



THE  
ORTHODOX CHURCH  
OF INDIA

BY  
DAVID DANIEL







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**HISTORY**

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(History)  
DAVID DANIEL

*Published by*

MISS RACHEL DAVID  
26/164-A  
Vikram Vihar  
Lajpat Nagar IV  
New Delhi-110 024

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First Print : July 1972

Second Print : July 1986

Price Rs. 75.00

\$ 12.00



St. Thomas  
The Apostle of India



Malankara Sabha Bhasuran  
Vattasseril Geevarghese Mar Dionysius  
Metropolitan—1908-34



Catholicos Baselius Mar Thoma Mathew:-I



DEDICATED  
TO  
THE SACRED MEMORY OF  
METROPOLITAN ALEXIOS MAR THEODOSIUS



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## PREFACE

That Christianity has been in existence in India from the beginning of the Christian era is beyond doubt. There is, however, a notion among those not acquainted with the history of Christianity in the country that it is an importation from the West. This notion, though mistakenly held, is understandable. During the long and varied history of India, parts of it came under the domination of the Portuguese, the Dutch, the French, and finally almost all of it under the British. The dominant religion of all these nations was Christianity and, as a part of their expansionist programme, they spread Christianity among Indians. It is not surprising, therefore, that, even today, many in India identify Christianity with foreign domination and consider it an exotic western product.

Christianity in fact came to India much before it went to Rome or Western Europe. It is believed to have been brought by St. Thomas, one of the twelve apostles of Jesus Christ. All writers of the early history of India agree that Christianity has been prevalent in India since the early days of the Christian era.

The Syrian Christians of Kerala constitute the most ancient Christian community of India. They believe that their form of Christianity is apostolic and derived directly from Apostle St. Thomas. Tradition has it that he landed in Cranganore on the west coast of Kerala in 52 A.D. He preached the gospel of Christ and converted a large number of people into Christianity. Later, he travelled further south and converted many more. He ordained priests and founded churches. From the western coast, he proceeded to the east and further to Malacca and China. He returned to India and was martyred in Madras in A.D. 72.

The Christian community established by St. Thomas in Kerala is still the dominant Christian community of India. They continue to uphold the apostolic traditions and the religious heritage of the ancient Church. The community is purely Indian in its character and outlook and has been an integral part of the political, cultural and economic life of the nation.

The St. Thomas Christian community, however, remained by and large, a community of Kerala till recent past. It, however, took an active part in the political and economic infrastructure of that State and identified itself with its national life. Many of its members received titles and decorations from the ruling princes which are still being retained by their descendants.

The latter half of the nineteenth century, however, witnessed a change in the attitude of the community. With the spread of education and pressure of employment, they began to move out in search of newer opportunities of economic life. The influx began to be more as the days passed. Today, the members of the Syrian Christian Community of Kerala are settled in almost all parts of the country and even abroad. Wherever they went they continued to maintain their religious tradition and mode of worship, as far as possible. They also maintained a close link with their parent Church. They established parishes and founded churches. The Orthodox Syrian Church of India thus began to expand and has now about 45 parishes outside Kerala.

A major difficulty facing the outside Kerala parishes is the lingua franca. The medium of the liturgy and worship of the Syrian Church is Malayalam. Unfortunately Malayalam has become a mere spoken language of minimum usage among the younger generation of Syrian Christians settled outside Kerala. A gap, between the older and younger generations is, therefore, steadily building up in their religious life. The younger generation, apparently, is not growing up with their religious tradition and heritage mainly because of the problem of language. This aspect is of utmost consideration in as much as the stability and the growth of the Church. An effective measure of bridging this gap and bringing up the younger generation in relation with their Church is to provide them with literature enabling them to understand the history and faith of the Church. It is this conviction that has prompted the author to write this book.

The present volume is the first part of the proposed book "The Orthodox Church of India" and deals with the history of the Church. The second part which deals with the faith of the Church will follow.

The author is indebted to Shri C.P. Jacob and Shri K.J. Philip for their valuable help and encouragement rendered to him

in preparing this book. He is most grateful to Rev. Fr. T.J. Joshua and Rev. Fr. K.K. Mathews of the Orthodox Theological Seminary for scrutinising the manuscript and for their suggestions. The library of the Cambridge Brotherhood House, Delhi, was a great help to the author for writing this book and he expresses his deep appreciation to Rev. James Stuart for extending to him the facilities of the library.

—David Daniel

New Delhi

3rd July, 1972

## PREFACE TO SECOND EDITION

Fourteen years have faded since 1972 when the first print of this book was released. During these years, the Church has witnessed events of outstanding significance in the ecclesiastical, administrative, missionary, educational and social fields. The development and progress in these and allied fields have been tremendous if one makes a careful overview of the strides made. It is true that the Church split and a chunk of it has been drafted away to form the Jacobite Church under the supremacy of the Orthodox Church of Syria. Nevertheless, the Malankara Orthodox Church expanded considerably within and without India, made remarkable strides in strength, cohesion and progressive programmes, made impressive participation and cooperation in the national life of India and in ecumenical cooperation with the sister Churches in India as well as the World Churches in the international field. This aspect recalls what Dr. P. C. Alexander said, "Whenever I think of this small community of Orthodox Christians in India I am struck by one simple factor and that is the real life, vigour and vitality of this small community."\*

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\*Dr. P. C. Alexander : Address delivered in the Catholicate Saphthathi meeting at Kottayam on September 12, 1982.—Catholicate Saphthathi Souvenir 1982. Malankara Sabha Special. p : 47.

Keeping, therefore, an all round view of the historical ecclesiastical, ecumenical and developmental milieu of the Church, the second edition of this book is brought out as a revised and enlarged one.

The author is extremely grateful to the facilities and cooperation extended to him by the Orthodox Christian Library of St. Mary's Orthodox Syrian Cathedral, New Delhi. Thanks are also tendered to organisations such as MGOCSM, Bethany Ashram, Perunad, Parimala Mar Gregorios Memorial Charitable Trust, St. Mary's Bethlehem Convent, for providing valuable information. The support and encouragement offered by Rev. Fr-T.G. Zacharia, Shri Abraham Zacharia chempaka madhom have been of great help in presenting this edition. Needless to say, Printaid, New Delhi has rendered a beautiful piece of artistic work in producing this volume. The author is deeply indebted to them. The warm reception to the first edition from the Church members has given immense moral courage. Before their goodwill, I bow my head in gratitude.

Above all, the light that was kindled by the blessed Metropolitan Alexios Mar Theodosios is the moving force behind this venture. Trusting in his intercessory prayers, this volume is submitted to his sacred memory.

—David Daniel

Alummoottil  
Ambaical  
Mavelikara

July 3  
August 6, 1986.

## INTRODUCTION

### The Early Church

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (St. John 1/1). The Word was made flesh and dwelt among men. That was Jesus Christ, the Son of God. He was crucified and buried; but rose from the dead and ascended into heaven to sit with God the Father. He bade his disciples to tarry to receive the Holy Spirit which He promised to send from the Father. They tarried and received the Holy Spirit. Thus began the Ecclesia, the Church of the New Testament.

The Church, from the very beginning was an international and classless society. It welcomed into its fold people of every race and social stratum. Those who joined it became members of a closely knit community. But they did not lose their national characteristics and identify. They worshipped the Holy Trinity in their own language and held on to their customs and ways of life.

The Church appeared first in history as a fellowship of self governing communities. There was nothing enforced in their unity; it arose organically from a deep realisation, shared by all its members, that they belonged to the same body, since they had all been born in to the same new life. They met and worshipped God as members of a blessed family. Each one regarded others as his brothers and sisters, children of God. They pooled their resources; and looked after each one's need. Each one lived not for himself but for God and they worked for the Glory of God.

### Role of Emperors

But this was not to continue long. From the fourth century onwards, these Christian communities received the protection of the Emperors; consequently, their constitution underwent a radical change; they lost their independence and became subject to the control of the State. Formerly, if any dispute arose within the Church, attempts were made to settle the issues through nego-

tiation. As Constantine became a Christian and the patronage of the Empire was granted, he tried to bring about unity within the Church. The Emperors began to use their political power to maintain unity among Christians, often inflicting severe penalties on those they deemed to be in the wrong. The Emperors' intentions were sincere and honest. They wished and strived to preserve peace and concord. But their methods were crude, those of the old unredeemed world; in effect, they proved fatal. The more they tried to suppress by force the disagreements among Christians, the more acrimonious the conflicts became, until at last the Church split into several bitter bodies antagonised to each other. Fragmentation tendency raised its ugly head in every part of the Christian world. More and more groups emerged and each group fell out with the other on points and counter points. These schisms were caused usually by national, temperamental and doctrinal divergences among members of the Christian Church. The spirit of mutual charity was lost as the divided Christian Churches began to establish onesided interpretations of the faith.

### **Eastern Orthodox Church**

The doctrinal differences rocked the foundations of Christendom and rent asunder the One Holy Catholic Church into the Western Church (The Roman Catholic Church) and the Eastern Church (The Orthodox Churches). The Eastern Churches use the term *ORTHODOX* for their identification. It is derived from two Greek words-*ORTHOS* meaning straight, correct, true and *DOXA* meaning Glory. It means, therefore, a Church, a community which worships or glorifies God in the true, straight or correct spirit. For the Orthodox, the Church is primarily a worshipping community and its main obligation is glorifying the Creator in the right spirit.

The Orthodox Christendom is spread wide over the world under its two wings: the Oriental Orthodox Churches and the Byzantine Orthodox Churches. By nature, they are autocephalous. Irrespective of their strength or position, all enjoy equality of status and freedom of self-government. Their unity is real and they usually display unanimity in all major issues. Their inter-Church relations reflect a sense of equality, freedom and mutual respect which are characteristic of the Christian East.

### **Oriental Orthodox Churches**

The Oriental Orthodox Churches distinguish themselves from the Byzantine Orthodox Churches as well as others, by their adherence to the unadulterated apostolic faith professed by the undivided Catholic (Universal) Church as enunciated in the first three ecumenical councils held in Nicaea (325 A.D.) Constantinople (381 A.D.) and Ephesus (431 A.D.). The Council of Chalcedon (451 A.D.) drew up a resolution which varied from the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed in so far as the Personality of Christ is concerned. The Churches of Rome and Constantinople, with political power in their favour, manouvered the Council to accept the two-nature theory (DIOPHYSITISM) on the recommendations of a Royal Commission constituted for the purpose, in the face of opposition from prelates of Alexandria and others. The Churches of Egypt, Syria, Palestine, Armenia and Persia rejected the enforced decisions of the Chalcedon Council and drew apart from the Churches of Rome and Constantinople. They are now known as the **ORIENTAL ORTHODOX CHURCHES**.

They are: i. The Orthodox (Coptic) Church of Egypt;  
 ii. The Orthodox Church in Syria;  
 iii. The Orthodox Church in Armenia;  
 iv. The Orthodox Church in India; and  
 v. The Orthodox Church in Ethiopia

### **Orthodoxy of Oriental Churches**

In the past, the Oriental Orthodox Churches have been wrongly regarded as **MONOPHYSITES** (MONO: Single: PHYSIS: Nature-Single nature of Christ as advocated by Eutycheus) or Pro-Eutychean; but the Oriental Orthodox Churches vehemently condemn both Nestorius and Eutycheus as heretics. As against the Monophysitism of Eutycheus, they accept the one wonderfully united nature in Christ which is the Alexandrian point of view. Therefore, it is absolutely unrighteous to continue to call the Oriental Orthodox Churches as Monophysites. They uphold the single procession of the Holy Spirit; venerate St. Mary as the Mother of God (**THEOTOKOS**); believe in Seven Sacraments, communion of saints, prayers for the departed; observe five seasons of lent; view the Church as a divinely established body; recognise the sixty-nine books in the Bible as well as the Holy Tradition, and the three-fold system of Ministry.

The Orthodox Churches appear divided and lacking an organisational unity as found in the Roman Catholic Church. Nevertheless, they are not different Churches like the Protestant denominations. A common tradition of faith and practice and intercommunion bind them inherently, yet autonomous in administration. Characteristically, the heads of all Oriental Orthodox Churches are nationals of the countries to which they belong.

### **The Byzantine (Eastern) Orthodox Churches**

The Churches of Rome and Constantinople remained together for a few centuries more. They too, however, fell apart in the eleventh century. The Roman Church in a local council held at Toledo in Spain in 579 A.D. adopted a new version on the dogma concerning the procession of the Holy Spirit altering materially the decision of the second ecumenical Council of Constantinople (381 A.D.) that the Holy Spirit proceeds 'from the Father'. The Toledo Council decided, that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Son also and added, therefore, the words 'and from the Son' immediately after the Constantinopolitan Creed, 'from the Father'. In 1014, Pope Benedict (1012-1024) sanctioned the alteration in the original Creed. The Latin term for 'and from the Son' is FILIO QUE. This phraseology of Filio que led to altercations between the two Churches and, as a result, they separated. The Church of Constantinople and other sister Churches which followed the original Creed came to be called the Byzantine or Eastern Orthodox Churches. The various Eastern Orthodox Churches are listed in Appendix I.

It is of interest to observe here that the Chalcedonian (Eastern) Orthodox Churches have neither altered the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed nor added the Chalcedonian formula to it. To-day, the same Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed is used by the Oriental and the Eastern Orthodox Churches alike.

## **ECUMENICAL MOVE FOR UNITY**

### **Oriental-Byzantine Orthodox Dialogue**

In recent years, an earnest desire has been evinced by the Oriental and Byzantine Orthodox Churches to come together and remove the stumbling blocks towards the goal of unity in faith. To this end, theologians of both the Churches, encouraged by the World Council of Churches, gathered together for the first time

at Aarhus in Denmark in 1964 (11-15 August). Five Oriental (Non-Chalcedonian) Churches and other (Chalcedonian) Greek and Russian Orthodox Churches took part in the unofficial consultation. The discussions and decisions of Aarhus contributed much to the mutual understanding of Chalcedonian and Non-Chalcedonian positions and to the clarifications of some difficulties in connection with the acceptance or rejection of the Council of Chalcedon. In the statement issued on the conclusion of the Conference, it was reported: "on the essence of the Christological dogma, we found ourselves in full agreement. Through our different terminologies, we saw the same truth expressed". Both sides have, therefore, agreed to base the Christological doctrine on the teaching of St. Cyril of Alexandria in their search for unity. Thereafter, the heads of the Oriental Orthodox Churches met in Addis Ababa in Ethiopia in January 1965 and approved the idea that the Chalcedonian Orthodox Churches are akin to the Non-Chalcedonian Orthodox Churches in teaching and practice. In order to pursue their ends, a permanent Secretariat for coordination between them has also been set up at Addis Ababa.

The Church hopes to have communion with the Eastern Orthodox Churches. This was the first priority for the Oriental Orthodox Churches drawn by them in the Addis Ababa Conference of 1965, as evaluated by Metropolitan Paulos Mar Gregorios. Since then the two sides met and started a series of dialogue searching for a solution to the factors keeping them separated. Mar Gregorios reported. "The four unofficial conversations i.e. Aarhus (1964), Bristol (1967), Geneva (1970) and Addis Ababa (1971) have now confirmed the basic insight of Addis Ababa. The differences are hardly theological. There are problems like acceptance of certain Councils, anathemas against saints and fathers of the other side, and the rank of Patriarchs; but none of these really constitute a substantial difference in faith. This relation remains the first ecumenical priority for the Oriental Orthodox Church."<sup>1</sup> The search for unity continues.

### **Roman Catholic-Orthodox-Protestant Dialogue**

The move for unity in Christendom received great momentum and dimension with the optimistic deliberations of the II Vatican

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1. Paulos Mar Gregorios. The Star of the East. Vol. I No. 1. January 1979. Page 12.

Synod of the Roman Catholic Church. Since then, the Roman Catholic Church has been either informally or officially participating in the ecumenical dialogue sponsored by the World Council of Churches. The theologians of the Roman Catholic Church and Oriental Orthodox Churches met in Vienna on September 7–11, 1971 for an “Unofficial Ecumenical Consultation” at the invitation of the Foundation Pro-Oriente. In the Conference both sides presented learned papers on the issues separating them. Concluding the conference they issued a statement which says:

“We find common basis in the same Apostolic tradition, particularly as affirmed in the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed; we all confess the dogmatic decisions and teachings of Nicaea (325), Constantinople (381) and Ephesus (431); we all agree in rejecting both the Nestorian and Eutychean positions about Jesus Christ. We have endeavoured for a deeper understanding of the Chalcedonian and Non-Chalcedonian Christologies which have separated us until now.

“We see that there are still differences in the theological interpretation of the mystery of Christ because of our different ecclesiastical traditions; we are convinced, however, that these differing formulations on both sides can be understood along the lines of the faith of Nice and Ephesus”.

## **W C C MOVES TOWARDS UNIVERSAL CHURCH**

### **The Lima Text of 1982**

In conformity with its objective “to proclaim the oneness of the Church of Jesus Christ and to call the Churches to the goal of visible unity in one faith and one eucharistic fellowship expressed in worship and common life in Christ in order that the world might believe”<sup>2</sup> (Bye-laws), the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches has been endeavouring for the past fifty years for basic agreement among the Churches on baptism, eucharist and ministry in order to achieve visible unity of the Churches. These three basic aspects of Christianity namely baptism, eucharist and ministry have been the subject of study of the first Faith and Order Conference at Lausanne in 1927, the Faith and Order Commission meetings at Accra (1974), Bangalore (1978) and Lima (1982). and various inter-church ecumenical consultations and dialogues.

## **Lima Text**

On the basis of this process of study, the Commission prepared three statements, one on each of the three aspects and presented them at its meeting at Lima in 1982. Over one hundred theologians met in Lima, Peru in January 1982 and recommended unanimously to transmit this agreed statement—the Lima Text—for the common study and official response of the Churches. They represented virtually all the major Church traditions. Eastern Orthodox, Oriental Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Old Catholic, Lutheran, Anglican, Reformed, Methodist, United Disciples, Baptist Adventist and Pentecostal.” The Churches’s response to this agreed statement will be a vital step in the ecumenical process of “reception”. The Lima Text is published as Faith and Order Paper No 111 by the WCC.

It is hoped that the Churches will “Develop these doctrinal convergences step by step, until they are finally able to declare together that they are living in communion with one another in continuity with the apostles and the teachings of the universal Church.”<sup>3</sup>

## **The Indian Orthodox Church**

The Church by virtue of its apostolic origin, indigenous growth independent character, ensured by its Catholicate and Constitution, has bloomed into an autonomous as well as autocephalous Church in the twentieth century. In the past, the Church has been trying to identify with the Church of Persia (till 15th century), the Church of Rome (1599-1653) and the Church of Syria (1665-1912). This dependence on Churches abroad marred the vision of the Church from developing its own “distinctive characteristics in life, working and discipline as historic Christian communities elsewhere have done. Rev. Dr. V.C. Samuel, therefore, rightly sets a goal as well as poses a challenge before the Church, “to evolve a form of Christianity which is genuinely authentic and at the same time Indian and indigenous.”<sup>4</sup>

The Church is anxious to maintain cordiality and ecumenical cooperation with all sister Churches of the world and in India in

2&3. Faith and Order Paper No. 111. World Council of Churches Preface pp. v-viii.

4. DR. V. C. Samuel : Our Church in History. Star of the East (Vol 5 No 4) December 1983 p : 28.

particular. His Holiness the Catholicos Mar Thoma Mathews I declared the views of the Church in a speech delivered at Ernakulam. He said,

“First, ours is an autocephalous Orthodox Church of apostolic origin, and we want to develop our life in sisterly ecumenical co-operation with all our sister churches in the world. We are fully committed to the ecumenical movement—a prayerful dedication to make manifest our unity in Christ as His One Body. We are anxious to engage in active dialogue with our sister churches in India as well as abroad. We have officially communicated our desire to begin dialogue with the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of India. We are still awaiting an official response. We have also communicated our desire to begin dialogue with the federation of the three evangelical churches: the Mar thoma Syrian Church, the Church of South India and the Church of North India. We have now been in dialogue for some years with the Lutheran churches in India.<sup>5</sup>

The avenues of unity opened are encouraging and promising.

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5. Catholicate Saphathi Souvenir 1982 Page 46.

## CHAPTER ONE

# ST. THOMAS IN INDIA

### Origin

THE INDIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH, otherwise known as the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church is one of the oldest Churches in Christendom and the most ancient in India. It is believed that the Church was established by St. Thomas, one of the Apostles of Jesus Christ, in 52 A.D. Unaware of this situation, perhaps, many in India and elsewhere trace the origin of Christianity in India to the European missionaries who came in the wake of Portuguese and British rule over India; and they, as a result, regard Christianity as a Western religion.

In fact, Christianity, in its origin at least, was primarily an Asian-African religion. Antioch and Alexandria, the two great centres of primitive Christianity, were the capital cities of the Asian and African provinces of the Roman Empire. Before the rise of Islam, Christianity was the religion of a large number of African and Asian peoples. Libya, Egypt, Tunisia, Sudan, Ethiopia, Algeria and Morocco in North Africa were all Christian countries until about the eighth century. So also in Asia, the great Syrian Church expanded to cover Armenia, Georgia, Turkey, Syria, Palestine, Iraq, Iran and Uzbekistan and as far as Tibet and China. Antioch in Syria was the place where the believers in Christ were called CHRISTIANS for the first time, in the year 41 A.D. approximately. This ancient Asian form of Christianity was inherited by India from St. Thomas in a contemporary period of its spreading elsewhere in Asia.

Territorially, India stands on the cross-roads between the East and the West. India, which had nurtured a civilization and culture of her own, had given birth to and cradled many religions too, which spread their wings beyond its frontiers. In the process, not only India had often received powerful impulses from her contact with other civilised nations but became itself a fertile

ground for imbibing new ideas and conceptions. Tolerance and receptivity have been the characteristics of the Indian culture. It is, therefore, no wonder that Christianity when it arrived in India was well received.

Christianity, thus, took roots in India even before it reached Europe. Unfortunately, no contemporary document in evidence has been bequeathed to posterity to substantiate historically the arrival of and the establishment of the Church by Apostle Thomas.

### **Sources of History**

Historical as well as apocryphal works of later historians and also traditional belief fill this vacuum of contemporary evidences. The earliest and original references of the missionary travel of St. Thomas to India are found in the works of Church historians such as Origen (185-254) Hippolytus (160-235) Clement of Alexandria, Eusebius of Caesaria (260-340) and in the Acts of Thomas (200) and the Book of Doctrines of Apostles composed about 250 A.D. All of them mention Parthia as the field which St. Thomas got by lot among the Apostles for evangelisation; but they hasten to add that the Apostle preached to Parthians, Medes, Bactrians, Hyracanians, Margians, Indians and Chinese. Parthian Empire included Persia, Assyria, Armenia and countries about Babylon as far as the borders of India. However, the most eloquent Churches which bear witness to the activities of the Apostle, have been the Churches of Edessa and India.

Only two sources, however, are available which throw some light on the arrival of St. Thomas in India. These sources enable historians to delve into the past and project a reasonable picture of the arrival and the activities of St. Thomas in India. One is the tradition of the Christians of Kerala State in South-West part of India. The other is an apocryphal Syriac literary work called the ACTS OF THOMAS according to which the Apostle was active in Punjab in North India, during the period 40-50 A.D. Although its credibility is doubted, this work cannot be completely ignored because of important historical references it contains. Both sources provide ample circumstantial evidences of the arrival of St. Thomas in India.

#### **I. TRADITION OF KERALA**

The tradition of Kerala Christians is that in 52 A.D. St. Thomas, the Apostle, landed in the port of Muziris near

Kodungallur (Cranganur) in Malabar coast of Kerala. Contemporary records on persons and events relating to his arrival and further activities are virtually absent. In the circumstances, historians lean heavily on such scanty materials like Church records, stray inscriptions, writings of foreign travellers or traditions orally transmitted down the generations to build up the development of the Church in the early centuries.

Historically, it was a possibility that St. Thomas could have arrived in the Malabar coast. Taking into consideration the fact that there existed a continuous flow of trade between the West and East, especially the Malabar coast, which was better known as the land where pepper grew, in the early centuries before Christ and subsequent period; there is reason to believe that St. Thomas landed in Muziris which was a flourishing port of trade, in a trading vessel.

St. Thomas, on the other hand, was guided and moved by three things. Primarily, he was personally bound by the last command of His Master Jesus Christ to preach the gospel to all the nations of the world. Secondly, God the Holy Spirit guided his thoughts and movement. Thirdly, the allocation of India by lot to his charge for evangelisation. These were the inner urges which prevailed on St. Thomas to come to India. These are facts to be believed, beyond historical evidences. The Kerala Christians believe these.

It is also of importance that a quick and easy searoute to reach India in forty days from Oxalis, the Southern tip of Arabia, reckoning with the South-Westerly monsoon winds had been discovered by the Greek navigator Hippalos in A.D. 47. This must have given added impetus to traders to visit India frequently and expand their trade. Further, the existence of a flourishing colony of Jews in Muziris about whom St. Thomas might have learnt from traders could have attracted him to it.

Under these circumstances, the arrival of St. Thomas in Muziris in 52 A.D. was more than a possibility. The port of Muziris at its mouth had an island called Maliankara. In the course of centuries, Maliankara was shortened to Malankara. St. Thomas may have landed in this Island also and evangelised and formed a Christian community. The St. Thomas Christian

community has acquired a name 'Malankara' Church which term could be related to this Island of Maliankara.

### **The Port of Muziris**

Muziris, where St. Thomas landed, was the port of the Chera Kingdom. It is also identified as the 'Muchiri' of the Tamil literature. The port area is known as Kodungallur, situated at the mouth of river Periyar. Muziris was the port of trade between the East and the West. An international trading community had grown around the port. Romans, Egyptians, Arabs, Syrians and Persians came to this port to trade in all kinds of ware, pearls, precious stones, ivory, silk, spices and the priceless pepper. P. Thomas concludes, "Muziris was a cosmopolitan port. Merchants of all nations were found there. Egyptians, Syrians, Arabs and Persians who came in their trading vessels with gold and implements of war for exchange with the products of India; Chinese in their uncouth junks laden with bales of silk for exchange with Indian goods and the gold of the Westerners. Muziris was at that time the main transit emporium of trade between the West and the Far East. Traders of all important nations had their settlements and factories at Muziris, as shipping was not regular and the cargo had to be stored awaiting the arrival of trading fleets. The ubiquitous Jew was already there. No one could say when and whence he came; but he had extensive trade connections and a high standing in the Perumal's court. It was, in fact, the Jewish settlement in Muziris that attracted St. Thomas to the port. Romans, as already mentioned, had a temple and two cohorts stationed in Muziris".<sup>1</sup>

### **Bar Hebraeus's witness**

Bar Hebraeus, the Catholicos (1266-86) of the Persian Church also mention that India was the evangelical field of St. Thomas. In the introduction to the second volume of Church history, he stated :

"I begin here the second part on completion of the first part of the history. In the same manner, I begin with the apostolic times of Apostle Thomas, the first high-priest of the east. As we understand from the book 'Doctrines of the Apostles', in the

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1. P. Thomas : Christians and Christianity in India and Pakistan. Pages : 10-11.

beginning, St. Thomas preached the gospel of Christ in the East. In the second year of the ascension of our Lord, on his way to India, he preached to Mazdais and Persians. In his travel to India, he evangelised in Tigris too.”<sup>2</sup>

Historians like Chaplain James Hough and George Milne Rae, however, reject this tradition. On the other hand, the recording of a non-Christian historian T.K. Velu Pillai asserts it. He says, “If the desire for trade and the exigencies of political ambition made travelling anything but an abnormal enterprise, the missionary who desired to carry the word of God to the remotest confines of the earth would find no difficulty in arriving at Malabar coast from Socotra, Edessa or Antioch. The learned Chaplain emphasises the absence of what he calls ‘the faintest vestiges of authentic history’ in support of the coming of St. Thomas and finds an easy way to reject the tradition. What is the authentic evidence of the facts of history, which are said to have transpired nearly two thousand years ago? It is not reasonable to hope that the visit of St. Thomas could be proved by certified records in the archives of Government nor is it right to think that the transactions should, if true, be recorded on stone or copper. St. Thomas came to India to preach Christianity, not to create historical evidence.”<sup>3</sup>

Further, “the discovery of the Syrian Christians on the Malabar coast was a fruitful source of perplexity to both sections of European Christianity” says Dean Stanley. “Their separation from the Western world had left them in ignorance of the improvements or corruptions of a thousand years and their conformity with the faith and practice of the fifth century should equally disappoint the prejudices of a Papist or a Protestant.”<sup>4</sup> The distinctive characteristic of the Syrian Church in Malabar is the veneration for the text of the Gospel and the Syriac language in which it was revealed.

### **Missionary Activities in Kerala**

On arrival, St. Thomas is presumed to have preached the

2. Konat Abraham Kathanar : Article ‘Pourasthya Catholica Simhasanam (Malayalam), Malankara Sabha December 1970, P. 42. Translation by the author.
3. T.K. Velu Pillai : Travancore State Manual 1940 : pages 653-4
4. A.P. Stanley : Lectures on the History of the Eastern Church. pages 26 and 42. Quoted by T.K. Velu Pillai in Travancore State Manual 1940 pages 662-663

Gospel to the scattered Jews first as also to the local population. The first converts to Christianity are believed to be Jews. Many among the other converts were high caste Brahmins (Namboothiris) and Nairs. Wherever he went, St. Thomas established churches and ordained priests to carry out ecclesiastical duties. Although different versions of his activities exist, all historians are on accord in supporting the traditional claim of seven churches established by the Apostle in the coastal region of Kerala, spreading from Maliankara-Kodungallur (Cranganore) in the north to Quilon in the south. They are at Kodungallur (Cranganore), Palur, Paravur, Gokkamangalam, Chayal, Niranam and Quilon. He also set up a church at Thiruvithamcode, where he spent a fairly long time in meditation and prayer.

Information on the circumstance leading to the conversion of the local population and the consequent establishment of churches is based on the local traditions passed from generation to generation in the absence of any contemporary written record. It is believed that St. Thomas performed miracles in the name of Jesus Christ by which many Brahmins and Hindus came to believe in Him.

### **Kodungallur**

At Kodungallur, the Apostle is said to have made converts from Jews who were living there as well from natives of the place. The local king also became a Christian and was given the name of Andrew and his nephew Keppa was ordained priest.”<sup>5</sup> Keppa was a constant companion of St. Thomas in his further travels. Later, the Apostle appointed this Keppa as his successor and entrusted him the flock of believers prior to his departure from the last point of missionary centre of Chayal to further east across the Western Ghats.

### **Palur (Palayur)**

In the case of Palur, the conversion of Brahmins was preceded by a spectacular miracle. Palur (Ponnani, Malabar) was a busy centre of inland trade and an important strong-hold of Brahmins and the blue blooded Namboothiries. Here existed a trading group of Jews also with a synagogue.

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5. Brown, L.W. The Indian Christians of St. Thomas P : 49

According to the folklore, the Apostle was one morning passing by the temple-tank called Thaliakulam (which still exists on the eastern side of the present Church) where he saw Brahmins chanting Vedic incantations and splashing water up-wards by their palm. On enquiry, he was told that the water was thrown upwards as an offering to gods. The Apostle accosted them and said that the offering was not acceptable to the Gods; otherwise the water wouldn't have fallen back. To the Brahmins the Apostle further clarified that he could keep the water remain in mid-air provided they accept Jesus Christ as their God. The Brahmins agreed to it. Thereupon, St. Thomas got into the tank, and sprinkled water upwards and made the drops remain suspended in mid-air. Besides, a cup-size depression was also seen in the water-level. The story goes that most of the Brahmins kept their promise and accepted Christ as their saviour. Those who didn't agree with St. Thomas, cursed and abandoned Palur. Thereafter, the place came to be called 'Sapakkad' (Accursed Forest) or 'Chavukat'. To this day, the place has retained the name.

The temple at Palur was suitably renovated to serve as a church. "The tradition seems to be supported by two facts; First, recent excavations show that the present church and its compound stand on the remnants of a Hindu temple with its tank, sacred well, sculptures. In the second place, a Brahmin family which has emigrated, called Kalathu Mana, keeps a document, Nagargarandhavaryola, where it is written: "Kali Year 3153 (52 A.D.) the foreigner Thomas Sanyasi came to our village (gramam) preached there causing pollution. We therefore came away from that village". How old is that document in its present version? Palayur must have been also a Jewish centre. for one of the nearby places is still called "Juda Kunnu", the hill of the Jews. All this convergence of various testimonies show at least that Palayur is a place of remote Christian antiquity. Archaeological excavations will reveal a great deal of fresh evidence, as in some other places like Cranganore and Nilakkal." (HAMBYE "SAINT THOMAS AND INDIA").<sup>6</sup>

By tradition, the Palayur parish used to celebrate the Thaliakulam incident of St. Thomas on July 15 every year.

6. George Mark Moraes. A History of Christianity in India. p. 40,

Nearby parishes of Aarthat, Pazhanji, Thozhiyur, Chaattukulangara. Chalissery also used to join the celebrations.<sup>7</sup>

Residing at Palayur, St. Thomas worked among the Jews settled in nearby areas of Eyyal and Mattom. The Apostle also used to spend some time in meditation in a mount close by which later came to be called Aarthat, where he gathered a number of hill tribal people to Christ and put up a Cross. A Church was later raised at this site in the name of St. Mary. One day, he came across a large number of workers digging a water-tank, which was meant for Namboothiri Brahmins to wash before they went to the temple for Pooja (worship). The tank, however, could not find water even at a good depth. At this point, St. Thomas assured the Namboothiris that the God he worshipped could produce water in the tank and struck at the floor with the whip he had. Surprisingly water rushed in from all sides and the tank was flooded. On this miracle, many Namboothiris, believed in Christ and were baptised by St. Thomas. The water-tank came to be called "Chattu Kulam" meaning tank raised by whip (Chatta). This water-tank is still in existence on the Kunnankulam-Guruvayur Road.

Placid J. Podipara also gives the following comment regarding Palayur.

"Both the Christian and the Hindu traditions say that when St. Thomas converted some Brahmins of the place, the rest ran away to a nearby locality called Vemmanat saying Iniyathe kuli Vemmanat, i.e., "the next bath at Vemmanat" which expression has become even a proverb in the language of Malabar. In 1949 the present writer was in Vemmanat and two elderly and respectable high caste Hindu gentlemen, one a Brahmin and the other addicted to the service of the temple of Vemmanat, recounted to him this tradition as current among them. In Palayur there is a compound called Kalath; in Vemmanat there is the Brahmin family of Kalath which, according to tradition, is one of the Brahmin families that ran away from Palayur to Vemmanat."<sup>8</sup>

7. Cherian Thommi. Mar Thoma Sleehayum Malankara Christianikalum. (1976) P : 31, Quoted from P.C. Kunjathu's Aar that Palli Charithram. P: 37.

8. P.J. Podipara : The Thomas Christians P : 19, Quoted by A.M. Mundadan History of Christianity in India, Vol. I (1984) : 1984 P : 33.

### Paravur

As regards Paravur, the traditional story is that St. Thomas reached Paravur on a festival day of the local temple and he began preaching the gospel of Christ. This provoked the Hindus who surrounded him with criminal intentions. The Apostle raised a storm which struck them down. Many fell unconscious. The people were surprised and awestricken. The Apostle then calmed the storm and sprinkled water over the unconscious and awakened them. This miracle caused many to turn to Christ. The temple here also was converted to a church. But was destroyed during the invasion of Tippu Sultan of Mysore, in 18th century.

### Niranam

As Palur in the north, Niranam in the south was also a great centre of Brahmins. It is nearby the ancient trading port 'Neakynda' on river Pampa described in Periplus and the sea-port Purakkad. The Greek navigator who wrote Periplus in 60 A.D. had visited the river-port Neakynda where he saw pepper being traded and single-log boats plying. Neakynda is the present Naakida.

St. Thomas could have come to Niranam because of its accessibility to the river-port. Anyway, local tradition is very strong that he preached to the Brahmins and that a formidable number of them became Christians. "Local Christian tradition has it that most of the Namboothiri Brahmins of Niranam having been made Christians by St. Thomas, the rest left the place after giving the boxes containing the documents relating to their landed properties to a Kaymal or 'Nair Chief' there, who has since been known as Niranam Petty Kaymal i.e. the box-chief of Niranam, who now lives three furlongs to the north of the Jacobite Church. Tradition also says that the four chief Namboothiri families of Niranam converted by St. Thomas are those of Thayyil, Pattamukkil, Manki and Madathilen"<sup>9</sup>

It is also a tradition that the wooden-cross set-up by St. Thomas on a high-rise plot not subject to the annual inundations of the river Pampa, was uprooted by the Niranam Namboothiris and thrown into the river but was subsequently recovered and erected

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9. V. Raghavan Nambyar : Annals and Antiques of Tiruvalla published in Kerala Society Papers. Vol. I. Series 2 (1929)-Pages 65 Col. 2.

by other brahmin Christians on a second site not far away, where the present Orthodox Church is located.

Over the succeeding centuries, Niranam became the strong hold of Orthodox Church. In a Memoir of the Survey of Travancore and Cochin (July 1816-1820-Vol. I 1863) Lieut Conner says about the Niranam Church as follows:—"An inscription found at Niranam state the church there to have been enlarged in A.D. 1259 (P. 19 Foot Note. 2)....." Niranam is one of the most ancient Syrian churches that with a degree of toleration we must admire, holds its place unmolested within a few paces of a Pagoda"<sup>10</sup> (P. 12).

### **Nilackal (Chayal)**

Nilackal (Chayal) 57 km east of the present day Ranni was the last of the seven Christian centres of missionary activity of St. Thomas in Kerala. From this point, the Apostle crossed over the Western Ghat to Tamil Nadu finally reaching Madras.

Till about seven or eight centuries ago, it was a thickly populated area and a flourishing commercial centre. It is said that the place in course of time was deserted due to prevalence of epidemic, attacks of wild animals, invasions from neighbouring rulers and other calamities and consequently turned to dense forest area. In these unfavourable circumstances, the Christians too had moved to other places of safety like Kanjirappally.

Remains of Church building and crosses were discovered in the time of Pulikottil Joseph Dionysius (1864-1908) and by Fr. Thoma O.I.C. of the monastery at Perunad (Ranny) in 1957. Daniel Mar Philoxinos, Metropolitan had raised temporary structures and celebrated Holy Qurbana on March 3, 1957 at the cite. Catholicos Mar Mathews I had also visited the location, when he was metropolitan.

Since then continuous efforts were made in 1972, 1976 and 1979 by the Christian community of different denominations concertedly with the Government for grant of land and permission to build a Church at the cite. Although a 4 hectare-plot was agreed to by the Government in 1976 and 2 hectare in 1979, the land did not come into possession for various reasons.

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10. Joseph T.K. : Lieut Conner On Niranam Church.—Article in Malayala Manorama, Shashtyabda poorthi, Smaraka Grandham. Pp. 454.6.

The situation turned dramatically critical when a cross was unearthed on March 23, 1983 while digging was in process in the farmland of State Farming Corporation at Nilakkal. The plot lay adjacent to the Hindu Mahadevar Temple. Efforts were made to raise a church on the spot. However, because of communal tension in the area the project was dropped.

However, 32 bishops of different denominations gathered together at Vadavathur Seminary, Kottayam on July 21, 1983 and an Action Committee with Mar Coorilos, Catholicos-elect as Chairman was formed to negotiate with the Government and the Hindu Community leaders. Following negotiations, Government agreed to allot a land 3.5 km. away from the original site and permitted construction of a church.

The Christian Community of Kerala consisting of eight denominations is in the process of raising an Ecumenical Church—St. Thomas Ecumenical Church at Nilakkal.

A place of worship in commemoration of St. Thomas was temporarily raised and its consecration was held by the leading dignitaries of eight denominations on April 8, 1984. They were :

Mathews Mar Coorilos	:	Metropolitan and Catholicos-designate, Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church.
Thomas Mar Athanasius	:	Metropolitan, Mar Thoma Church
Kuriakose Kunnassery	:	Metropolitan } Roman Catholic
Joseph Pauwathil	:	Metropolitan } Church.
Benedict Mar Gregorios	:	Arch-bishop — Syro Mahankara Church.
Abraham Mar Climis	:	Metropolitan — Jacobite Syrian Church.
M.C. Mani	:	Bishop } Church of South India.
T.C. Joseph	:	Bishop }

### Thiruvithamcode<sup>11,12</sup>

The story of the establishment of a church at Thiruvithamcode by St. Thomas is not far from scepticism, although it involves the rulers of Chola and Venad kingdoms. According to the

11. Syrian Christian Congress Souvenir 1961.

12. Geevarghese Ramban, K.V.—Thiruvithamcode Suriyani Palli Charithravum Tharisakkalude Aithiyavum. (3rd print 1966) : Pp. 27-28.

legend, St. Thomas, who had reached Madras, had converted a number of Vellala Chettiars of the area. The ruler of the land "Saliakon" was, however, not happy at this and started persecuting the Chettiars. St. Thomas came to their rescue. It is said, St. Thomas took sixtyfour families of these Chettiars and others to Nagarcoil, not far from Trivandrum in the south, crossing the Ghats through Aruvamozhi Pass. As to how St. Thomas happened to chose Nagarcoil is related to an earlier contact which the Christians of Madras had gained with the brother of the ruler of Venad while the latter was at Madras. It appears the Prince had promised them all help if they would come over to Venad. So when the Apostle and the Chettiars called on the ruler of Venad at the Royal palace at Thiruvithamcode, the latter received them sympathetically and ordered that all the sixty-four families may each be given a plot of land, a house and that they may be allowed to build a place of worship. The church which they built, perhaps renovated, is existing to-date, as St. Mary's Church.

There is an interesting legend about how these Chettiar Christians came to be called "Dharia Chettikal". The origin of this epithet is traced to the interview these Christians had with the Venad ruler. The king had offered them at the time of reception, flowers, fresh lime, sandal powder and sacred Ash called 'Vibhuti' (Bhasmam) on a golden plate. The immigrants accepted all the items excepts the 'Vibhuti'. At this the king exclaimed, "Are you vibhuti-Dharia Chettikal?" meaning, non-Vibhuti-using Chettikal?" Thus, the Christian Chettiars of Thiruvithamcode came to be known as Dharia-Chettiars.

### **In Tamil Nadu**

After having set the Church in Kerala in a firm footing, St. Thomas crossed the Western Ghats and entered the Chola Kingdom, the Tamil Nadu of the present day. On the Coromandel coast, the Apostle set up his abode, in a rock-cave on the Chinna Malai, not far from the Madras city. From here, he used to move out for his evangelisation work. The rockcave in which he lived, is still preserved and attracts pilgrims and tourists alike.

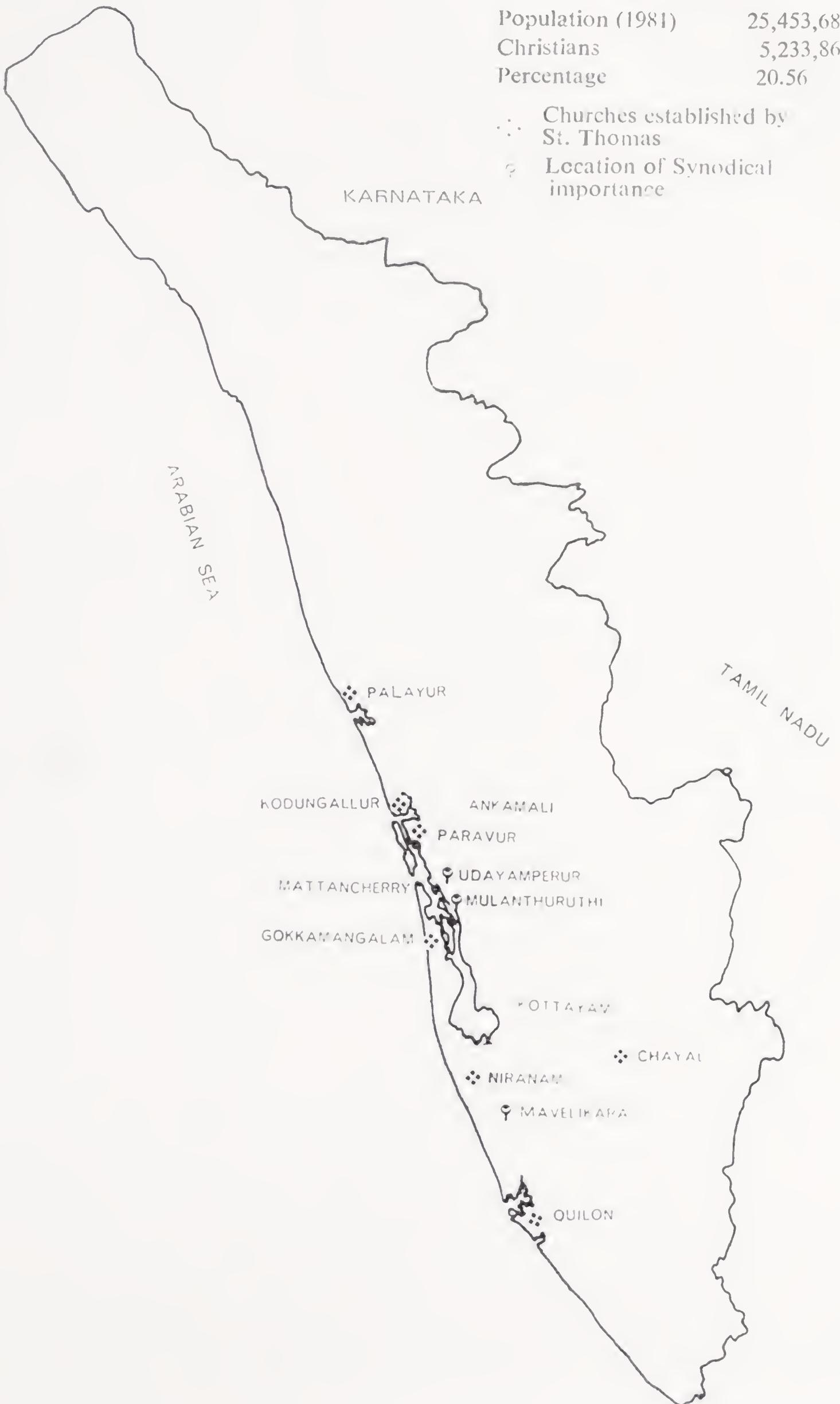
### **In China**

According to tradition, the Apostle left the Coromandel coast and went up as far as China. The details of his work outside India are not available either by tradition or legendary stories.

# Map of Kerala

Population (1981)	25,453,680
Christians	5,233,865
Percentage	20.56

- Churches established by St. Thomas
- ♀ Location of Synodical importance





It has, however, been known that Christian communities existed in China from the very early centuries.

### **Thomma Parvom and Margamkali Song**

An account of the missionary activities of St. Thomas is also given in a mini-epic poem on St. Thomas in Malayalam—**THOMMA PARVOM** which is said to have been composed for use in church of Niranam by a priest Thomas in 1601 on the basis of a script handed down forty eight generations from his ancestor, a priest Maliakal Thomas of Niranam who was ordained by St. Thomas. The original script is kept in the monastery at Mannanam, near Kottayam (Kerala). It recounts the arrival of St. Thomas from Arabia in December 50 A.D. in Maliankara, the conversion of the king at Kodungallur who was baptised and given the name Andrew and also of his nephew who was baptised and ordained as a priest named Keppa, and his activities in other centres. The Apostle's martyrdom is mentioned to have occurred on 3rd July at Mylapore.

Another local record of the Apostle's death is the 'MARGOM KALI SONG' composed in 1792. This too tells the same story; the date of death, however, is given as December 21, 52 A.D.<sup>13</sup>

The authenticity of the two lyrics is in doubt. With the passage of time it is said that many erroneous changes have been inserted by interested parties to give support to their own points of view.

### **Martyrdom — Diverse accounts**

Diverse accounts are extant about how the Apostle met with his death in India.

### **Kerala Tradition**

According to Kerala tradition while the Apostle was on his usual gospel work in and around Madras, one day he had an encounter with Brahmin priests, outside the city. An altercation ensued which ended in the consummation of the shrine of the goddess Kali by fire at the Apostle's behest. The enraged brahmins fell upon him and one of them thrust his lance at the Apostle, consequent of which he died.

13. Brown L.W. : The Indian Christians of St. Thomas P : 51.

The story continues that the body was taken to the small chapel which the Apostle had built and was buried there. The entire episode took place at Mylapore. Notwithstanding the Kerala tradition, historians have come out with various versions of the martyrdom.

### **Mar Solomon 13 Cy. AD.**

Mar Solomon, a Nestorian bishop of the 13th Cy. AD. in his Book of the Bee has given a different picture. According to him, "because he (St. Thomas) baptized the daughter of the King of the Indians, he stabbed him with a spear and he died. Habban the merchant brought his body and laid it in Edessa, the blessed city of our Lord. Others say that he was buried at Mahlush, a city in the land of the Indians".<sup>14</sup>

### **John De Marignolli (1349 AD)**

In his account of travel, John De Marignolli<sup>15</sup> (1349 AD) says, "during his day time he used to go on building his churches in the city, but at night he retired to a distance of three Italian miles, where there were numberless peacocks...and thus being shot in the side with an arrow such as is called friccia (so that his wound was like that in the side of Christ into which he had thrust his hand), he lay there before his oratory from the hour of compline, continuing throughout the night to preach, whilst all his blessed blood was welling from his side; and in the morning he gave up his soul to God. The priests gathered up the earth with which his blood had mingled, and buried it with him."

### **A.M. Mundadan**

In his book, "History of Christianity" (1984-Vol. I), Prof. A.M. Mundadan has given three versions of the martyrdom of St. Thomas, the Apostle.

#### *i. St. Thomas in pea-cock figure killed by a hunter.*

Mundadan relates a story narrated by Duarte Barbosa. To quote: "Being persecuted in Quilon, the Apostle departed for Mylapore. One day a hunter while hunting peacocks in this locality saw a group of peacocks with their chief seated on a flat stone there. The hunter shot an arrow and the chief of the peacocks

14. M.K. Kuriakose : History of Chistianity in India (20) P : 15

15. ibid (27) P : 20

being wounded flew away. In the air it was transformed into a human being and fell down dead. The governor of the town being informed of this miraculous happening came and immediately recognised it as the body of the Apostle"<sup>16</sup>—(The Book of Duarte Barbosa-(1981-21 II. P. 125).

ii. *Killed with Lance by orders of King.*

This incident narrated by Barros is another version of the martyrdom which Mundadan has quoted. It says, "the Apostle was martyred with a lance while praying on a mountain about a league from the town, and this was done under the orders of the King of the Place."<sup>17</sup>

iii. *Killed with a Lance by Envious Brahmins*

Another historian relied by Mundadan is Diogo de Couto who has given yet another picture of the Apostle's martyrdom. According to Couto, "The envious brahmins who had been discredited before the King by virtue of St. Thomas, went to kill him. Hearing he was in the cave near the Little Mount, they stood near the slope of the mountain, where there was a narrow opening to let in a little light and looking through it, they found the Apostle on his knees with eyes closed in a rapture so profound that he appeared to be dead. The brahmins thrust a lance through the opening and wounded him mortally."<sup>18</sup>

The essence of all these tradition, stories, anecdotes and inferences converge to the conclusion that St. Thomas died a martyr to his faith at Mylapore.

**Date of Martyrdom December 21.**

The Malankara Orthodox Church calendar indicates that the Apostle was speared on December 19, 72 A.D. For three days St. Thomas languished before he succumbed on December 21, 72 A.D. The Church observes December 21 as the Apostle's Martyrdom Day.

According to the legendary Ramban Song (Thoma Parvam), "Mar Thoma, who had established the Way in several countries and regions of the earth, and whose laws were faithfully followed

16. Mundadan A.M. : History of Christianity in India Vol. I. Pp. 44-5.

17. *ibid* P. 45

18. *ibid* P.45-6

by the leaders and followers of the communities he had founded, was, in the early hours of the 3rd day of July 72, going on a journey and happened to pass by the Mount in Mylapore. Here stood a temple of Kali, and the priests of the temple, the bitter enemies of the Apostle, furiously issued forth from the temple and stopped the saint.

‘No man’ said they, ‘shall pass this way without worshipping at the shrine ; hence you come with us and worship the Goddess. If you do this, not only shall we let you pass this way unmolested but shall feed you sumptuously on delicacies.’

‘What ?’ replied Mar Thoma, ‘Am I to sell my soul for a morsel of rice, and worship the devil ? But if you insist I shall do your bidding and you shall see how your Goddess will run away from her shrine and the temple itself be destroyed by fire.’

‘Do not utter blasphemy’, cried the priests, and they forced him to go to the temple.

As the saint approached the temple, a splendrous light shone forth and Kali ran out of the temple and the temple itself was consumed by fire. Thereupon, the infuriated priests fell upon Mar Thoma like mad animals. And one of them taking a long spear thrust it cruelly into the heart of the Apostle. After doing this evil deed, they ran away from the place for fear of the people.

Mar Thoma then knelt on a stone and prayed. Angels on wings carried news of the tragedy to the king and worthy Bishop Poulose... three Naaliks before sunset, the great Mar Thoma alas, Passed away<sup>19</sup>.”

### **Tomb at Mylapore**

The Kerala tradition holds that Mylapore is the place where St. Thomas suffered martyrdom and was buried. The earliest available recorded reference to Mylapore is attributed to Pseudo-Sophronius (A.D. 7th Cy) ” who seems to be the first to indicate the place name “Calamina” where St. Thomas was martyred and buried. Isidore of Seville (A.D.636) and many others after him echo this tradition.”<sup>20</sup> Isidore wrote: “This Thomas preached the Gospel of Christ to the Parthians, the Medes, the Persians,

19. Kuriakose K.M. History of Christianity in India Source Materials-pp.43-44.

20. Mundadan A.M. History of Christianity in India. V of I. P: 56.

the Hyracanians, and the Bactrians, and to the Indians of the Oriental regions and sealing his preaching by his passion he died transfixed with a lance at Calamina, a city of India, and there was buried with honour.”<sup>21</sup> Historians identify Calamina with Mylapore near Madras.

Mar Solomon, a Nestorian Bishop of 13th Cy, Amr ibn Matta, a Christian Arab historian (1340), Nicolo De Conti (1425-30), a Venitian merchant from Italy, Syriac Document of 1504, Duarte Barbosa (1515)...all point to Mylapore as tomb of St. Thomas. Nicolo De Conti and Duart Barbosa had visited Mylapore and had recorded their findings.

Nicolo De Conti (1425-30) reported to Pope Eugene IV that he “arrived at a maritime city, which is named Malipur, situated in the Second Gulf beyond the Indus (Bay of Bengal). Here the body of St. Thomas lies honourably buried in a large and beautiful Church, it is worshipped (venerated) by heretics, who are called Nestorians, and inhabit this city to the number of a thousand.”<sup>22</sup>

Duarte Barbosa had visited the tomb in 1515. His account is as follows :

“Going yet further and leaving behind Charamandal and the lands, there is on the sea stand a city, which is right ancient and almost deserted, called Mylapur, which erewhile was very great and fair, pertaining to the Kingdom of Narasyngua. Here lies buried the body of the blessed Saint Thomas in a little church near the sea.....

.....Here (in Mylapur) lies buried the body of the Blessed saint Thomas very modestly in the church which his disciples and fellows built for him. The Moors and Heathen used to burn lights on it, each one claiming it as his own. The church is arranged in our fashion with crosses on the altar and on the summit of the vault, and a wooden grating, and peacocks as devices, but it is now very ruinous, and all around it covered with brushwood, and a poor Moor holds charge of it and begs alms for it, from which a lamp is kept burning at night, and on what is left they live. Some

21. A.E. Mendlycote : India and the Apostle Thomas—p 95. Quoted by K.M. Kuriakose (28) p 20.

22. Mundadan A.M : History of Christianity in India. Vol. I : p.143. Quoted from Medly cott. p. 95f.

Indian Christians go there on pilgrimage and carry away many relics, little earthen balls from the same tomb of the Blessed Saint Thomas, and also give alms to the aforesaid Moor, telling him to repair the said house.”<sup>23</sup>

There are still other records of historians namely (Hymns of) Ephraim (306-373), Gregory Nazianzen (329-390), Gregory of Tours (538-593), Marco Polo (1292), Odoric of Pordenone (1324) which state that the tomb of St. Thomas is in India, without identifying the place or city.

In view of the above references in successive centuries, historians have reasonably converged to the point that the tomb of St. Thomas is situated in Mylapore. To quote Mundadan : “In almost every century, we have one or more testimonies to the existence of the tomb in India. The burial place of St. Thomas the Apostle who according to the earliest documents worked and died in India was well-known at the time of St. John Chrysostom. During the centuries following, it is in India. By the 7th Cy. it is in Calamina or Qalimaya in India. In 12-14th centuries it is in Calamina or Myluph or in Meilan. From that time onwards there remains no more doubt that the site of the church and tomb of the Apostle Thomas and this is identified with our Mylapore. The fact remains that no other place has put forward any serious claim of possessing the grave of St. Thomas the Apostle”<sup>24</sup>.

### **Monastery of St. Thomas at Mylapore**

It has also been observed that a monastery existed at Mylapore in the third and fourth centuries. Z.M. Paret had pointed out a narrative in Fr. H. Hosten’s *Antiquities from San Thoma and Mylapore*<sup>25</sup> (Indian Antiquary 1928), according to which a monastery in the name of St. Thomas with a strength of 200 inmates possibly existed around 363 or before, near Black Island (South of Baith Katraye), in India, which itself was near the city of Milon, at a distance of six days’ journey from Maron. Milon is considered to be Mylapore. (Beth Katraye is, however, an island in

23. Cited in Mansel Longworth Dames, *The Book of Duarte Barbosa*. Vol II Pp 126-9 and A.C. Perumalil *The Apostles in India* pp. 72, 82 Quoted by M.K. Kuriakose: *History of Christianity in India - Source Materials*. P : 25.

24. Mundadan A.M. : *History of Christianity in India* Vol. I : p. 58.

25. Z.M. Paret : *Malankara Nazranikal*. Vol. I (1965) Pp : 369-70

Persian Gulf. It, therefore, could be contended that Black Island is in Persian Gulf).

### **Tomb excavated**

The tomb attracted the Portuguese in 1517 and in course of time they had established in Mylapore a colony of army personnel and others. It grew to a diocese in 1606, under the Roman Catholic Church. The Portuguese opened the tomb in 1523. "In the four hundred years between 1523 and 1903, the tomb in Mylapore was broken open at least four times for one reason or other. In 1893-96, the present Gothic Cathedral was built"<sup>26</sup> — the SAN THOME CATHEDRAL.

## **II. ACTS OF THOMAS**

ACTS OF THOMAS is an apocryphal book. Written in Syriac in the third century, it is the most original and ancient document on the missionary activities of St. Thomas in India although the description of the Apostle's activities are limited in outlook and nature. The book is also, considered as one of the "oldest and most idiomatic monuments of Syriac literature".

Bardesan of Edessa (154—222 A.D.) is believed to be the author of the Acts of Thomas. He was a fervent Christian and a historian in the court of the King of Syria, probably Abgar VIII. There he met a visiting Indian Mission and gathered from them the information about the missionary work of St. Thomas in India. This was the source of "Acts of Thomas". The book gained considerable reputation in Christian centres of the world as it contained information on the activities of the Apostle. It was also translated into Greek and thence into Latin in the third and fourth centuries. The Encyclopaedia Britanica recognises the book as an authoritative document on the early Christian Church of the East.

### **Missionary Activities**

The missionary labours of the Apostle in India are described in fourteen distinct ACTS in the book. Paret has reproduced in Malayalam these Acts in his 'Malankara Nazranikal'. A brief account is rendered here for the benefit of the readers. The First Act opens with a conclave of the Apostles of Christ in Jerusalem

26. Mundadan A.M. The History of Christianity in India. Vol. 1, P : 51

casting lots among themselves to apportion areas of the world for missionary work for each. In the process, India fell to the lot of JUDAS THOMAS, also called DIDYMUS, otherwise known as St. Thomas. The Apostle was unhappy with the lot and was reluctant to honour the assignment; but Christ intervened and sold him for three pounds of silver to Abanes, a merchant of Gondophornes, King of India. Abanes was at that time in Jerusalem in search of a skilful carpenter (architect) at the behest of King Gondophornes for purpose of constructing a palace for him. Soon they started sailing and reached a port called in Syriac, Sandaruk Mahosa. There they attended the marriage feast of the local King's daughter. Thereafter they continued their voyage to India. The Second Act describes the arrival of St. Thomas in the court of King Gondophornes and the activities of the Apostle in his kingdom. The King commissioned St. Thomas to build a palace for him. But the palace was not built for long. On enquiry the King was told by the Apostle that the palace was being built in heaven. Unconvinced, the King imprisoned the Apostle. While the Apostle was in prison, the King's brother Gad died and his soul was taken up into heaven where he beheld the palace built by the Apostle. He returned to earth and apprised the King of what he saw. Gondophornes, believing his brother, became penitent and freed the Apostle. St. Thomas then told the king about his mission and preached to him the Gospel of Christ. Consequently, King Gondophornes and his brother accepted the Gospel and became Christians. The Apostle continued his works in the kingdom. Various miracles worked by St. Thomas in the name of God and consequent acceptance of the new faith by many in the country are recounted in the next four Acts. According to Act Seven, the Apostle was invited by Sufir, General of King Mazdai and he left the Kingdom of Gondophornes after entrusting his flock in the hands of one Xantippus. Act Eight also gives an account of the miracles performed by the Apostle during his journey to the capital of the Kingdom of King Mazdai and how he cast off the evil spirits which possessed the General's wife and daughter. Ninth Tenth and Eleventh Acts narrate the conversion of Mygdonia, the wife of the Chief Minister Charisius and Queen Tertia. Imprisonment and persecution of the Apostle by the enraged King following his wife's conversion, are described in the Twelfth Act. While the Apostle was in prison Queen Tertia and Prince Vissan came

to him one night. St. Thomas miraculously came out of the prison and baptised them. These events form the subject of Act Thirteen.

### **Martyrdom**

The concluding Fourteenth Act describes the martyrdom of St. Thomas. King Mazdai who was very disgusted with the disruption of his family life, held a mock trial of the Apostle and finally ordered that he may be speared to death. General Sufir and Prince Vissan, who had accompanied the Apostle, took the body and buried him in a sepulchre.

### **Eclipse of the Church in Punjab**

About the growth of the infant Church in Punjab, entrusted to the care of Xantippus by St. Thomas, there is absolutely no reference any where in the history of Punjab either traditionally or legendary. In the circumstances, the Church is believed to have perished along with the Indo-Parthian kingdom consequent on its occupation by the Kushans.

Departing from Punjab, St. Thomas is next seen in the country of Mazdai. When did St. Thomas leave Punjab? Where did he go? Which kingdom did Mazdai rule? History does not give out any clue to these queries. The author of Acts simply states that the Apostle travelled all over India without giving any further details. St. Thomas next appears in Kerala. Here is a gap, a missing link, in the continuity of the gospel work of St. Thomas in chronological terms.

### **An Appraisal of the Acts of Thomas**

The Acts of Thomas was originally well received in the Christian centres, but it was later discredited on grounds of inaccurate references to characters, places and time and because of agnostic tendencies. Consequently, it came to be considered apocryphal in character and mythological in estimation. The criticisms arose because of doubts on the possibility of either a voyage by sea or travel by land to India and the historical identity of King Gondophornes in regard to his kingdom and the time of his rule; improbable nature of the stories; un-Indian names of the characters; non-specification of the places St. Thomas visited, especially the place of his martyrdom. Viewed in this light, the Acts of Thomas has been assessed as a work of fiction, imagination

and invention and hence mythical and legendary. Further, there has not come to light any corroborating factor either historical or literary, to support and fortify descriptions in the Acts. However, a few circumstantial evidences testify the possibility of a journey by sea to India and also provide historical proof of the king by the name of Gondophornes. In retrospect, even if the stories of miracles in the Acts are discounted, the importance of Acts has to be reckoned as one of the earliest original documents throwing light on the missionary journey of St. Thomas to India and his martyrdom there.

### **Trade routes**

There were regular over-land and sea routes used by traders from India, Syria and Egypt since the time of Chandra Gupta Maurya and Seleucus in Syria. India was, therefore, not unknown to the traders either in Syria or Jerusalem and certainly there was distinct possibility that St. Thomas could have come in a trading vessel from the port of Persian Gulf to an Indian Port Pattala and thence travelled to the Court of King Gondophornes by river and land.

### **King Gondophornes of Indo-Parthian Kingdom<sup>27</sup>**

King Gondophornes remained a mythical figure until the archeological excavations carried out in Takshashila (Taxila) in the nineteenth century revealed his identity. Coins and the Takt-i-bahi stone with inscriptions of King Gondophornes and other kings preceding him were unearthed during the excavation. These findings have enabled historians to trace the line of King Gondophornes to the Indo-Parthian dynasty which ruled an area comprising Afghanistan, Seistan, Sind, Punjab and the North Western Frontier Province from 95 B.C. to 50 A.D.

The Indo-Parthian dynasty was apparently established by Maues when he attained power in the Western Punjab within the domain of the Parthian King Mithradates I. There were two main lines of Indo-Parthian princes: one ruled in Seistan while the other governed the Western Punjab of the Kingdom of Taxila. King Gondophornes was fourth in the line of succession of King Maues in the order Maues, Azes I, Azeles (Azes II), Gondophornes.

27. Vincent Smith : Early History of India. p : 267.

28. Paret Malankara Nazranikal : Vol. I, pp : 279-341.

Gondophornes succeeded Azes II about 20 A.D. He must have been an able king for he expanded his domain by conquering Sind and Arachosia and freed himself from the Parthian control. In 48 A.D., he died; and his kingdom was divided into two. His nephew Abdagases ruled Western Punjab which was conquered and annexed later by the Kushan King Kadphises I about 50 A.D. With the Kushan occupation, the Indo-Parthian dynasty vanished from history.

The historical identity of King Gondophornes and his brother Gad was established by numismatic evidences in 1834. J.N. Farquahar in his study, "The Apostle Thomas in South India" throws light on King Gondophornes, Gad and Habban in the following words :

"(a) about 1834 an English scholar named Masson found a coin in Afghanistan bearing the name of Gondophores; and it became clear that King Gudnaphur was a historical king. Later, (b) an inscription was found which fixed his approximate date, and it became clear that he was a contemporary of the Apostle. Still later (c) other coins were found on which Gondophores and Guda are together named as viceroys under the suzerainty of Orthagnes. These date from the years before the accession of Gondophores to the throne; and they justify us in regarding Gad the king's brother of the Acts as a historical person. Finally, (d) it was pointed out in my former paper that in the phrase, "the merchant of King Gudnaphur" we have another historical reference. The minister in charge of the king's trade was amongst important officials in early India and the great position which Habban occupied explains his visit to Alexandria and his bold invitation to Thomas to evangelize the Punjab. It also enables us to understand the selection of Tamil India as the Apostle's field, when the Punjab became impossible, and the fine strategy which marks his work in the South."<sup>28</sup>

In view of the archaeological, numismatic and other documentary evidences, it would not be illogical to infer that King Godophornes was an Indo-Parthian King who ruled over Western Punjab during 20-48 A.D. and that St. Thomas could have visited the King.

28. J. N Farquahar : The Apostle Thomas in India according to the Acts of Thomas. Edited by Dr. Jacob Vellian (1972) pp 72-73

Sir John Marshal has indicated that St. Thomas visited King Gondophornes in 40 A.D.<sup>29</sup>.

Z.M. Paret, however, differs. According to him, the King Gondophornes was a South Indian King and the activities of St. Thomas narrated in the Acts of Thomas since his coming to his court took place in Kerala<sup>30</sup>.

### **Missionary Journeys of St. Thomas**

On a review of the descriptions in the Acts and the strong Kerala tradition, historians hold that St. Thomas undertook two journeys to India. There is reference to a third journey also. St. Thomas began his first journey from Jerusalem to the Kingdom of King Gondophornes depicted in the Acts from where he returned after some time to Jerusalem. In his second journey, he proceeded from Jerusalem to Kerala, touching Socotra, the island in Arabian Sea. According to another view, St. Thomas, leaving Kerala, came to the island of Bahrein where he suffered martyrdom.

### **First Journey**

Three divergent views have been advanced by historians about the route which St. Thomas may have taken in his journey to the kingdom of King Gondophornes—two sea-routes and a land route. Historians A. Mingana<sup>31</sup>, A.E. Medlycott<sup>32</sup>, and Z.M. Paret<sup>33</sup> hold that St. Thomas came to Socotra touching Edessa, Port Basra in the Persian Gulf and that it was from Socotra that the Apostle proceeded by ship to Patala the Indus river port and thence to Taxila, the capital of King Gondophornes.

Paret however strikes a slight departure in this sea-route in the sense that St. Thomas sailed direct to Muziris from Socotra<sup>34</sup>. According to him, the port of Sandruk described in the Acts of St. Thomas was in Socotra and all the other anecdotes described in the Acts occurred in Kerala and that he never returned to Jerusalem but spent the rest of his life there till his martyrdom at Mylapore.

There are other historians who hold the view that St. Thomas

29. Sir John Marshal : A Guide to Taxila (1960)

30. Z.M. Paret : Malankara Nazranikal Vol. I. pp : 279-341

31. Early Spread of Christianity pp. 1-8

32. Thomas Apostle in India

33. Malankara Nazranikal. Vol. I

34. Z.M. Paret : Malankara Nazranikal. Vol. I. pp. 303, 312

took a different sea-route to reach the court of Gondophornes. J.N. Furquahar<sup>35</sup> upholds that St. Thomas left Jerusalem to the Egyptian port of Alexandria in view of the Jews living in concentration there. There he met Habban, the emissary of King Gondophornes. Both travelled down the river Nile to Andropolis and trekking over-land reached the Red-Sea port of Mios Hormis. At this port, they caught a trading vessel and reached the Indus River port of Patala in the North Western coast of India from where they sailed up-stream to Attock and from there travelled by land to Taxila, the capital of King Gondophornes. Farquahar has equated Andropolis with Sandaruk Mahosa, depicted by Bardessan. Subsequently, with the invasion of Kushans, the Apostle left the Kingdom of Gondophornes and sailed in a ship bound for Alexandria. On the way, he landed at Socotra, preached there and established a Church.

In contrast to other historians, P.V. Mathew points out that St. Thomas took a land route to Taxila<sup>36</sup>. According to him, St. Thomas, proceeding from Jerusalem reached Edessa along with Adai, Thaddai and Xantippus. After deputing Adai to King Abgar, he continued preaching in Media, a province in Parthian Empire and came to its prosperous provincial capital Urumiya, on the shores of Lake Urumiya. It was also the birth place of Zoraster and consequently, a pilgrimage centre to the Persians as a whole. Here Habban met the Apostle, put him in a vessel which took them across the Caspian Sea to its eastern port of Sandaruk Mahosa, described in the Acts. From this city, they travelled along the route which Alexander, the Great, took across Samarkhand and reached Taxila, the capital of the Kingdom of Gondophornes.

## Second Journey

Some historians<sup>37</sup> point out that following the invasion of Kushans, St. Thomas left the Kingdom of Gondophornes caught a

35. Farquahar J. N. : Professor of Competitive Religion in Manchester University. Published two articles in John Rhyland Library Bulletin. St. Thomas in India (1926). St. Thomas in S. India (1927) Reprint 1972 by Jacob Vellian

36. Mathew P.V. 1. Mar Thoma and Mar Mani (Malayalam). A Reader in Early Christianity and Manichianism in India (1977) P : 60. 2. Sugandha Nadu, P : 84

37. Farquahar J. N. : The Apostle Thomas in S. India P. 47. 2. E.M. Philipose. pp. 80-111, 3. Z.M. Paret: Mal. Nz. : Vol. I pp. 295

trading vessel bound for Alexandria and disembarked at Socotra where he had gathered many in Christ. This accounts for the presence of Christians in Socotra in the early centuries. Subsequently, he continued his voyage from Socotra to India (Medlycot and Farquahar) availing the South Western Monsoon beginning in June 52 A.D. This time he reached Muziris in Kerala.

An entirely different view is put forward by P.V. Mathew in his books *Mar Thoma, Al-Thom and Sugandha Naadu*. According to him, the Apostle was taken up in clouds from the kingdom of Gondophornes to Jerusalem at the time of the assumption of St. Mary in A.D. 48<sup>38</sup> (Chapter 7). This story is given in the *Doctrines of Apostles* also. Later, he left Jerusalem for India via Babylon. Reaching Petra in Jordan and crossing the Bay of Agba and Red Sea, he came to Socotra<sup>39</sup>. From Socotra, the Apostle proceeded to and landed in Muziris in A.D. 69.

### Relics of St. Thomas

The sacred relics of the Apostle were translated to Edessa by a Syrian merchant called 'Khabin'<sup>40</sup>. Historians hold different dates about the removal of relics from the tomb at Mylapore. J.N. Farquahar holds it at 165 A.D.<sup>41</sup>. But Rufus, the Church historian, who lived in Edessa and wrote the chronicles of Edessa contend that it was in 394 A.D. that they were transferred to Edessa<sup>42</sup>.

Bar Habraeus has also given an account of the translation of the relics to Edessa in his work *Ousar Rossae*. To quote from the book : "Adai (Thaddeus), the chief of the 70 evangelists, is the twin brother of St. Thomas and hence was called the 'twin',...St. Thomas, 130 years after his death, appeared to Habban, the grandson of Habban the merchant, one night in a dream and told him that he was duty-bound to take his body and bury it besides his brother's : it was his grandfather Habban who had brought

38. Mathew P. V. : *Sugandha Nadu* : P. 45 : He cites the reference from *Legends of our Lady Mary-by Budge* P. 165

39. Mathew P. V. : *Sugandha Naadu* (1984) P : 113

40. Keay F.E. : *A History of the Syrian Church in India* P : 10

41. Farquahar : *Apostle Thomas in India*.

42. George Milne Rae : *The Syrian Church in India*. "They brought the coffin of Mar Thomas the Apostle to his great temple in the days of Mar Cyrus, the Bishop. Notes to Chapter, 4.

him to India and hence he was duty bound to bring him back to Urhai (Edessa) beside his brother Adai (Thaddeus). Immediately, he took the holy body of the Apostle to Edessa, and placed it beside Addai's grave, where he built a Church"<sup>43</sup>.

According to George Mark Moraes, "some time in the second century the sacred relics or a part thereof were transferred to Edessa by a Syrian merchant a crowning proof of the martyrdom of the Saint at Mylapore. For no other place in India claims the honour of possessing his tomb. St. Ephraim (A.D. 373) had surely the translation of the relics in mind when he wrote in one of his hymns :

"Whence is thy origin, O ! Thomas that so illustrious thou shouldst become. A merchant has conveyed thy bones, a (priest) Pontiff has made a celebration for thee; and a king has erected a shrine (for thee)".

(PLACID "Thomas in Syriac writings and Liturgies")

"In his Carmena Nisibina XLII St. Ephraim gives us the precise information that it was only a part of the head of the Apostle that was brought to Edessa. In his hymn, he describes the devil as howling because the relic has come to the city :

"The devil howled; into what land shall I fly from the just ? I stirred up death to slay the Apostles that by their death I may escape their blows. But now I am struck still harder; the Apostle whom I slew in India has overtaken me in Edessa. Here and there he remains all himself; thither I went and there was he; here and there I found him and I grieved."

(SCHUSTER : "A note on St; Thomas and his feasts.)<sup>44</sup>

The relics were considered to have been brought to Edessa on 3rd July and which date, therefore, is observed as St. Thomas Day in Syria. The Orthodox Church in India also observes the 3rd July in memory of the event.

At Edessa, the relics were first deposited in a small church in 354 A.D., but in 394 A.D. were shifted to a bigger church at Edessa

43. Bar Hebraeus : Ousar Rosse, Quoted and translated in Malayalam by Fr. Abraham Konat, in Malankara Sabha. Vol. 29. Issue 10, 1974 October. pp. 287.

44. George Mark Moraes : "A History of Christianity in India" pp. 42-43.

built in the Apostle's name<sup>45</sup>. In 1142, Edessa was captured by Zenghi the Emir of Mosul and the church was burnt and destroyed. The relics were, however, salvaged. To-day, both the Roman Catholic Church and the Greek Orthodox Church claim the possession of the relics. According to the Roman Catholic Church, the relics were taken to Chieos in the Aegean Sea in 1143 and thence to Ortona in Italy in 1258 where it still remains. In 1950, the Roman Catholic bishops of Kerala tried in vain to bring them to Kerala.<sup>46</sup>

The Greek Orthodox Church, on the other hand, claim that the complete skull of the Apostle is deposited in a case in the monastery in Patmos. It is the custom of the inmates of this monastery to hold a procession in the city every year on the Tuesday following the Easter Sunday carrying the relics of saints including the skull of St. Thomas.<sup>47</sup>

The Orthodox Church of Georgia also make a valiant claim of possession of the head of St. Thomas. In 1982, Ilia II, Catholicos-Patriarch of All Georgia greeted the Catholicos of Malankara Orthodox Church as follows: "With special feelings of love I greet you on behalf of the Georgian people and our Apostolic Church because the head of St. Thomas, the enlightener of your country, is preserved in Georgia in the Sioni-Patriarchal Cathedral."<sup>48</sup>

The Syrian Orthodox Church too had, it appears, still some portion of the relics left with them for. they discovered a casket of relics at the top of a pillar close to the chancel of the church of St. Thomas at Mosul on August 31, 1964, while the church was being repaired. It is thought that when the church was originally built and dedicated in the name of the Apostle, a portion of the Saint's relics was obtained from Edessa and placed there as has been the practice on such occasions.

His Holiness Moran Mar Baselios Ougen I, Catholicos of the East, while on a visit to the Orthodox Church in Syria in March, 1965, obtained a portion of the holy relics from Mar Severios

45. Delhi Orthodox Syrian Church Souvenir 1965.

46. Brown LW: The Indian Christians of St. Thomas. pp. 58.

47. Z.M. Paret : The Story of Mar Thoma (1981) pp. 225.

48. Ilia II-Felicitation—Catholicate Saphthathi Souvenir 1982.

Saccai, Metropolitan of Mosul. On Tuesday March 9, 1965 the holy relic was deposited with all solemnity in the Catholicate Chapel at Devalokam, Kottayam.

### **St. Thomas Tomb at Mylapore**

In course of time, the shrine of St. Thomas became a revered pilgrimage centre. With the pilgrims to the shrine at Mylapore, there is a custom which echoes the story of King Mazdai carrying a bit of the earth from the tomb. The pilgrims, when they return, take with them a pinch of sand from the tomb of the Saint which serve as a cure for all illness. This is a time-honoured custom. Marco Polo, the first European traveller, who visited the tomb in 1292, himself carried a bit of the earth from the site of the tomb as was the practice and it helped him.

### **Extraneous Records**

Apart from the local records on the tradition regarding the origin of the establishment of the Church by St. Thomas in Malabar, extraneous documents dating from the third century are extant which show that there existed a big Christian Church at least as early as the latter half of the second century. Demetrius, Bishop of Alexandria, is thought to have sent his disciple Pantaenus who presided over the Alexandrian Theological School to India in response to a request from the people of India in 190 A.D. Eusebius has mentioned that Pantaenus visited India where he saw not only a large body of Christians in Malabar, but even a gospel of St. Mathew in Hebrew.<sup>49</sup> St. Jerome (A.D. 340-420) also has confirmed Pantaenus's visit to India; the date ascribed is 190 A.D.

### **Writings of Church Fathers**

There are also references to St. Thomas, as the Apostle of India, in the writings of other early Church Fathers. Hippolytus who died a martyr during the reign of the Roman Emperor Sirtus (225-235) has recorded that "The Apostle Thomas after having preached the gospel to the Parthians, Medes, Persians suffered martyrdom at Codamina, a town of India."<sup>50</sup> In the *Doctrines of the Apostles* (pp. 33), a Syriac document written in Edessa, about

49. Mundadan A.M. : *History of Christianity in India*, Vol. I – P. 65.

50. Dorotheus, quoted in E. Kenneth : *St. Thomas the Apostle of India* (1892) op. cit. pp. 9.

250 A.D. and compiled by Cureton, it is given, "India and all its countries and those bordering it even to the farthest sea, received the Apostle's hand of priesthood from Judas Thomas, who was guide and ruler in the church which he built there and ministered there"<sup>51</sup>. It also refers to letters received in Edessa from Judas Thomas from India read in the churches.<sup>52</sup> St. Jhon Chrysostom (347-407) says that the tomb of St. Thomas was as much venerated in the East as that of St. Peter in Rome. St. Gregory Nazianzen (370-390) referred to St. Thomas as the Apostle of India, in his oration against the Arians, delivered at Constantinople: "Granting that Judae was the country of Peter, what has Paul in common with the Gentiles, Luke with Achaea, Andrew with Ephesus, Thomas with India, Mark with Italy or the rest."<sup>53</sup> St. Jerome (342-400) speaks of the missions of St. Thomas in India as a fact universally known and believed in his time. "He wrote, "He (Jesus) dwelt in all places; with Thomas in India, with Peter in Rome, with Paul in Illyricum, with Titus in Crete, with Andrew in Achaia,..."

### Travellers' records

Cosmas, a merchant of Alexandria known as Indicopleustus, who became a monk later, visited India in 552 A.D. and found in the land called Male, where the pepper grows, a church of Christians with clergy and congregation of believers. According to him the priests were ordained in Persia. St. Isidore of Seville in Spain (689) says, "Thomas preached the Gospel of Christ to the Parthians, Medes, the Presians, and to the Indians of the Oriental origin and penetrating the inner-most regions and sealing the preaching by his passion and he died transfixed with a lance at Calamina, a city of India and there was buried with honour"<sup>54</sup>.

Further in the Anglo Saxon Chronicle, we find that in the year 883, "Sigheln and Athelstan conveyed to Rome the alms which King Alfred had vowed to send thither and also to India to St. Thomas and St. Bartholomai when the English were encamped against the enemy army (Danes) at London"<sup>55</sup>.

51. William G. Young: Handbook of Source Materials (24) pp. 26.

52. *ibid.* (212) pp. 162.

53. Nicene Post-Nicene Fathers-Vol. III. pp. 3328 (xi).

54. A.C. Perumalil : "Apostle In India" page 49

55. Thomp. "The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle" Vol. II page 66

Moraes, referring to twelfth century Chronicles, says that Sigheln was none else than Bishop Sigelinus of Sherborne. He quotes William Malmesbury (1114-1123) as follows.

“Beyond the sea, to Rome and to St. Thomas in India, he (Alfred) sent many gifts. The legate employed for this purpose was Sigelinus, the Bishop of Sherborne, who with great success arrived in India and which everyone at this age (i.e. almost two centuries before Marco Polo and John of Monte Carvino and other travellers) wonders. Returning thence he brought back exotic gems and aromatic liquors which the land there produces”.<sup>56</sup>

Marco Polo the reknowned Venitian traveller came to Mylapore in 1292 A.D. His observations run as follows :

“The Christians who thither on pilgrimages gather some of the soil from the place where the Saint was killed, and this soil they take away then to their countries. Now, if anyone falls ill of a tertian or a quartan ague, or of any other fever of the kind, they give him a potion made with this soil; and as soon as the sick man has drunk it, he is well again. And this is true of all the sick who thus drink this soil. Messr Marco himself brought some of this soil to Venice, and cured many people with it. And you must know that it is a red soil”.<sup>57</sup>

There are many more writers of the East and the West of the early centuries who confirm the existence of the Church in Malabar established by St. Thomas and his martyrdom in Mylapore. Further, Christians of the East and the West alike come to Mylapore to offer their respect and gifts to the saint.

### **St. Thomas Christians**

It will but be appropriate to observe here that St. Thomas spent twenty years from 52 A.D. to 72 A.D. in South India, for the most part thereof in Kerala on his Gospel mission. This is a long stretch of period in any one's adult life. One develops a personal attachment and commitment to the land and its people with such long association. No wonder, the Christians in Kerala do not have any doubt and hesitation in holding the time-

56. George Mark Moraes.—“A History of Christianiy n India” page 51

57. L.F. Benedetto : “The Travels of Marco Polo. Translated by Prof: Aldo Ricci P.310,

honoured tradition that St. Thomas is their founder Father. Consequently, they were known as St. Thomas Christians. The community of St. Thomas Christians also came to be called Malankara Church or Malabar Church with reference to its geographical identity.

Regarding the apostolate of St. Thomas in India, Mundadan concludes: "The South Indian claim to the apostolate of St. Thomas is supported by two monuments; the community of St. Thomas Christians with their living tradition and the tomb of Mylapore which is definitely identified as the burial place of St. Thomas at least from the 14th century onwards. As it has already been pointed out, these considerations have forced a number of scholars to postulate an argument of convergence in favour of the following conclusion; St. Thomas, the Apostle, preached the Gospel in South India and the origin of Indian Christians, at least initially, is to be attributed to this preaching."<sup>58</sup>

To conclude, therefore, there is no rival tradition for the origin of Christianity in Kerala other than that attributed to St. Thomas, one of the twelve Apostles of Christ; secondly, no other place in the world other than Mylapore in Madras claims to have the tomb of St. Thomas and thirdly historians of repute outside India testify to the Indian Apostolate of St. Thomas, from early centuries. Above all, therefore, St. Thomas stands as the founder of Christianity in India and as the Apostle of the East.

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58. Mundadan, A.M. : History of Christianity in India Vol.1 P : 61.

## CHAPTER TWO

# DEVELOPMENTS OF THE INDIGENOUS CHURCH

The Church established by St. Thomas waxed in strength in the succeeding centuries. The circumstances which prevailed in Kerala in the early centuries helped the members of the Church to obtain a superior niche in the social edifice in Kerala. The growth of the Church, however, must largely be attributed to the spirit of toleration evinced by the local rulers and the non-Christian communities of the land. The structure of the society was also instrumental in carving out an esteemed position for Christianity.

### Political Climate — Sangam Age

At the time of the arrival of St. Thomas, the present-day Kerala was part of a larger unit of Tamilakam and comprised of five distinct principalities of *Venad* (Trivandrum and Quilon (Part) Districts), *Kuttanad* (Ernakulam, Alleppy, Kottayam and Quilon (Part) Districts), *Kudanad* (Trichur and Palghat Districts) *Puzhinad* (Cannannore and Kozhikode Districts) and *Karkanad* (Wayanad and Kudallore Districts). The first five centuries of Kerala history is known as the Sangam age. "Politically, the land of Kerala was ruled in the early Sangam age mainly by Ays in the South, rulers of Ezhimala in the North and the Cheras in the region lying between".<sup>1</sup>

In the first two centuries of Christian era, Kerala was ruled by Brahmins. Subsequently, Perumals or Kings were raised by them to rule the country. V. Nagam Aiya writes "While the armed Brahmins were ruling the land, it is said disputes arose and injustice ensued; so the Brahmins assembled at Tirunavoy and resolved to appoint a king...The first choice fell on a "Keya Perumal" of Keyapuram in the country east of Ghats...He was installed as the first of the Perumals in 216 A.D..."

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1. Sreedhara Menon A. : 'A Survey of Kerala History'. pp. 65.

“There were twenty-five Perumals in all, who ruled for 212 years i.e. from 216 A.D. to 428 A.D...The first and last Perumals bear one common name, Cheraman Perumal, though they are especially known as Cheraman Keralan and Bhaskara Ravi Varma ...According to other accounts, Cheraman Perumal was more a title than a name and was applied to all the Perumals alike.”<sup>2</sup>

The Cheras in course of time established their superiority over the other kingdoms and conquered them. According to Sreedhara Menon, “It was during his (Utiyan Cheralatan) reign that the Cheras started on their career of northward and eastward expansion starting from their original home in Kuttanad.”<sup>3</sup> The members of royal family took up residence in different places of the extensive empire and administered the localities of their choice on behalf of the reigning sovereign as heir-apparents.

### **Post Sangam Period**

During the next three centuries, i.e. from sixth to eighth, Kerala came under foreign rule of Kalabhras and other South Indian powers like the Chalukyas, Pallavas, Pandyas and Rashtra Kutas. The Cheras, however, regained their authority about 800 A.D. under Kula Sekhara Varman. The Kulasekhara kings ruled over Kerala from 800 to 1102 A.D. with Thiruvanchikulam or Mahodayapuram as their capital. The kings were popularly called as ‘CHERAMAN PERUMALS’.

### **Religion**

“The people of ancient Kerala followed Dravidian practices which were not based on any particular religious philosophy. Their way of life was an incongruous mixture of primitive rites and practices...While the people were thus following Dravidian practices of worship, the religions from the north, viz Jainism, Buddhism and Brahminism entered Kerala in the centuries prior to the beginning of the Christian Era...In course of time all these three religions made steady progress within the framework of a free and open society and left their indelible impress on Kerala culture.”<sup>4</sup>

2. Nagam Aiya V. : State Manual 1906 pp. 224.

3. Sreedhara Menon A : ‘A Survey of Kerala History’ pp. 65.

4. *ibid*-- pp. 87-88

### **Aryanisation**

The Aryanisation of Kerala was a slow but steady process which was effected in a subtle manner “not by the force of arms, but by the arts of peace”. It ended in the final submission of local Dravidian races to the “superior intelligence and administrative skill of the Brahmins from the North”. The question of the date of the Aryan immigration into Kerala and its impact on social life is a much discussed one. “Logan has expressed the view that the Vedic Brahmins proper must have come to Malabar only in the early years of the 8th century A.D...The consensus of opinion of scholars is that the process of the Aryanisation of the Deccan and South India began about 1000 B.C. and it reached a decisive stage by the time of Katyayana (4th century B.C.). Vedic sacrifices were conducted by Brahmin priests under the patronage of the Chera rulers...Thus the Sangam works testify to the intrusion of Aryan ideas and practices into Kerala in the early centuries of Christian Era... It may be assumed that the first batch of Aryan immigrants came to Kerala in the 3rd Century B.C. itself immediately following the advent of the Jains and Budhists”.<sup>5</sup>

### **Caste System on the Aryan Ideology of Chaturvarna**

“The caste System was foisted on a casteless society by the Aryan immigrants who worked with extra-ordinary missionary zeal in spreading the Aryan ideology based on the primacy of Chaturvarna. The scholars and men of letters among the immigrant Brahmins who could impress the local rulers by their superior intelligence and scholarship succeeded in persuading the latter to conduct Yagas or sacrifices after the Vedic fashion for the sake of their own long life and prosperity. Having thus got the moral support and allegiance of the rulers, they won over the rich merchants to their side by throwing open to them the trade routes and commercial centres of North India. The princely and merchant classes who were thus brought within the sphere of Aryan influence were made to believe that they constituted two superior castes, the former the ruling caste (Kshatriyas) and the latter the trading caste (Vaishyas). Eventually these castes began to look upon their kinsmen who followed other occupations as inferior to them in the social scale. The Brahmins also succeeded in creating in the minds of these two castes a feeling

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5. *ibid* : pp. 94-95.

that the former were superior to the latter and as such deserved the allegiance of all classes of people. Even in the later Sangam age the protection of the Brahmins is seen to have been held up as a great virtue of the rulers. At the same time the toiling classes like the Panas, the Vetas, the Kuravas etc who had occupied a high status in society in the early Sangam age came to be looked upon as low castes''<sup>6</sup>. The Brahmins, thus, were the dictators and custodians of religion and formed the highest niche in society.

The Nairs were the next major community, who constituted the defence and civil services of the State. The Brahmins and Nairs have thus been the main communities of early Kerala. The rest of the population comprised of farmers, artisans and other working classes who were considered as out castes.

The society was caste-ridden. Each caste used to keep measured distance from one another, wherever they met; for example, a Nair had to stand at arms-length from a Namboothiri. In the manner of speech and gestures as well and even in right of way, each member followed an unwritten code of caste-conduct. The Brahmins and Nairs enjoyed numerous powers, privileges and pre-requisites in the society. Their superiority in the society was conceded by other lower castes.

The Christianised Brahmins and Nairs retained their prerequisites even after change of religion. They continued to preserve their customs and habits. This continuity helped them to hold their high status in society. Christianity thus took roots in a caste-ridden society.

### Religious Harmony

In spite of the predominance of Hindu religion and culture Kerala under the Kulasekhara was free from inter-religious conflict of a sectarian nature. The Chera emperors followed a liberal policy of religious toleration as is evidenced by their grants to the Christians, the Jews etc. Though Buddhism and Jainism were fast declining owing to lack of patronage they still retained their hold on sections of the community. The religious outlook of the people was so eclectic that no religion was considered by any section of the com-

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<sup>6</sup> ibid : pp. 97.

munity as inferior to the other. The Hindus who constituted the majority of the population gave donations to the temples of other religions as well. The religious institution of all non-Hindu faiths, Buddhist, Jain, Christian and Muslim were referred to as Pallis with great respect. Thus the picture of religious life in the Kulasekhara age is one of understanding and harmony in the relations between the followers of different religious faiths”<sup>7</sup>.

In fact, the political liberalism, the cosmopolitan impact, the religious tolerance evinced by the rulers as well as the contemporary society, the receptivity of the higher strata of the society—all these factors contributed to the progressive growth of Christian faith in the early centuries in the land of Kerala.

### **Immigrants : Cana Thoma 345**

That which strengthened Christianity was the immigration of Syrians from Mesopotamia to the port of Muziris in 345 A.D. It was an epoch making event. According to the Kerala tradition Mar Joseph, Bishop of Edessa, had a dream in which he saw the Church of India as a flock of sheep without a shepherd. The bishop informed the Catholicos Mar Simeon Bar Sleeba of his dream who sent for Thoma of Cana near Baghdad, a trading merchant. Consequently, a crowd of four hundred Syrians comprising of Mar Joseph, Bishop of Edessa, priests, deacons, men, women and children from Jerusalem, Baghdad and Nineveh (Mosul) set out for Malabar, and landed in the port of Muziris. A reference to this story is found in a letter attributed to Mar Thoma IV, written in 1721. This is available in A. Mingana's "The Early Spread of Christianity in Asia and the Far East", which runs like this:

“From this date (i.e. St. Thomas's death) the faithful diminished little by little in our country. At that time, St. Thomas appeared in a vision to the Metropolitan of the town of Edessa and said to him: 'Wilt thou not help India?' and he also appeared to Abgar King of Edessa, who was the King of the Syrians; and then by order of the King and the bishop three hundred and thirty-six families composed of children and grown-up people, clerics, men and women, came to India under the leadership of Thomas the Cananite, from Canan, which is Jerusalem. All these sailed in

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7. *ibid* : pp. 154.

the sea and entered Coringalore, our country. They inhabited it by special permission from the King Shiramon-Pirumal who was ruling India at that time. All this took place in 345 A.D. From that time, the Church of our country spread in all directions, to the number of seventy-two churches.”<sup>8</sup>

### **Sapor’s Persecution**

Most of the immigrants led by Cana Thoma were victims of persecution unleashed by King Sapor II who ruled over Persia for seventy years from 309 to 379 A.D. Sir Percy Sykes gives a brief account of the reasons and extent of the persecution. “The fact that Christianity became the official religion of the Roman Empire under Constantine was undoubtedly the main cause of the hostility shown to the members of the Eastern Church by Shapur, a hostility which was increased by Constantine’s somewhat tactless assumption of a protecting interest.

“The first order issued against the Christians was that they should pay double taxes as their contribution to the cost of the war in place of personal services. Mar Shimum, the Catholicus, who was required to collect the money, foolishly refused, on the two-fold grounds that the people were too poor and that a bishop was not a tax-collector. He was arrested with many of his colleagues; and on Good Friday 339 A.D., Mar Shimum, five bishops and one hundred priests were executed at Susa, the ancient capital of forgotten Elam. The persecution thus initiated was continued by massacres and the destruction of churches for full forty years. Monks and nuns, especially, being subject to pitiless persecution, because they conspicuously violated the sane tenets of Zoroastrianism.”<sup>9</sup>

### **Cana Thoma and the Perumal**

Cana Thoma and the immigrants are thought to have “arrived in a ship at a place called Carnellur on the 7th day of March”<sup>10</sup>. The port of Muziris is identified with Carnellur or Kodungallur. The ruling Perumal of the land welcomed Cana Thoma and was impressed of the latter’s remarkable bearing and wealthy

8. Firth C.B. : *An Introduction to Indian Church History*. pp. 29.

9. Brigadier General Sir Percy Sykes: ‘*History of Persia*’ Vol: I Chapter XXXVII: Pp. 415.

10. Keay F.E. : *A History of the Syrian Church in India*. pp. 19.

following. No doubt Thoma gained the confidence of the Perumal. In the words of P. Thomas: "The standing of Cana Thoma with the Perumal was very high. His vast resources and personal ability won for him many honours from the Perumal. He was a trusted adviser of the Perumal. In all commercial matters, his counsel was supreme and he was the virtual director of the commercial policy of the monarch. He was given the title of Perum Chetty or Great Merchant: because of the splendour of his princely house-hold, Thoma and his heirs were also known as Ravi Kartan (Lord Sun) or in common parlance Iravi Kortan"<sup>11</sup>. In appreciation, the Perumal allotted a suburb of Muziris which came to be called MAHADEVAR PATTANAM (The City of Great God).

### *Canai Thomman Chepped*

The privileges which Cana Thoma and the Christians gained were confirmed in ROYAL CHARTER in three copper plates, known as CHEPPED. They were in the possession of the Christians till the sixteenth century and were handed over by the ruling Metropolitan Mar Jacob to the Portuguese Factor at Cochin for safe custody. The Malabar Christians of Thevalakara in 1599 complained to Archbishop Menezes about the loss of the Cranganore Plates which it is believed meant those given to Thomas, the merchant, and Francis Roz, Bishop of Cranganore, writing in 1604 says, "The last emperor of Malabar called Xaraman Perumal was the one who gave land for a church and a settlement to the St. Thomas Christians and great privileges, as is seen from their *Ollas*, the copper original of which was taken to Portugal by the Religious of St. Francis, a copy of them remaining there. This Perumal," he adds, "died on 1st March 1258 years ago. (This would be in 346 A.D.) The Jesuit Father Hosten, believed that the Plates, having been taken to Portugal by the Franciscans, are now either in the Tome de Tombo of Lisbon or in some old Franciscan monastery in Portugal. At all events, they and any copy of them, have quiet disappeared"<sup>12</sup>.

Moraes, however, gives a translation of the same as found in the British museum. According to this, the Perumal, having heard

11. Thomas P. : Christians and Christianity in India. pp .31.

12. Keay F.E, : A History of the Syrian Church in India. pp. 19-20

the arrival of Cana Thoma, "himself came and saw and called the said chief man Thomas, and he disembarked and came before the King, who spoke graciously to him; and to honour him he gave him in surname his own name, calling him Coqurangon Cananeo. And he received this honour from the king and went to rest in his place. And the king gave him the city of Magoderpatanam for ever.

"And the said king, being in his great prosperity, went one day to hunt in the forest, and the same king surrounded the whole forest. And he called in haste for Thomas, who came and stood before the king in a lucky hour. And the king questioned the soothsayer. And the king afterwards spoke to Thomas (saying) that he would build a city in that forest. And he answered to the king, first making reference and said: 'I desire this forest for myself'. And the king granted it to him and gave it for ever. And at once, the next day, he cleared the forest and cast his eyes on it in the same year, on the eleventh of April, and gave it as an inheritance to Thomas at the time and year aforesaid, in the king's name who laid the first brick for the Church and for the house of Thomas Cananeo, and made there a city for all (of them), and entered the Church and there made prayer the same day. After these things, Thomas himself went to the King's palace and offered him presents, and afterwards he asked the king to give that land to him and to his descendants; and he measured two hundred and sixty-four elephant cubits and gave them to Thomas and his descendants for ever; and at the time sixty-two houses which immediately were erected there, and gardens and trees, with their enclosures and with their paths and boundaries and inner yards. And he granted him seven kinds of musical instruments, and all the honours and to speak (?) and walk like a king and that at the weddings, the women might give a certain signal with their finger in their mouth, and he granted him distinct weight and to adorn the ground with cloths, and he granted the royal fans, and to double sandal (mark) on the arm, and a royal tent (2 or 3 words not de-ciphered) in every part of the kingdom for ever and besides five tributes to Thomas, and to his lineage, and to his confederates for men, and for women, and for all his relatives and to the children of his law for ever. The said king gave it in his name"<sup>13</sup>.

"Thomas Cana founded his settlement in the delta of the

13. George Mark Moraes : A History of Christianity in India. pp 65

Periyar and called it Mahadevar Pattanam (city of the Great God) of the Malabar Christian tradition”<sup>14</sup>.

“The high esteem in which Thomas Cana was held by the Chera King is evident from the fact that according to tradition he conferred on him and his companions the title of ‘Mappilla’ (son-in-law), while the Chera called his own indigenous subjects “Pillais” i.e. sons”.<sup>15</sup>

“The new comers merged with the old Christians and both taking to trade, what, with the port of Muziris in their hands and their connections with the Middle Eastern countries, they rose to great prosperity. In the absence of the Vaishya or trader class in the Hindu caste heirarchy of Kerala, the Christians found it easy to step into the breach and they were welcomed by every ruling family”.<sup>16</sup>

“The good relations that existed between the Perumal and Canai Thoma continued among their descendants. Ravi Kartan of Musiris, the heir to the title of Thoma, enjoyed monopoly trade from generation to generation and his power and prestige waned only after domination of the Indian Sea by the Muslims. There were also fresh immigrants from Syria but none proved so powerful as Thoma and his men”.<sup>17</sup>

On turning the pages of history one comes across a descendant of Cana Thoma who was conferred titles and prerequisites by the ruling Perumal. In 774 A.D. Vira Raghavan Perumal executed a Chepped in favour of Iravi Kortan of Mahadevar Pattanam, excerpts of which are given as under :

“While we were pleased to reside in the great place, we conferred the title of Manigramam on Iravi Kortan alias Cheraman Loka Perum Chetty of Mahadevar Pattanam.

“We also gave him the right of festive clothing, house pillars, the income that accrues, the export trade, monopoly of trade, the right of proclamation, fore-runners, the five musical instruments, the conch, the lamp in day times, the carpet, the palanquin, the royal parasol, the drum, the gateway with

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14. *ibid* pp. 66

15. *ibid* pp. 67

16. *ibid* pp. 67

17. Thomas P. : *Christians and Christianity in India and Pakistan*. pp. 33.

ornamental arch, and monopoly of trade in the four quarters.  
 “We also gave the oil mongers and the five classes of artisans as slaves.

“We also gave with the libation of water (caused it to be) written on a copper plate to Iravi Kortan who is the Lord of the city, the brokerage on articles that may be measured with the *para*, weighed by the balance or measured with the tape, that may be counted or weighed, and on all other articles between the river mouth of Kodungallor and the gate chiefly between the four temples and the privileges attached to each temple.

“We gave this as property of Cheraman Lok Perum Chetty alias Iravi Kortan, and his children and children’s children in due succession.

“The witnesses who know this are: We gave it with the knowledge of the villagers of Panniyur and the villagers of Soigram. We gave it with the knowledge of the authorities of Venadu and Odunadu. We gave it with the knowledge of the authorities of Eranadu and Valluvanadu. We gave it for the time that the moon and the sun shall exist.

“The handwriting of Cheraman Loka Perum Dattan Nambi Sadayan, who wrote this copper plate with the knowlede of all these witness.”<sup>18</sup>

### **The Christian Kingdom of Villiarvattom<sup>19</sup>**

A Christian Kingdom, called Villiarvattom with MAHADEVAR PATTANAM as capital, is believed to have been in existence. To the Portuguese historians, this Kingdom is known as BELIARTE. The historical tradition of the kingdom is well described in a song, “Villiarvattom Pana”. The Kingdom extended from the coastal islands of Chendamangalam, Maliankara and others to the regions north and south of them to Udayamperur. The capital of Mahadevar Pattanam was originally in the island of Chendamangalam and later shifted to Udayamperur following a battle with Arabs who killed their princes and ransacked and destroyed their city. The Udayamperur church is reputed to have been built in 510 A.D. by a Raja of Villiarvattom. One of the

18. Thomas P. : Christians and Christianity in India and Pakistan, pp. 34.  
 (This chepped is kept at old Seminary, Kottayam.)

19. The Delhi Orthodox Syrian Church Souvenir 1965.

inscriptions found in the church refers to Raja Mathulla (circa 900 A.D.) and another to Raja Thoma. During the reign of Raja Thoma, the fame of the Christian dynasty in India reached Europe and prompted Eugene IV to send emissaries with a letter to him in 1439. According to tradition, preserved in popular songs like "Villiarvattom Pana", Raja Thoma was survived by his niece, Princess Mariam, also known as Kripavathi. She married Prince Rama Varma of the Cochin Royal family. He became a Christian in order to marry her, assuming the title of Prince Emmanuel. The Cochin Raja was not happy with the alliance and consequently Prince Emmanuel was either exiled or he had to flee to Ceylon. Stricken with grief, Mariam died shortly after. With her death, the ancient kingdom of Villiarvattom ceased to exist. "The local King of Diamper took over the jurisdiction and properties and then, when these Rajas ceased, the king of Cochin claimed to have more jurisdiction and right on the Christians of St. Thomas than the other kings in whose lands they dwell."<sup>20</sup>

The sceptre of Villiarvattom rulers was presented by the Christians of Cochin to Vascoda Gama in 1502 in the hope of Portuguese assistance against the Arabs who were their rivals in sea trade<sup>21</sup>.

### **Second Batch of Immigrants 823**

In 823 A.D. another batch of immigrants from Syria, including Mar Sapor also called Mar Sabrisho and Mar Aphrod arrived at Quilon. History is silent on the strength of the immigrants and their further movement in the country. One important document, however, brings out the arrival and acceptance in the society of the immigrants. According to this evidence in the form of Chepped (Copper plate of guarantees) executed by King Sthanu Ravi to Mar Sabrisho of Kurakkeni Kollam, the Christians were given the liberty to build a church for their worship and a city called Kollam (Quilon) and other privileges of honour. An account of the arrival of the immigrants is given in a Syriac document written in the late 18th century. A translation of the same is available in A. Mingana's "Early Spread of Christianity in India". oft quoted by historians. It says;

"In those days and in the days that followed, Syrian Fathers

20. Brown L.W. : The Indian Christians of St. Thomas. pp. 13.

21. Keay F.E. : A History of the Syrian Church in India, pp. 30.

used to come to that town by order of the Catholicos of the East and govern the diocese of India and Malabar to go to other parts until they were dispersed. Then in the year 823, the Syrian Fathers Mar Sapor and Mar Parut (Piruz) with the illustrious came to India and reached Kollam. They went to the King Shakirbirti and asked from him a piece of land in which they could build a church for themselves and erect a town. He gave the amount of land they desired and they built a church and erected a town in the district of Kollam to which Syrian bishops and Metropolitans used to come by order of the Catholicos who sent them”<sup>22</sup>.

Having settled, the descendants of the immigrants spread over to Kundara, Chathannur, Kayamkulam, etc.

### *Quilon Cheppeds*

In the ninth century two sets of Copper Plates were granted to the Quilon church, following the arrival of Mar Sabrisho and Mar Aphroth. Known as the Tharissa Palli or Quilon Cheppeds, these are available even today.

Ayyan, King of Venad, a vassal of Sthanu Ravi of the Chera Dynasty who reigned at Cranganore, is said to have extended this Royal Charter. Sreedhara Menon says :

“The first Venad ruler about whose reign we have any authentic information is Ayyan Atikal Tiruvatikal. He has immortalised himself in the famous Terisappalli Copper Plate Grant issued by him in 849 A.D. (the 5th Regnal year of Sthanu Ravi Varma Kulasekhara) in the presence of important officers of the State and representatives of the Anchuvanam and Manigramam. The inscription records that one Maruvan Sapiriso also had built a church named Terisapalli and a Nakaram (trading centre) at Kurakkeni Kollam and the Venad Chief made the gift of a plot of land to the church and the Nakaram along with several families of labourers and proprietary rights”<sup>23</sup>.

The first set consisted of three plates. Of these one is kept by the Orthodox Church (Catholicate Palace) and another by the Mar Thoma Church at Thiruvalla. The third plate is considered to have been lost.

22. Brown L.W. : *The Indian Christians of St. Thomas*. pp. 74.

23. Sreedhara Menon A. : *A Survey of Kerala History*. pp. 160

According to these Cheppeds “the king gave some low caste” people to be servants of the church, exempted them from paying certain specified rates and taxes, gave them the right of entry into the market (denied before because they were not caste-Hindus), any crime committed by the people was to be tried by the Christians, the church was given also the administration of customs in Quilon, that is, the steelyard and weights and Kappan”<sup>24</sup>.

The second set had four plates, three of which are kept by the Orthodox Church (Catholicate Palace, Kottayam) and one by Mar Thoma Church at Thiruvalla.

The privileges, according to these Cheppeds, were granted to Christians and Jews of Quilon and also of Manigramam. Concerning the Christians, “The Church was given land let out under certain conditions to four families of agriculturists and two of carpenters so as to ensure a perpetual income to the Church. The boundaries of the land given to the Christian community were also marked out in the ancient way, by making the course taken by a female elephant let free. The Christians had the sole right of administering justice in this territory and of receiving the bride price and were entitled to receive protection, if they needed it, from the Venat militia called the Six Hundred and the Jewish and Manigramam leaders.

“The Jews of Anjuvanam had certain dues payable to the king remitted and the right to collect other dues, as well as assessing all dutiable articles coming by land or water on the king’s behalf. They were to keep the customs income in safe custody and would withhold payment of this collection and weighment of this collection of fees until wrongs done to their community were redressed. They had the right of cooperating with Government officials in the King’s commercial transactions. They could try their own cases, live in the town of Quilon as tenants and they enjoyed seventy two social privileges”<sup>25</sup>.

### **Origin of Malayalam Era 825 A.D.**

It is of interest to note that the beginning of Malayalam era known as KOLLA VARSHAM is reckoned with the grant of royal patronage by King Ayyan to Mar Sabrisho.

24. Brown L.W. : The Indian Christians of St. Thomas. pp. 74-75.

25. *ibid.* pp. 75-76.

This is among the various theories advanced by historians towards reckoning the establishment of the Kolla Varsham. "The origin of the Kollam Era," writes Menon "is also ascribed to the establishment of a Christian community at Quilon in 825 A.D. It is argued that the Christian traders who came to Quilon started reckoning their year from the date of their settlement in the town and thus inaugurated a new era. This era is said to have been adopted later by the people all over Kerala as their own either under the orders of the respective rulers or on their own initiative in view of its utility"<sup>26</sup>.

### **Life of St. Thomas Christians**

In such favourable circumstances, the St. Thomas Christians improved their fortunes in the successive centuries. They proved to be very good agriculturists, merchants, traders so much so that they soon established their superiority in establishing trade relations with the West and also attaining a position of influence locally. In warlike qualities, too, they proved themselves. "They are fine gunsmen and so good shots that they rarely miss fire and from early age they are brought up gun-in-hand and turn out splendid hunters."<sup>27</sup>. Thus, the Christians were, as a business and military oriented community, able to give solid support to the ruling Perumals in men and material during their war campaigns as well as in times of peace. As a result, the princes and chieftains in whose territories they were widely scattered granted them immunities and privileges and even ranks of distinction, which were in several instances recorded on copper plates and preserved for posterity. Brown has recorded that "the ability and usefulness of the first Christian groups were recognised not only by the grant of concessions and privileges recorded on copper plates. They were given charge of collection of revenues for the Rajas...in certain places and in the fourteenth century Marignolli found that they were in charge of public weighing office in the Quilon customs. Associated with concessions in the pepper and other trades was the grant of service from certain castes and the responsibility of protecting them. A seventeenth century writer says that the carpenters, metal smelters, black-smiths and goldsmiths

26. Sreedhara Menon A. : 'A Survey of Kerala History pp. 120.

27. Brown L.W. : 'Indian Christians of St. Thomas' page 2 (quoted from Gouvea).

recognised no superiors except the priests of the Thomas Christians and that the barbers were also under Christian protection. This relationship was in force only in the neighbourhood of the Christian centres, not over the whole country."<sup>28</sup>

The enjoyment of these privileges were not the only marks of distinction given to the Christians; they were also given certain honorific titles. Tharakan, Muthalali, and Panikkar were titles of honour granted by the Rajas. Many of their descendants are still known by these titles.

All these served to reinforce the exalted position of the Christians and made them a people to reckon with. Gibbon in his "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire" assessed the St. Thomas Christians in the following words:

"In arms, in arts, and possibly in virtue they excelled the natives of Hindustan. The husbandmen cultivated the palm tree, the merchants were enriched by the pepper trade, the soldiers preceeded the Nairs or nobles of Malabar and their privileges were respected by the gratitude or the fear of the King of Cochin and the Zamorin himself."

The immigration of Syrians gave a new vigour to the St. Thomas Christians. The immigrant Syrians mingled freely with them. They inter-married and merged into a single community. A new generation was moulded. This helped the consolidation and preservation of faith. The immigrants Mar Joseph of Edessa and other priests who came with Cana Thoma, Mar Sabrisho and Mar Aphrod organised the Church and introduced the Syrian liturgical forms of worship.

### **Social Customs**

The Christians of St. Thomas thus came to have their liturgy and other forms of prayer in the language of Syriac consequent of their association with the Churches of Persia and later Syria from the very early centuries. In view of the use of Syriac language and the Syrian Church connection, the St. Thomas Christians came to be called Syrian Christians also.

The Syrian Christians are as Indian as any other member of any other community in India, in their customs, manners and life style. In the last twenty centuries, generations of Syrian Christians

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28. *ibid.* pp. 169.

have grown in and followed the customs of the land and quietly flowed into the national milieu.

Two reasons could be attributed to this congenial character of the Syrian Christians. Primarily, they took their origin from among the high-caste Namboothiri brahmins who had a high sense of observing traditions. They naturally inherited the ancient traditions of the high caste community. Secondly, the Syrian community members, although they took up a new religion, were zealous to retain their high caste status in the society. In the ancient social system of Kerala when caste was the most important factor determining a person's status and even function in society, it was probably necessary to guard the privileged boundaries of their high caste status from the polluting inroads of converted novices from low castes.

The Syrian Christians considered many of the customs and manners of their Hindu brethren as part and parcel of the Keralite or Malayalee way of life including the ceremonies connected with birth, marriage and death. The birth of a child is announced by Kurava sound; the child is fed with a little gold in three drops of honey to ensure prosperity; the mother is considered to be under pollution for about a fortnight after giving birth, etc.

A child on attaining three years of age was used to be introduced to education by a Hindu teacher guiding the child's fingers to trace the words, 'Hari Shri Ganapathaye Namah' in rice heaped in a brass plate, before a lit brass lamp. The writings were replaced by Thriyeka Daivathinu Sthuthi (Glory to Triune God). The girl child's ears are pierced at the age of six to hold ornaments.

A few customs connected with marriage which are of Hindu origin but continued by Syrian Christians are interesting. The bride offering a gift of betel-leaf etc. to a Guru (Teacher) or the eldest relative before she sets out to the church for marriage, the bridegroom tying a 'Tali' or 'Minnu' (a pear shaped gold ornament with beads arranged like a cross), around the neck of the bride and of presenting the bride with a new cloth called the Manthra kodi, are typical Hindu practices.

Observance of Shradham (prayers followed by feast) on the death anniversary of departed person is another Hindu Social custom practiced by the Syrian Christians.

The St. Thomas Christians are accustomed to consult astronomers to ascertain Muhurtam (auspicious moment) before setting out for any purpose e.g. for a journey; for wedding; etc. Drawing horoscopes is not uncommon among them. These practices are, however, fast disappearing with the passage of time, spread of education, impact of Christian approach, dispersion of population, challenge of younger generation. etc.

The festivals in Hindu temples and Christian Churches were often festivals of the entire village community. A church procession for example, will have the same familiar music played in Hindu temples, the same type of laced silken umbrellas, flags and festoons, decorated elephants and ear-breaking beating of drums and noise of crackers. The festivals invariably end with remarkable display of fire works in the night.

Needless to say, the St. Thomas Christians have assimilated many of the social customs and practices of the land and are indistinguishable as an entity in the society.

## CHAPTER THREE

### THE PERSIAN CHURCH

The history of the Malankara Church from the early centuries right upto the sixteenth century reveals that the Church in Persia played a very vital role in nurturing its growth. It used to send Metropolitans, train and strengthen its clergy, edify and sustain its faith and provide ecclesiastical leadership to the Christian community. Undoubtedly, the Persian Church stood by the Malankara Church in her vicissitudes and greatly helped her in her independent and indigenous growth. The Malankara Church is greatly indebted to her.

#### **Earliest Persian Christians**

The earliest reference to Christians in Persia and further east is found in the Acts of Apostles chapter 2 verse 9. On the day of the Feast of Pentecost, people from Parthia, Media, Elam, Mesopotamia, Juddaea, Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia in the East were among the crowd that gathered in Jerusalem to hear the Apostles, the same day, three thousand souls became Christians (Acts 2/41). Mesopotamia included Persian kingdom. Persians were obviously believed to have been among them.

#### **Parthian-Persian Empires**

Politically, Persia was a part of the Parthian empire which extended from Mesopotamia in the West to the borders of India in the East. The Empire was a loose federation of independent small kingdoms which acknowledged the overlordship of Parthian Kings ARASCIDS. The main religion of the people was Zorastrianism. The Parthian Empire lasted for nearly five centuries from 240 BC till 225 A.D.

The Persian Kingdom of Osrohene lay in the North Mesopotamia between the Roman and the Parthian Empires. The rulers of Osrohene who were elected-monarchs and called by the title of Abgarus were tributary vassals of Parthian Kings.

In 226 A.D., the Persian King Ardashir overthrew the Parthian King and installed the rule of the SASSANID dynasty. Consequently, the Persian Empire with capital at Seleucia came into being.

### **The Persian Church — Origin**

The history of the spread of Christianity in Persia and towards the East in the early centuries is available in the Church histories of Bishop Eusebius Pamphilius of Caesarea (314-340) and Catholicos Gregorios Bar Hebraeus (1266-1286) of the Persian Church. Other equally important works are, the Doctrine of Addai, the Apostle, Doctrine of the Apostles, a Syriac document written about 250 A.D. in Edessa and The Chronicle of Arbil. The latter, written by Massiha Zacha between 550 and 569 A.D., gives an account of the growth of the Church in the Parthian Kingdom of Adiabene which had its capital at Arbil. The outstanding figures among early Christians in Persian Kingdom of Osroene were Tatian ( ) and Bardaisan. They lived in Edessa and their historical works also throw light on Persian Church's history. It was from Edessa that Christianity spread to Persia.

### **Christ and King Abgar of Edessa**

Edessa was the foremost city in the east outside Roman Empire which claimed Christian faith. The origin of the establishment of a Church in Edessa (Urha), the modern Urfa in Turkey, is built upon a story described by Eusebius. The story is attributed to the King Abgarus (V) UCHOMO (Abgarus the Black) who ruled Osroene in the time of Christ, from 9 BC. to 46 A.D.

Abgarus Uchomo was being wasted away with a disease. He came to know of Jesus and of his healing powers. Bar Hebraeus wrote : "In the 19th year of Tiberius, Abhgar, King of Urhaisent a certain painter whose name was John, the tabellarious, and he painted a portrait of our Lord Jesus upon a tablet and brought it to Abhgar. And Abhgar also sent a letter to our Lord, by the hands of Hananya".<sup>1</sup> In the letter, Abhgar sought deliverance from his disease. It is as follows:-

"ABGARUS, the Prince of Edessa, sends greetings to Jesus, the excellent Saviour, who has appeared in the borders of

1. Budge, Earnest A. Wallis : The Chronography of Gregory Abu'l Faraj Bar Hebraeus. pp. 48.

Jerusalem. I have heard the reports respecting thee and thy cures, as performed by thee without medicines and without the use of herbs. For, as it is said, thou causest the blind to see again, the lame to walk, and thou cleanseest the lepers, and thou castest out impure spirits and demons and thou healeest those that are tormented by long disease and thou raisest the dead. And hearing all these things of thee, I concluded in my mind one of two things; either that thou art God and having descended from heaven, doest these things; or else, doing them, thou art the Son of God. Therefore, now I have written and besought thee to visit me, and to heal the disease with which I am afflicted. I have also heard that the Jews murmur against thee and are plotting to injure thee; I have however, a very small but noble state, which is sufficient for us both.”

Our Lord declined the call at that time but condescended to write him a private letter which is also reproduced below.

“Blessed art thou, O Abgarus, who without seeing has believed in me. For, it is written concerning me, that they who have seen me, will not believe; that they who have not seen me, believe and live. But, in regard to what thou hast written, that I should come to thee, it is necessary that I should fulfil all things here, for which I have been sent. And after this fulfilment, thus to be received up, I will send to thee a certain one of my disciples, that he may heal thy affliction, and give life to thee and to those who are with thee”.<sup>2</sup>

#### **Abgarus—St. Thomas-Thaddeus**

Eusebius has also narrated the further developments after Christ that St. Thomas sent Thaddeus to the King, who healed him and how Christianity spread in Edessa. To quote Walter Bauer, “After reproducing the letters, Eusebius continues : “To these letters, the following is appended in Syriac”. There follows the account of how after the ascension”. Judas, who is also called Thomas”, sends Thaddeus, one of the seventy disciples, to Edessa. There he heals Abgar and many others, and is requested by the

2. These letters have been acquired by the British Museum in 1841, 1843 and 1847 from the Nitrian Monastery in Lower Egypt”. (From George Milne Rae : The Syrian Church in India).

“toparch” to tell him about Jesus’s life and works. Thaddeus declares his willingness but he wants to do so on the following day before the entire populace. Thus all the citizens of the city are summoned. Still nothing more is said about the projected apostolic sermon, but the account concludes with the statement: These things took place in the year 340 (of the Seleucid era=28/29 c.E)<sup>3</sup>.

Two other references are also available about this legendary letters. One is the Doctrine of Addai, the Apostle (Pages 1-5) according to which, the letter of King Abgarus was sent through Hannan, the keeper of the Archives at Edessa to Jesus at Jerusalem. Hannan met Jesus at the house of the Chief Priest of Jews and delivered the letter to him. We are told that Jesus verbally declined the offer of King Abgarus. There is no mention of any written reply from Jesus. In the other document, Ancient Syriac Documents (Pages 130-131) it is recorded that the reply from Jesus was written by St. Thomas. This is mentioned in the Armenian history by Moide Khorin. Here we have three versions—a reply in writing by Jesus, an oral reply by Jesus, and a reply in the handwriting of St. Thomas. In the circumstances, historians do not give credibility to this letter but treat it as apocryphal and legendary in the absence of corroborative evidences.

As regards the role of St. Thomas and Thaddeus, it is reported thus : “Nor was the fulfilment of his promise to him long deferred, but after he was raised from the dead and was taken upto heaven, Thomas, the Apostle, and one of the twelve as by the instigation of God, sent Thaddeus (Addai) who was also numbered among the seventy disciples of Christ to Edessa, to be a preacher and evangelist of the teaching of Christ and through him the promise of Christ was fulfilled”<sup>4</sup>.

Several historians have discounted the Abgar-Jesus story as a fabricated legend and do not give it any credance. They are of the view that Eusebius had relied on unreliable Syriac documents presented to him, which related to a period much later than that of the King who was not contemporary to Jesus and which he did not verify with reference to the time and identity of the ruler.

3. Walter Bauer : Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earlier Christianity. SCM, Press Ltd. London 1971 pp. 3.

4. Cureton : Ancient Syriac Documents pp. 1.

Further, on numismatic and other circumstantial evidences they conclude that it was Abgar IX who ruled from 179 to 214 and not Abgar V, who first turned Christian and, therefore, Abgar-Jesus correspondence could not have happened.

However, it is accepted historically that Thaddeus was the first missionary to Edessa and that Christian community was formed there due to his labours.

### **Church is Established**

Succeeding Thaddeus, his disciples AGAEUS (Aggai-120-152) and MARI (152-185) continued the missionary labours in the Parthian Empire. Edessa was their base city from which they spear-headed their missionary activities in Parthia. As a result, a Church was established extending over the whole of Parthian Empire including Persia, Assyria, Armenia, Adiabene and countries about Babylon as far as the borders of India. Edessa, Tigris, Nisibis, Arbil, Seleucia, Ctesiphon were some of the important centres of the Church. According to Bar Hebraeus, on his way to India St. Thomas had preached to Magis in Tigris, converted them and founded a Church there.

Seleucia and Ctesiphon were two cities which stood facing each other on the banks of the river Euphrates. It was Mari, who first evangelised in Seleucia and his period of leadership of the Persian Church is reckoned from 152 to 185. During his time, the headquarters of the Church was shifted from Edessa to the twin cities of Seleucia Ctesiphon<sup>5</sup>.

### **Edessa:**

Edessa was the capital of the Persian Kingdom of Osrohene which lay in North Mesopotamia outside the Eastern boundary of Roman Empire. It was conquered and annexed to the Roman Empire by Caragulla in 216 A.D. Later in 535 A.D. Khusro Nashirwan, the King of Persia, took Edessa from the Roman Empire. Edessa adorned a place of distinction in the early centuries, since it was known for its eminence in Syriac literature. Syriac was then the spoken language of most part of Mesopotamia.

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5. Mar Aprem, Metropolitan of the Chaldean Syrian Church of the East at Trichur, Kerala had visited Seleucia in 1968. He writes : "Now the city is in ruins. It is now known as Salmon Park about 60 miles from Baghdad".

It was closely related to Aramaic, the spoken language of Palestine. From the second century onwards, Christians translated Greek writings into Syriac works. The Syriac New Testament may be the earliest of translations from the Greek before 200 A.D. The Syriac language as developed in Edessa is important because it became the ecclesiastical language of the eastward advancing part of the Church and was carried in scriptures and liturgy across Asia to the China sea<sup>6</sup>. Mar Ephraim who composed Syriac liturgical hymns and prayers which are in use in the Orthodox Church till to-day lived in Edessa. He had attended the Council of Niceaea in 325 A.D. along with the bishop of Edessa, as a deacon. He had also taught in the theological school at Edessa.

A few other documents connecting St. Thomas to Edessa are also available in the annals of Church history. In the ancient Syriac Document, Cureton testifies that Addai had built a Church at Edessa which was dedicated to St. Thomas and to which his body was translated. (P.2, 141). Further, in the "Doctrine of the Apostles", a Syriac document written in Edessa about 250, it is recorded that "after the death of the Apostles, their disciples read in the Churches in every places, which they had received from the Apostles, what James had written from Jerusalem, Simon from Rome, John from Ephesus....and Judas Thomas from India<sup>7</sup>..... J.N.Farquahar also says that the letters of St. Thomas 'lay in Edessa until the close of the second century at least.'".

It may, therefore, be observed that the initiative for spreading the faith in Persia came from the Church in Edessa and the Persian Church was indebted to Edessa.

### St. Thomas, the Founder

On review, the significant fact which emerges from all the preceding historical events is that the Church in Persia was established at the initiative of St. Thomas, the Apostle and further strengthened at the hands of his disciples Thaddeus, Aggai and Mari. The Church in Persia, may, therefore, confidently be said,

6. John Fobster : Church History I AD 29-500 The First Advance: SPCK London. pp 85

7. William G. Young. Handbook of Source Materials. (212)—Doctrine of the Apostles. Canon 10—Church. pp 162.

had an apostolic origin and an indigenous growth in the tradition of St. Thomas—and St. Thomas is, therefore, reckoned as the founder of the Persian Church<sup>8</sup>. The chronology of the heads of the Church begins from him.

### **Independent Status**

Another equally important aspect of the Persian Church to be conceded is that in the initial growth of the Church, no other Church either at Jerusalem or at Antioch or elsewhere sustained it by any ecclesiastical authority other than of its own. The history of the Church in its first two centuries show that neither it did owe allegiance to any extraterritorial Church nor any Church outside Persia especially its neighbour the Church of Syria had laid any claim either juridical or jurisdictional, although a tendency is discernible from several later instances that Antioch would have liked the Persian Church to be within its sphere of authority. In this context, the statement of W.A. Wingram is relevant. He writes. “The Church of Easterns was the daughter not of Antioch but of Edessa and was never included in the Patriarchate of the former city”.<sup>9</sup>

### **Initial Connection With Antioch**

At the time of Mari's death, his disciple Abrosius was at Antioch on a good will visit. Since no other Metropolitan was in position at Seleucia, it is said that the Persian Church requested Antioch for a Metropolitan. The Antiochian brethren, however, consecrated Abrosius (185-201) as Metropolitan of Seleucia. This was the first occasion, as recorded by Bar Hebraeus, when the Persian Church had received an ordination from the Church of Syria. On this incident, Dr. V.C. Samuel has made the following Comments. “Two things are clear from this incident. Firstly, it was the Eastern fathers which requested for a Metropolitan, for Seleucia,. In other words, Bar Hebraeus only mentions that the Eastern Church requested for help in an exigent situation when they had no metropolitan. Secondly, although Bar Hebraeus tries to high light the Antiochian role, he does not mention the Patriarch to have played any part. It was not he who consecrated Abrosius

8. NOTE: In tracing the history of the Persian Church, the account provided by Bar Hebraeus in his book *Ecclesiastical History* is followed—Author.

9. Wingram; *The History of the Assyrian Church* pp: 25-26

but the 'brethren' there. It was only accidental that Seleucia transacted a relationship with Antioch"<sup>10</sup>

### Jerusalem Connection

The next three heads of the Church were Abraham (201-213) and Jacob (213-231) and Ahod Abuei (231-246) at Seleucia. Abraham was consecrated at Antioch and the other two at Jerusalem. In fact, Abuei was sent to Jerusalem by the bishop of Antioch. The term Patriarch came into force only after Nicene Council of 325 A.D. The story is that prior to Jacob's death, the Seleucian fathers elected Ahod Abuei and Qom Yesu and sent them to Antioch with the request to consecrate one of them as Metropolitan of the Persian Church at Seleucia. At Antioch they stayed in the house of a certain Christian by name Mhaimno. Politically, the Roman and Persian Empires being in enmity and Antioch being within the Roman empire, the two coming from Seleucia were apprehended as Persian spies. Qom Yesu was crucified to death. Ahod Abuei, however, managed to escape and fled to Jerusalem, where he took refuge with the Church fathers. The Antiochian Metropolitan coming to know of the unfortunate episode, sent letters to the Jerusalem fathers desiring that they may ordain Ahod Abuei as Metropolitan for the East. This was in 231 A.D.

## CATHOLICATE FOR THE EAST

### Development of a Catholicate for the East Bar Hebraeus's Account.

The Jerusalem fathers did more than raising a Metropolitan when Ahod Abuei approached them for consecration. They showed a concern for the stability and juridical independence of the Church in the East, as may be conjectured from the history of Bar Hebraeus who has made the following record of the event. "Consequent to the consecration, the Western fathers allowed the Eastern fathers to consecrate the candidate of their choice when their leader passes away and also directed that they, therefore, need not go again to Antioch for that purpose. They also issued a letter of authority (stathicon) which specified that the Great

10. Dr. V.C. Samuel : Church Weekly. dated 17.9.1978 (Malayalam-translation by the author)

Metropolitan of the East shall be proclaimed as Catholicos Patriarch. This act did not please the Patriarch of Antioch.”<sup>11</sup>

### Arabic Nicene Canon/Huddaya Canon

The thirty-third Arabic Canon says, “Let the See of Seleucia which is one of the Eastern cities be honoured like-wise and have the title of Catholicos and let the prelate thereof ordain Archbishops as the other Patriarchs do, so that the Eastern Christians who live under the heathens, may not be wronged by waiting the Patriarch’s leisure or by going to him; but may have a way opened to him to supply their own necessities. Neither will any injury be done to the Patriarch of Antioch thereby, seeing that he has consented to its being thus upon the synods having desired it of him.”

The Huddaya Canon, which is a compilation of Canons by Bar Hebraeus, also provides that “the great Metropolitan of the East hereafter shall have powers similar to those of the Patriarch to consecrate Metropolitans for the East. He shall be called, Catholicos. When present in the synod of the Western Church (of Syria), the Catholicos shall sit in precedence over all other Metropolitans, but along with the Patriarch of Jerusalem.”

(Chapter 7 Para 1)

### A Critical Examination

How do Church historians evaluate the claim of a Catholicate evolved at Jerusalem in 231 A.D.? What does the Persian Church history say about it? Does it stand the test of historical reality? Or is it a framed story?

Evaluation of the incident becomes subject to constraints when the sources of information are not supported by contemporary or valid records. The sources available are the Arabic Nicene Synod Canons and Bar Hebraeus. These sources have been criticised, for their historical credibility.

11. Rao Sahib O.M. Cheria. Concise History of the Catholicate (Malayalam P: 46) Translation by the author.

Menhorden apes episcoope Marboye Loepiscoop madin hoye d’kadune, nadireeso d’lahoon henoon h’semoon eedo alhav d’gobel oolonest d’neesal thub l’Antiochia back sat sthathikon b’hokkan vad catholico op Patriorcho nes metropolitho raabod muudanaho open lo s’paras hodes l’patriarcho dh ‘Antiochia’.

The Arabic Nicene Synod Canons is a compendium of decrees passed in the Church from 4th century onwards till its publication in 9th or 10th century. Dr. V.C. Samuel says that it cannot be given either the historical credibility earlier than 9th century or the authenticity of the Nicene Council.<sup>12</sup>

Bar Hebraeus was the Catholicos (Maphrian-1266-1286) at Tigris which office was established with the blessings of the Church of Syria in favour of the non-Nestorian/non-Chalcedonian persuasion in Persia and hence had an Antiochean bias. The incident of installation of the Catholicos at Jerusalem-via-Antioch, according to Dr. V.C. Samuel, is a story depicted to highlight the juridical status of the Antiochean Church over the Persian Church. He bases this conclusion mainly on the following arguments.<sup>13</sup>

1. Bar Hebraeus who lived in the 13th Century does not clarify how he had come to know the incident which took place in 3rd Century.
2. Bar Hebraeus does not mention the Metropolitans in position either at Antioch or at Jerusalem.
3. None of the Church historians who lived prior to Bar Hebraeus and whose books are available, has made any mention of this incident.
4. The records of the Persian Church history do not indicate any knowledge of the incident.
5. The Patriarchs of Antioch even as late as the 7th century had never consecrated Metropolitans for the neighbouring areas.

It is, however, admitted on the strength of Persian Church history records that the Church installed a Persian national Papa as the first Catholicos, following Ahod Abuei, at Seleucia in 280. According to Bar Hebraeus, Papa came to position in 266 A.D. The subsequent Church history shows that Seleucia raised their own heads to maintain autonomy. In view of the subsequent history, the story of Bar Hebraeus cannot be completely ignored in tracing the origin of the Catholicate of the Persian Church.

12. Dr. V.C. Samuel : 'Malankara Sabhayude Antiochean Bandham' (Malayalam)—(The Antiochean Connection of Malankara Church (English title) 1983—pp. 55.

13. *ibid*—pp. 55.

### Chronicle of Arbil

The Chronicle of Arbil gives a different picture about Ahod Abuei, according to which he was the bishop of Arbil during the reign of Shapur I (241-271), and also that there was no bishop at Ctesiphon during this period. The story is recounted by William G. Young in the following words :

“When the Kingdom of the Arascid-Parthians had come to an end, the Christians (of the Capital) asked for a Bishop of their own, as we shall tell...

In the army of Shapur I (241-271), there was a wealthy Christian, named Ganzqan. When he went to Hedayab and saw that there were many Christians in the district and its villages, he begged Shahlufa (Bishop of Arbil) to come to Ctesiphon and visit the little group of brethren who had begun to show themselves there. Shahlufa was afraid to go, but Ganzqan reassured him and calmed his fears, and he set off, strong in his God.

On the way he and his companions were kidnapped by Arab raiders, and it was four months before he was able to escape.

Then they entered into the rich city of Ctesiphon, gathered all the brethren who were there, and encouraged them. Shahlufa laid his hands on a man and ordained him priest. He stayed two years, from the time King Shapur left Ctesiphon till the time of his return.

Then he returned to Arbil. His successor Ahodabuhi, visited Ctesiphon about 280, and ordained a further five priests, but had to leave hurriedly (see above, 381). The people felt the need of a bishop of their own, and went again to Ahodabuhi.

The inhabitants of Ctesiphon asked him urgently to consecrate a bishop, who would remain always in their midst. ‘There is a good number of Christians here; they said, “The Lord Bishops are far from us, and cannot come every day to us, to meet our needs and guide us in the ways of justice, spiritually and materially”. He agreed readily to do what they asked, and consulted Haibl’el Bishop of Susa. The two agreed to elect Papa, a Syrian, a very learned and wise man. Then everyone went back to his own country.

— Mashiha-Zakha, Chronicle, of Arbil: pp. 31 and 41 (French in Mingana, S.S.I., pp. 107, 111, 119 Y.)<sup>14</sup>.

14. William G. Young : Handbook of Source Materials. pp. 274·5.

The above narrative is, however, silent about when and how Ahod Abuei came to succeed Shahlufa, who ordained him, and what position he occupied.

Ahod Abuei of the Chronicle belonged to Arbil and succeeded Shahlufa. Bar Hebraeus places him before Shahlufa (246-66). There is confusion between the two records in regard to persons place and chronology.

Dr. V.C. Samuel says the following about the development of Persian Church till the time of Papa. "Persian Church consider St. Thomas, the Apostle, as its first head. According to the tradition of the Persian Church, the Apostle on his way to India for propagation of the Gospel halted at Edessa for some time and spread the faith in and around it through his disciples Addai and Aggai. Addai sent his own disciple Mari to Seleucia, the capital of Persian empire. Due to his labours, a Church was established there.

But the Church did not develop fast in Seleucia. Moreover, following Mari, there was no bishop at Seleucia till towards the end of 3rd Century. About 280 A.D., Papa, the Persian was made the head of the Church at Seleucia.....Persian records project Papa as the first Catholicos of Seleucia"<sup>15</sup>.

## TOWARDS AUTONOMY

### Catholicos Papa (267-336)

The Persian Church, as already noted, had an indigenous growth and hence had an independent and autonomous status. In fact, Mari (152-185) who was responsible for the formation of the Church, may be considered as the architect of autonomy of the Church.

However, it was Catholicos Papa (267-328) who made assertive strides in this direction as may be seen from the excerpts from "Christians in Persia", by Robin E. Waterfield : "His (Papa's) importance lies in the fact that he tried to define the limits of the various dioceses, to regularise the method of appointing Bishops and to bring them into some sort of federation which would acknowledge the supremacy of the See of which he was the bishop.

15. Ref : Dr. V.C. Samuel. Malankara Sabhayude Antiochian Bandham. (Orthodox Faiths Series No. 4) 1982 pp. 52-53.

Naturally enough he met with considerable opposition", notably from Miles bishop of Susa. After quarrelling with his diocese, he went on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem and Egypt. On his return he attended the episcopal synod convened (in 315) to discuss the reforms of Papa"<sup>16</sup>. In the synod, Papa was removed from his office, but he approached the bishops of Edessa and Nisibus. On their efforts, a reconciliation was arrived at and Papa regained his position. A controversy was settled within the Catholicate. Assemani has given this view. (Ref. Vol III Page 415). About Papa's attempt to establish the Primacy of Ctesiphon the Chronicle of Arbil gives the following account. "This Papa, Bishop of the cities, lived in the capital of the kingdom, and the other bishops needed his help in outward affairs. He went on to claim supremacy over all the bishops, as though they needed only one Head.

There was opposition, but Papa strengthened his hand by writing to the bishop of Edessa suggesting official recognition as Patriarch. He consulted other Western Bishops.

"They wrote a letter to the Emperor Constantine on this subject in their name addressed to the kings and nobles of the West—that is, the Roman Empire—there were several Patriarchs—those of Antioch, Rome, Alexandria and Constantinople—so there should be in the East, that is in the Persian Empire, at least one Patriarch.

This request was agreed to and accepted by all the Eastern bishops, who were afraid otherwise of trouble both from Constantine and from Shapur II.<sup>17</sup> A precedent was set up.

Thus, Papa came to occupy the position of head of the Persian Church. However, it was in the Council of Seleucia held in 410 that the Church declared its autonomy. This was further edified in the Council of Markabta held in 424.

### **Council of Nicaea 325 A.D.**

The first ecumenical Council held at Nicaea in 325 A.D. had deliberated over, apart from the burning theological issues, the juridical status of bishops of important Christian centres also. The prominent centres mentioned in the Canons 6 and 7 of the Council

16. Robin E. Waterfield : Christians in Persia pp. 18.

17. William G. Young : Handbook of Source Materials (383) pp. 275-76. quoted from Mashiha-Zakha: Chronicle of Arbil pp. 44-45.

are, Alexandria, Rome, Antioch and Jerusalem. They read as under :

Let the ancient customs hold good which are in Egypt and Libya and Pentopolis (Cyranica), according to which the Bishop of Alexandria has authority over all these places.

For this also is customary to the Bishop of Rome.

In like manner in Antioch and *in the other provinces the privileges are to be preserved to the Churches*. But this is clearly to be understood, that, if anyone be made a bishop without the consent of the Metropolitan<sup>1</sup>, the Great Synod (Council of Nicaea) declares that he shall not be a bishop. Since custom and ancient tradition has held good, that the Bishop of Aelia (Jerusalem) be honoured, let him have his proper honour, saving to the Metropolis (Caesarea) the honour peculiar to it."<sup>18</sup>

1. i.e. Bishop of Antioch.

The four Great Sees—Alexandria, Rome, Antioch and Jerusalem (and later in 381 Constantinople also) came to have Patriarchal status.

It is evident that these Council decisions do not identify a recognition or status to either the bishop or Church of Seleucia Ctesiphon. At the same time the Council emphasised that "in like manner in Antioch and in the other provinces the privileges are to be preserved to the Churches". In other words, the Council took note of the Churches established in other provinces and gave a *fait accompli* to the existing hierarchy prevailing in them.

It may be remembered here that the Synod was convened by the Roman Emperor and the reference to jurisdiction was related to the geographical limits of the Roman Empire. The provinces referred to in the Nicene Creed, therefore, were those within the Roman Empire.

Persia was not a province of Roman Empire, but the Persian Church was represented in the Council, by "John the Persian, on behalf of (the Churches) in the whole of Persia and in the Great India."

Further, "Eustatius, Bishop of Great Antioch on behalf of the Churches in Coele-Syria (North West Syria) and the whole of

18. William G. Young. Handbook of Source Materials (204) pp. 155.

Mesopotamia and in Cilicia also”, was a signatory to the decisions of the Council. Those from the East who attended the Synod included Mar Papa, the Catholicos of Seleucia, and the bishop from Edessa.

The presence of these imply that the Council was fully aware of the Church in Persia and the status of the bishop (Catholicos) there. On the basis of the direction that ‘the privileges of the Churches in other provinces’ were also to be preserved, it is assumed that the Council recognised the status of the Catholicos — Chief Metropolitan of the Persian Church.

### **Huddaya Canon**

Bar Hebraeus has also recorded the juridical status of the Catholicos vis-a-vis the Patriarch in his book, *Huddya Canon*, which is a compendium of rules of ecclesiastical importance, based on the Apostles’ Canons compiled by Climis, Doctrines of Adai and universal synods. The provisions referring to the Council of Nicaea are taken from the Arabic canon. The powers, privileges and status of the Catholicos are enshrined in Chapter 7 Para 1 of the *Huddaya Canon*, which has been quoted earlier in page 58.

### **Council of Seleucia 410 A.D.**

The Persian Church held a Synod in 410 A.D. at Seleucia. According to the Acts of this Synod, the Catholicos in position was Izhaq. Bar Hebraeus’s history identifies Mebuchat (401-420) as Catholicos in whose chairmanship the Synod was held. In holding the Synod, Bishop Maruta of the Roman Church played an important role.

A move to organise the Church was started in 399 when “Roman Emperor Aurelius sent the Mesopotamian Physician and Bishop, Maruta of Maipherqat, as his personal envoy to the enthronement of the Persian Emperor Yazdegard”.<sup>19</sup> He came a second time in 409, “to help with the reorganisation of the Persian Church”. He carried letters from the bishops of the west including those of Antioch, Aleppo and Edessa. These letters instructed Maruta to try and reconcile the doctrines of the Eastern and

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19. Dr. Paulos Mar Gregorios - *The Indian Orthodox Church. An Overview.* P: 16.

Western Churches. A Council was convened in which "Forty bishops attended the Synod under the chairmanship of the marzban or provincial Governor. The meetings began at Seleucia Ctesiphon on 6th January 410. The Council adopted the Nicene Creed and the other canons of the Council of Nicaea. It further decided that "The holder of the See of Seleucia Ctesiphon was to be the Grand Metropolitan and Head of all the Bishops".<sup>20</sup>

"Among the canons passed at the Synod of Seleucia were the following; 12. We accept of our own-free-will and we have been commanded by Yazdegard, King of Kings—we, all the Bishops of the East and those who shall come after us—to obey in all things right and prescribed the Bishop, Catholicos, Arch Bishop Metropolitan of Seleucia and Ctesiphon until Christ shall come—that is to say, every bishop who shall sit on the sublime throne of this Church of Koke. (Seleucia). 21. The first and principal See is that of Seleucia-Ctesiphon. The bishop who occupies it is the Great Metropolitan and Head of all bishops. ....".<sup>21</sup>

(Acts of the Synod of Seleucia 410)

The Council had also inter-alia decided that there should be three bishops at least for the consecration of a bishop, uniformity in the dates of observance of the important festivals of Epiphany, Christmas and Easter, and that every year forty days lent and Good Friday should be observed.

In this Council the jurisdiction of the Great Metropolitan or Catholicos of Seleucia Ctesiphon was also settled, with six Metropolitanates under him, viz., Beit Lapat (with four diocesan bishops under him) Nisibis (with five diocesan bishops), Arbeles (six) Karka of Bet-slok (five), Fars (Persade) and Qatar (Bahrein and that region of the West) and Surral other Bishops in Metia and other outlying areas".<sup>22</sup>

### Royal Patronage

The Acts of Synod of Seleucia 410 also recorded the royal

20. William G. Young : The Hand book of Source Materials. (393,395) Pp : 283

21. Robin E. Waterfield. Christians in Persia — pp. 20-1

22. Dr. Paulos Mar Gregorios : The Indian Orthodox Church — An Overview (1982) Pp: 16

patronage which the Church received during the time of the Persian Emperor Yazdegard I. He established the Christians as a millat or subject community in the Persian Empire with the Patriarch of Seleucia Ctesiphon as their recognised head. According to the Acts, all the bishops including Mar Ishaq, and Mar Maruta called on Yezdegard. The Emperor gave orders to his Prime Minister Khusrau Yazdegard which have been reproduced by William Young as follows :

“Previously, there was a great persecution against you, and you had to go about in secret; now the King of Kings has brought you great peace and tranquility. Thanks to the frequent meetings of the King of Kings has had with the Catholicos Ishaq, Whom he has been pleased to establish Head of all the Christians of the East and especially since the day when Bishop Maruta came here, by the favour of King of Kings, peace and tranquility have increased to you. With regard to the letter which has come from the land of Romans, concerning the Bishops of this place, Yazdegard, King of Kings now commands as follows: Every man whom you shall choose and know to be capable of governing and directing the people of God, who shall be appointed by the Bishops Izhaq and Maruta shall be Head. No one shall separate himself from them. If anyone opposes them and acts contrary to their will let them tell us, and we shall inform the King of Kings; and no matter who he be, his malice shall be punished”<sup>23</sup>.

#### **Council of Markabta 424**

In 421, Dad-ishu was the Catholicos. He was “imprisoned by the Persian authorities, instigated by rebel bishops who challenged his primacy and discipline. Through the good offices of the ambassadors of the Byzantine Emperor Theodosius II, he was liberated.” He, therefore, desired to spend the rest of his life in a monastery. But he was persuaded to continue by the Council of Bishops held at Markabta in 424 A.D., which was attended by six Metropolitans and thirty other episcopas. Apart from confirming Mar Dadishu as the Catholicos, the Council took formal decisions on the independence of the Church, the Catholicos and its relations with the Church of Syria.

23. William G. Young: *The Handbook of Source Materials* (392) pp. 282.

The following decree of the Council asserts the independent status of the Persian Church. To quote:

“Now by the word of God, We decree, that the Easterners shall not be permitted to carry complaints against their Patriarch before the Western Patriarchs, and that every case which cannot be determined in the presence of their Patriarch shall be kept to the judgement of Christ.....No one for any reason shall be allowed to think or say that the Catholicos of the East can be judged by those under him or by a Patriarch like him. His own judgement is reserved for the Christ who has chosen him, raised him up, and placed him at the head of his Church”.<sup>24</sup>

(Acts of the Synod of Dad-ishu)

This synod was a land mark in the history of the Persian Church in that it elevated the Catholicos to the status of a Patriarch, thus emphasising its claim to be entirely autonomous.

Reviewing the progress in the development of the institution of Catholicate in the Church of Persia, it will be observed that the Catholicate which initially began with the consecration of Ahod Abuei in Jerusalem in 231 AD, was later confirmed by formal decisions by the Persian Church in its local Councils (Synods) held at Seleucia in 410 and at Markabta in 424. In the holding of the latter local Councils, political authorities were also involved. All these focus attention to the significant facts that the Church in Persia was independent, it had asserted its autonomy under its own head and that it was not under the jurisdiction of the Church of Syria. The Churches had an independent parallel growth, neither of them having jurisdiction over the other. The Church of Syria had not laid any claim on the growth of the Church in Persia.

It is relevant to mention here that it was with this Catholicate of Persia that the St. Thomas Church of India had maintained ecclesiastical relationship from the very early centuries.

### **The Church under Sassanid Rulers.**

The Persian Empire had come into being after 226 AD when Ardashir, the King of the Persian provinces rebelled against the Parthian King Arshaq and took over the whole empire. He was

24. William G.Young: Hand book of Source Materials (393) pp. 286.

the first Emperor (226-241) of the dynasty of SASSANID. The changing political situation had its effect on the Church in more than one way.

Shapur succeeded Ardashir in 241. He made successive raids into Roman Provinces. Antioch was captured in 256 and Edessa in 260.

When the Sassanids arrived on the scene the Church was more or less spread in major cities of the Empire, since the Parthian rulers were tolerant of the new religion. During the Sassanid rule, subject to their political and national policies, the Church had witnessed periods of growth and decline, peace and peril and protection and persecution. In the third, fourth and fifth centuries, a few major events had strengthened as well as impoverished the Church. If the influx of Christian refugees from the Roman Empire and the rise of Nestorian followers strengthened the Christian Church, persecution of very severe intensity for a period of a century from 339 to 438 AD and the division of the Church by the end of the fifth century weakened the consolidation of the Church in Persia.

### **Influx of Christian Refugees**

The influx of Christians to Persia from the Roman Empire was caused by the politico-religious conditions at different periods. They may be briefly mentioned; firstly, the persecution of Christians in general by the Roman emperors prior to Constantine and the acceptance of fleeing Christians in the Persian Empire.

To quote John Stewart, "One element which must have tended to strengthen the missionary activity of the" Church of the East in the early centuries was the stream of refugees which turned towards Persia to escape the persecution in the Eastern Roman Empire. It is said that during the reign of Decius AD 249, a great multitude of Christians in all the Roman provinces were cut off by various punishments and sufferings in a persecution more cruel and terrific than any that had preceded it.

"In the time of Diocletian (303-4) there were insurrections in Syria and Armenia, the blame for which was laid on the Christians and great number of excellent men were either capitally punished or condemned to the mines".<sup>25</sup>

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25. John Stewart : Nestorian Missionary Enterprise, pp. 7.

Secondly, the ex-communication of Nestorius and his followers by the Council of Ephesus in 431 A.D.; thirdly, the persecution by Roman authorities of those Christians in Syria and Palestine who did not accept the decisions of the Council of Chalcedon held in 451 A.D.; and fourthly, Christians brought as captives by Kings Chosroes I and Chosroes II of Persia who reigned from 531 to 628, from their conquest of Syria and Egypt. These Christians had settled in Nineveh, Mosul, Tigris in the Western areas of Persia. An important fact to be observed here is that these Christians owed allegiance to the Patriarch of the Syrian Church at Antioch, its faith and traditions.

### Persecution and Weakening

The Christians in the Parthian Empire had enjoyed toleration. According to the Chronicle of Arbil, seventeen Sees were established before the end of the Parthian period; almost all within Mesopotamia. However, the situation changed following the advent of Sassanid rulers. A new sense of nationalism and a zeal for the Zoroastrianism which was the national religion of Persia came to prevail. Ardashir, the first king of the Sassanids (226-241) issued an Edict that Fire temples should be set up in honour of his gods, and that the sun, the great god of the whole universe, should be honoured with special worship. He was the first to take the title King of Kings and God.<sup>26</sup>

The Sassanid Kings held two views about the Christians. Firstly, the Christians followed a new religion alien to Zoroastrianism which was the official and national religion. Secondly Christianity was the state religion in Roman empire and was protected by the Roman Emperors, with whom they were at war. In the circumstances, Christians were suspected of their loyalty to the land and Kings and also that they might welcome the protection of the Roman enemy and, therefore, were a security risk. This situation led to the persecution of Christians. The official script commencing persecution said, "The Nazarenes inhabit our country and share the sentiments of our enemy Caesar".<sup>27</sup>

In the order of arrest of Catholicos Shimun, the Persian Emperor called him "Head of the Nazarenes (Christians), who live

26. William G. Young. Hand book of Source Materials (380).

27. Robin E. Waterfield. Christians in Persia P: 19.

in our territory, whose Sympathies are with our enemy”<sup>28</sup>. During the years from 339 to 438, there were three periods of severe persecution which took place under three kings : The Great Persecution of forty years from 339 to 379 under Emperor Sapor II (309-379) the second one from 420 to 422 under Emperor Bihram V and the third in 438 under Emperor Yezdegard II (440-457).

Sir Percy Sykes gives a brief account of the reasons and the extent of the persecution by Emperor Sapor II. “The fact that Christianity became the official religion of the Roman Empire under Constantine was undoubtedly the main cause of the hostility shown to the members of the Eastern Church by Shahpur, a hostility which was increased by Constantine’s somewhat tactless assumption of a protecting interest.

“The first order issued against the Christians was that they should pay double taxes as their contribution to the cost of the war in place of personal services. Mar Shimun, the Catholicus, who was required to collect the money, foolishly refused, on the two-fold grounds that the people were too poor and that a bishop was not a tax collector. He was arrested with many of his colleagues; and on Good Friday 339 A.D., Mar Shimun, five bishops and one hundred priests were executed at Susa, the ancient capital of forgotten Elam. The persecution thus initiated was continued by massacres and the destruction of churches for full forty years. Monks and nuns, especially, being subject to pitiless persecution, because they conspicuously violated the sane tenets of Zoroastrianism”<sup>29</sup>

Sozomen the Greek Church historian, summed up the persecution in these words :

“I briefly state that the number of men and women whose names are known as martyred in this period has been counted as sixteen thousand. But beyond those is a multitude too great to be counted, whose names have not been listed, though Persians, Syrians, and the people of Edessa have given much care to the matter” (Young 390).

This persecution may have surpassed any of the sufferings of the Church in the Roman Empire during the previous century<sup>30</sup>.

28. John Fobster. Church History I-AD 29-500. The First Advance. P. 98.

29. Brigadier General Sir Piercy Sykes. History of Persia Vol. I Ch. XXXVII. P. 415.

30. John Fobster Church History I. AD-29-500. The First Advance. P. 99

The situation, however, changed with the rise of Nestorianism in the Persian horizon.

### Rise of Nestorian Schism

In the third decade of the fourth century, Christendom was surged with a heretical thought on the personality of Christ and consequently on the position of St. Mary, God bearer (Theotokos) = Yoldeth Aloho). Nestorius who hailed from Antioch and became bishop of Constantinople on 10 April 428, was the author of a new thought according to which "Christ is double in nature and single in dignity". He taught : (i) duality of the two natures (God head and manhood) and the integrity of each in Christ; (ii) Godhead in itself can neither be born nor suffer; (iii) the notion of the theotokos (bearer of God) which would assume that the Godhead in itself had been borne, was certainly worse than heretical, and (iv) the Godhead dwells only in the manhood; the latter is only a temple, only a garment of the Godhead and the latter was not born of Mary at the same time with the former, but only passed through Mary, it did not suffer along with humanity; but it remained impossible in the suffering of man"<sup>31</sup>.

The theory of Nestorius was contradicted by many learned fathers of the Church but mainly by Cyril, Patriarch of Alexandria. He stoutly defended Orthodox doctrine on the Personality of Christ and the status of St. Mary as Theotokos as enshrined in the Nicene Creed, in his famous doctrinal second Letter to Nestorius. To quote Dr. V.C. Samuel, "Cyril argues that the Nicene creed, the inviolable norm of orthodoxy, affirms that God the Son himself came down, was incarnated, lived as man, suffered, rose the third day and ascended into heaven". God the Son was, therefore, the subject of Christ's incarnate life. This does not mean however, that God the son changed into man, but it affirms that having united to himself in his own flesh animated with a rational soul, God the Son became man, and was called the Son. By this union the natures of Godhead and man-hood, which are different one from the other, converged into the one Lord Jesus Christ, into an indivisible Unity. Since God the Son, who is eternal united to himself hypostatically at the first moment of his conception, in the womb of the Virgin, she brought forth God, the Son,

31. Heifele History of the Church Vol. III P. 17

incarnate. She was, therefore, Theotokos (one who brings forth God) and the title is central to a sound Christology".<sup>32</sup>

To settle the controversy in Christendom, Emperor Theodosius II convened an ecumenical synod at Ephesus. The Synod met at the Cathedral at Ephesus on June 22, 431 with Cyril Patriarch of Alexandria, presiding. Nestorius was invited but declined to appear. The Council found that Nestorius "held and published impious doctrines" and hence issued a sentence that "Nestorius be excluded from the episcopal dignity and from all priestly communion".<sup>33</sup> In pursuance of the sentence on 23 June 431, which repudiated his impious doctrines and his disobedience to the canons, he had been on 22nd June in accordance with the ecclesiastical laws disposed by the holy synod and expelled from the body of the clergy".<sup>34</sup>

### Nestorians in Persia

Following the Ephesian sentence, Nestorius and his supporters were persecuted in the Roman Empire. They fled to and found refuge in the neighbouring Persian Empire. "When the supporters of Nestorius entered the Persian Empire, Piroz (457-487) was told that these Christians from the Roman Empire were the foes of the Christian Roman Emperor. In order to obtain the fidelity of his own Christian subjects, Piroz granted asylum to the victims persecuted by the Roman Emperor and supported the established Churches in that Empire who supported the Emperor".<sup>35</sup>

Among the Nestorians, Bar Saumo, Metropolitan of Nisibus and Narsai, head of the theological school at Nisibus contributed greatly to the advancement of Nestorianism and downfall of Orthodoxy. Bar Saumo played his cards well and courted the patronage of the Emperor Piroz. He became one of the Advisors of the Emperor. Nestorians thus came to have a period of protection while those of Non-Nestorian persuasion suffered at the hands of Piroz and his son Kavad (484-531). Catholicos Babooyah (Babowai) was put to death on charges of treason that in a letter

32. Dr. V.C. Samuel : The Council of Chalcedon Re-examined. P. 6.

33. HEIFELE : History of the Church. Vol. III. pp. 51-52.

34. & 35. Mar Aprem Nestorian Missions. P. 19.

which he wrote to the Roman Emperor, there was a derogatory remark on the Persian Emperor. Following the death of Babooyah, Metropolitan Bar Saumo of Nisibus called the Synod of Beth Lapat in 484 A.D. which declared the Persian Church to be Nestorian.

Acasius (485-498) succeeded Babooyah. He was a product of the Nestorian School at Nisibus. In 486, he convened a synod at Beth Adrei which acknowledged Nestorius as Church father and adopted a confession of Nestorian faith. "This synod is generally held to mark the final break of the Church in Persia with the West"<sup>36</sup>

### Division of the Persian Church

From the time of Catholicos Acasius, it may be reckoned that the Persian Church came to have two factions—viz. the Non-Nestorians and the Nestorians. In 498, the Nestorians adopted the name Chaldean Church and raised the head of the Church to the status of Patriarch. The Chaldean Church thus came to be the main Church in Persia. Later, during the time of Patriarch Hanne Yeshu II (774-8), the Patriarchate was shifted to Baghdad about 15 miles up the river Tigris from Seleucia Ctesiphon.<sup>37</sup>

The Non-Nestorian group was persecuted and discriminated. To its members, life was insecure in the city of Seleucia. However, it had pockets of strength in other areas in the country. In course of time, it was recognised by the State and continued as a minority Church.

### Orthodox Revival

A major event of far reaching significance in the matter of faith and the course of history of Christianity took place in the fifth century at the Council of Chalcedon held in 451 A.D.

The Council had drawn out a definition on the nature of Christ which outlined the personality of Christ "in two natures" as theorised in the Tome of Leo of Rome presented in the Council as against the "one incarnate nature of Christ" propounded by Patriarch Cyril of Alexandria. The Council adopted the two nature diophysite definition. The Churches of Egypt, Palestine and Syria followed the Alexandrian thought. The Churches which accep-

36. Robin E. Waterfield : Christians in Persia. P. 27.

37. Firth C.B. : An Introduction to the Indian Church History. P. 25.

ted the decision of the Synod came to be called 'Diophysite/Chalcedonian Church and the latter Monophysite. The Monophysites or Non-Chalcedonian Churches in course of time have styled themselves as Orthodox and are herein after referred as such.

The Orthodox were in position in Syria, Palestine and Egypt. Their Patriarchs and bishops in these countries were dethroned, harassed and imprisoned by the Diophysite group supported by the Roman authorities. Eventually, the Orthodox group was bereft of bishops and Patriarchs in these areas at different periods in the fifth and sixth centuries. Emperor Justin II was so inimical to the Orthodox that "at the beginning of the week before Palm Sunday of the year 571, he issued an edict proscribing the non-Chalcedonian body. He ordered their places of worship to be closed, their bishops and priests to be arrested and all their congregations to be disbanded.<sup>38</sup> It was during this period that a silver star appeared in the horizon of the Orthodox Church in the person of Mar Yakoub Burdana (Jacob-Baradaeus—meaning clad in horse cloth).

Born in about 500, at Tella Mauzlat, fifty five miles to the east of Edessa, Jacob was consecrated as bishop in 542 by Theodosius of Alexandria with a universal jurisdiction, with the active support of Empress Theodora. "During an episcopate of lasting for over thirty five years he dedicated himself unsweringly to the service of the persecuted non-Chalcedonian body amidst the greatest of dangers and the bitterest of privations. By his untiring labours he was able to ensure succession in the ancient See of Antioch, ordain bishops and clergy to the number of about a hundred thousand and founded churches in many parts of the east. In this way, despite persecution and disabilities of various kinds, the non-Chalcedonian body held its own in vigorous Christian communities in Egypt, Syria, Mesopotamia and elsewhere in the east.<sup>39</sup>

During his enterprising course of edification of the Orthodox, Mar Yakub had come to Mesopotamia in 559 and finding the Church bereft of its Catholicos, since Aacius, consecrated Ahoudemme as Catholicos. The Persian Orthodox Christians were thus rejuvenated.

38. Dr. V.C. Samuel : The Council of Chalcedon Re-examined. P. 145.

39. *ibid* : pp. 136-137.

Ahoudemme was killed in 575 and was followed by Com Yesu (d. 609) and Samuel (d. 614). With the death of Samuel in 614, the Catholicate once again fell vacant. However, the Orthodox (Monophysite) Christians found support in the wife of Emperor Chosroe II (590-628) who was herself a Monophysite. Her co-believers in Syria were encouraged to immigrate to Persia and settle. It was during this period that a Maphrianate at Tigris was established.

### **Establishment of Maphrianate**

The establishment of a Maphrianate in 629, 25 years after the death of the last Catholicos Samuel, was a significant development which helped the Church to survive and to restore its stature and image. In fact, it was the culmination of a politico-religious circumstances. The centuries old animose relation, between the Roman and Persian Empires, the purge of Nestorians from Roman Empire and consequent influx of Nestorians into Persia who received shelter and political favour from the Persian Emperors and the religious persecutions had contributed to the depletion in the strength and status of the non-Nestorians (Orthodox) believers. They, therefore, had left Seleucia and concentrated in the south-Western parts of Persia like Tigris, Mosul, Nineveh.

The circumstances preceeding the installation of a Maphrian as narrated by Bar Hebraeus, is briefly summed up below.

In 629 Athanasius Gamalo, Patriarch of Antioch, had sent his secretary, Deacon John, to the Persian Emperor at Seleucia to pay his complement following a peace treaty signed between Emperor Heracius and Chosroe in 628. On his return, Deacon John called on Metropolitan Christopher in Mathai's Dayara at Mosul. It may be recalled that the Christians at Mosul were mostly Syrians who were inclined to the Patriarchate of Antioch. During their discussion, the need for Metropolitans for the East was considered and Christopher agreed to approach the Patriarch for the purpose.

Accordingly, Christopher, along with John, five episcopas of the region and three members of the Dayara namely, Morooso, Aithaloho and Aahosier, went to Patriarch Gamalo at Antioch. Christopher made the request to the Patriarch to consecrate the three Dayara members as Metropolitans of the East. The

Patriarch, however, refused to comply reminding them of the Nicaean canons which empowered the Metropolitans of the East to raise their own Metropolitans. O.M. Cherian writes "Heeding the advice, the Eastern episcopas raised Dayarite Morooso as the Great Metropolitans, Catholicos of Tigris and vested in him authority over the Orthodox Church of the East", at the Patriarchate itself.<sup>40</sup>

It was decided in this East-West episcopal meeting that the Catholicos be called **MAPHRIAN** which means one who proliferates, and the headquarters of the Maphrian be at Tigris. Another decision of this synod was that the Metropolitan for Mar Mathai's Dayara shall be consecrated by the Maphrian and when they come together, he shall sit on the right side of the Maphrian in preference over all other episcopas.

The narration of the anecdote recorded by Dr. Alex Paul Urumpackal is also relevant. To quote "The Patriarch (Athanasius Gamalo), did not consecrate him (Mar Marutha) on the ground that the Nicean Canon had given the Orientals the freedom to consecrate their own Metropolitan on the demise of the Metropolitan of the East.

The Patriarch, however, gave a letter of permission authorising the consecration of Mar Marutha and his appointment as the Maphrian of Tagrith. After this re-union with the Patriarch, the Oriental bishops returned to the monastery of Mar Mathai and convoked a synod in 629. Mar Marutha was officially enthroned as the Maphrian of Tagrith. In this synod they formulated 24 canons concerning the organisation of the eparchies in the Orient and the juridical relation between the Maphrian of the Tagrith and the superior of the Monastery of Mar Mathai. Thus in the case of the first Maphrian, the election, consecration and the enthronement were the rights of Orientals. However, in the Institution of this Office, the Patriarch had a role essential and vital".<sup>41</sup>

Dr. V.C. Samuel, however, says that according to the history

40. O.M. Cherian: *Catholicate (Catholicate Simhasanam)* P. 64.

41. Dr. Alex Paul Urumpackal. *The Juridical Status of the Catholicos of Malabar.* P. 27-28.

of Patriarch Michael, Patriarch Gamalo himself consecrated Morooso.<sup>42</sup>

When Patriarch Gamalo raised a Maphrian it was an independent act, independent of the Catholicate established at Seleucia. Another fact to be observed in this context is that the Orthodox Christians at Mosul and nearby areas who were inclined to the Church of Syria desired a connection with that Church and a patronage in contrast to the Nestorian hierarchy of Seleucia.

The story explicit from the incident is that “after consecrating Morutho and the two monks with him, Patriarch Athanasius wrote a letter of commendation to the East, in which he does not make any claim of jurisdiction over the Persian Church. On the other hand, he says that the four Eastern Bishops requested him to assume leadership over them and the Church in the East as he was doing in the West. But he, though he was very reluctant on account of the difficulty involved in it, yielded to their persuasion of love. Accordingly he granted their request and agreed to guide them, God helping and improve their ecclesiastical affairs, The bishops from the East did not ask for any autonomy or the office of the Catholicos in place of the Catholicos of Seleucia, who had become Nestorian but they wanted the Patriarch to add the Eastern Provinces also under his administration and jurisdiction. The Patriarch agreed to fulfil this obligation.”<sup>43</sup>

In the letter, the Patriarch—Maphrian relationship is stated like this: “For the ordering of the Churches, we have consecrated, with divine assistance and the agreement of the said bishops Metropolitan Morutho from the land of the Arabs, as Chief and common leader of all the bishops. He is so consecrated that he may fill our face and place for all as our representative. The Patriarch is governing the Eastern provinces through his agent, the Chief Metropolitan of the East.”<sup>44</sup>

On reviewing the history of the Persian Church, one finds that two institutions had developed in that Church—the initial autonomous Catholicate and a later Maphrianate with the association of the Church of Syria.

42. Dr. V.C. Samuel. *Malankara Sabhayude Antiochean Bandhom*. pp. 58.

43 & 44. Dr. V.C. Samuel. *History of the Catholicate (Chapter II)*.

### One Church — Patriarchate and Maphrianate Divisions

With the establishment of Maphrianate, a qualitative change in the character of the Persian Church had developed. The earlier indigenous character and indigenous nature was replaced by an affection and allegiance to the Church of Syria. The move had begun with Jacob Burdana when he consecrated Ahoudemme in 559 as Catholicos. Thus the Church in Persia came to have two traditions, one following the Nestorian tradition with centre at Seleucia in the East Persia and the other the Syrian Orthodox tradition centred at Tigris in West Persia. The Syrian Church itself consequently came to have two constituents and traditions geographically—one around the Patriarchate at Antioch and the other around the Maphrianate at Tigris.

The issues which deserve consideration are of juridical importance—that is, whether the Maphrian was obliged to the Patriarch in any way; whether, he was the representative of Patriarch and whether the Patriarch was governing Persian Church through the Maphrian. In other words, with the installation of Maphrianate, was the Patriarch exercising juridical authority over the Persian Church? Conversely, was the Maphrian subordinate to the Patriarch? The position obtained was that with the installation of Maphrian by the Patriarch, the Maphrian was obliged to the Patriarch of Antioch and was subject to him. A two-way relationship was established, as distinct from the sovereign status of a Catholicos. Nevertheless, Maphrian functioned as the head of an independent Church with freedom of authority and without interference from Patriarch in the internal administration.

The considerations which were envisaged in the Maphrian-Patriarch relationship may be summed up, in the words of Dr. V.C.Samuel, as follows: “After 629, the Patriarch of Syria at Antioch and the Maphrian of Tigris were considered as two heads of Churches representing the Western and Eastern divisions of one Church. They decided to function within one’s own sphere of authority without interfering administratively in the other’s domain. Moreover, they repeatedly proclaimed that on the occasion of consecration of Maphrian, the Patriarch and on the occasion of the consecration of Patriarch, the Maphrian shall be the Chief Celebrant. However, there have been occasions when Patriarchs, in violation of the agreements, interfered in the area

of jurisdiction of Maphrian and also appointed Patriarchs without the presence of Maphrian. On all such occasions, the Maphrians had protested and consequently succeeding Maphrians were installed without the presence of Patriarchs. These disruptions in relationships used to end in reconciliations on the basis of the conditions governing Patriarch-Maphrian relations enunciated originally.

“In the Church of Syria in the Middle-East from 629 onwards there existed a Western Division and an Eastern Division. The Western Division covered the modern countries of Syria, Lebanon, Turkey, Jordan, Israel while the Eastern Division covered the north western regions of the present day countries of Iran and Iraq. The head of the Western division was Patriarch and the Eastern Division, the Maphrian. The Maphrian used to be called the Catholicos and the Catholicos of The East.”<sup>45</sup>

There arose tension in the friendly relationship of Maphrian and Patriarch following the death of Morooso in 649. Theodore who was the Patriarch deemed it his prerogative to consecrate the next Maphrian, contrary to the right and tradition of the Easterners to raise their own head. Although the Easterners resented this move, a compromise formula was arrived at, according to which the consecration of the Patriarch shall be held by the Maphrian and that of the Maphrian by the Patriarch. It is said that this was recorded in the proceedings of the council of bishops of both sides. Consequently in a synod presided over by Patriarch Theodore, Denaha I was consecrated as Maphrian of Tigris in 649. This mutually accepted procedure of consecration of one by the other between the Maphrian and Patriarch continued to be followed in subsequent situations when either the Maphri-  
anate or Patriarchate fell vacant.

### **Kaphthurtha Synod 869**

However, there have been frequent eruptions of relations between successive Catholicoses and Patriarchs. During the time of Catholicos Baselios Lo Aaosar (856-869), the tension with Patriarch Youhanon reached a climax<sup>46</sup>. The Catholicos

45. Dr. V.C. Samuel. : Antioch, and Patriarch, Catholicos Maphrian designations.—Article Published in Malayalam in the Church Weekly (Kottayam) Sept. Oct. 1978.

46. George. T.V. : Mar Thoma Sleehayude Pourasthya Catholica Simhasanam P. 50,

consecrated three Metropolitans and appointed them to dioceses under the Patriarchate. The Patriarch in retaliation consecrated a rival Catholicos Malchisedek (858-869) at Tigris. Reacting the Maphrian removed the name of Patriarch from the Tubden (Diptychus). Both the Catholicos and Patriarch excommunicated each other. However, the situation eased when both Lo Aosaur and Malchisedek expired in 860. The Catholicate lay vacant till 869.

In these circumstances, the episcopas of both the Catholicate and the Patriarchate assembled at Kaphthurtha in 869 to work out a reconciliation. Patriarch Youhanon had convened this synod, which made the following decisions<sup>47</sup>.

1. The Episopas and inmates of the Dayara of Mar Mathai should be under the obedience of the Maphrian of Tigris.
2. The Patriarch of Antioch shall not enter the See of Maphrian for any administrative purpose (interfere in administrative matters) unless invited; like-wise the Maphrian also shall not enter the See of the Patriarch.
3. When the Patriarch of Antioch and the Maphrian come together, the Maphrian shall occupy the first seat on the right hand side of the Patriarch.
4. Patriarch shall not be consecrated without the "Shal mousa"—letter of acceptance of the Maphrian, in case he is living. In case he does so, the Easterners shall have the freedom to raise the Maphrian themselves. Regarding who should lay hand on the Patriarch on the occasion of his consecration, whether it is the Maphrian or the President of the Synod, the person agreed by a committee consisting of four Episcopas each from the West and East, should do so.
5. The parishes of Kardoo, Bes-sabdai and the Negroneans of Madoye, if the Arabs agree, shall be within the jurisdiction of Tigris.
6. Decisions on disputes between Westerners and Easterners. (The excommunications made by them should be

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47. Bar Hebraeus : Huddayye Canon Chapter 7. Pt. I (1963) pp. 86-7.

withdrawn”—O.M. Cherian. *Catholica Simhasanom* P : 72).

7. Particulars about the three Episcopas consecrated by Maphrian in the See of the Patriarch.
8. The Episcopa ex-communicated by the Maphrian shall be ipso facto ex-communicated by the Patriarch also”.

### **Bar Hebraeus's Comment**

Notwithstanding the Kaphthurtha Council decisions, instances were there which showed that these provisions were not scrupulously followed. Such a situation developed during Bar Hebraeus's time. In 1283, when the Antiochene hierarchy installed Mar Philoxenos as Patriarch, Bar Hebraeus, the Maphrian of the East, was not invited as required under the Council's terms. The latter was very sore at this violation of a convention. The prelates of the Patriarchate from the monastery of Bar Sawma came to the Maphrian to tender apologies. Bar Hebraeus refused to receive them. Venerable aged Rabban Simon came to him thereafter. Receiving him, Bar Hebraeus said; “From ancient times, the holy fathers laid down that a Maphrian cannot be established without a Patriarch and a Patriarch cannot be established without a Maphrian. And since these (men) have transgressed the law and the canons of the Fathers, I have no part with them; neither will I associate myself with him in their transgression of the law”.<sup>48</sup>

### **Installation of Patriarch Daud'sha 1581**

The record of the minutes of the synod of Church of Syria which met in 1581 to elect Daud'sha as Patriarch also throw light on the traditional cooperation between the Churches.

Ernest Honigman has recorded that the first signatory to the minutes was Basselius, Catholicos of the East and India-on the throne of St. Thomas the Apostle<sup>49</sup>. This record shows the status of the Catholicos, his relation to the Church in India and his pre-

48. Ernest A Wallis Budge : *A Chronography of Mar Gregorios Abul Faraj Bar Hebraeus.* pp. xxvi.

49. Ernest Honigman : *The Covenant of Bar Souma and the Jacobite Patriarch in Syria-CSCO Thoma 7 Page 72.* Vatican Library. (Reported in Malankara Sabha December 1974-Volume 29/12 P. 326-St. Thomas The Apostle and Malankara Sabha)

rogative in the participation in the election of the Patriarch. Perhaps, he may have presided over the Synod.

All these records make clear two important facts: one-that both Churches were independent in respect of their spheres of jurisdiction and the other that in regard to consecration of the heads of the Churches, the Patriarch and the Catholicos cooperated.

### **Liturgical tradition**

The identical nature of both the Churches was reflected in their form of worship also. In its worship, the Persian Church followed the Syrian liturgical tradition. Vis-a-vis the historical division of the Church in the fifth century, the liturgical tradition also underwent changes. In the words of Mar Gregorios : “The Syrian tradition itself is divided into two : The East Syrian and the West Syrian.

The East Syrian tradition has developed along with the so-called Nestorian lines while the West Syrian tradition has followed the pattern set by the first three ecumenical councils. Within the West Syrian Church itself there developed two traditions-the one in the Patriarchate and the other in the Maphrianate of Mesopotamia and Persia”.<sup>50</sup>

### **Catholicate and Maphrianate**

The history of the Persian Church as afore-said came to have two different heads, a Catholicos and a Maphrian, at different periods of history. The evolution of one is distinct from the other and each has a different connotation. An attempt is made here to identify the two.

### **Catholicos**

The position of Catholicos as head of a Church in contrast to the term Patriarch at Alexandria and Antioch, developed outside the Roman Empire. In the Roman Empire, the titles Patriarch and Pope were the formal names used for the head of Churches although the title of Catholicos was in vogue in a non-ecclesiastical context. In the Roman administrative hierarchy, Catholicos was a

50. Mar Gregorios (Fr. Paul Varghese) *The Liturgical Tradition of the Syrian Orthodox Church*. (The Orthodox Theological Seminary Annual Report-1969-70) pp: 16

Government Official with administrative authority over a great territory.

It is a well established fact that the Persian Church evolved on its own volition and initiative a Chief Metropolitan called Catholicos, as their head in the Synod held at Seleucia in 410 A.D., with Papa holding the position. Bar Hebraeus has depicted a different story with Ahod Abuei becoming the Catholicos at the hands of the fathers at Jerusalem in 231 A.D. This story indicates an earlier evolution of the Catholicos in 231 A.D. and an earlier antiquity. Irrespective of the difference in the date of its origin pointed out by the historians, it is a historical truth that the Persian Church was headed by a Catholicos.

The significant aspect in the evolution of the Catholicos is that it was established consequent of a self-declared independent status by the Metropolitans of Persia in the Synod of Seleucia. The office of the Catholicos, that is, the Catholicate which came into being, independent of any external participation, denotes the autonomy and freedom of authority within the area of its jurisdiction and also "the juridical independence and the status as the Head of the Church in Persia."<sup>51</sup> The Church in Seleucia later in 498 changed the office of Catholicos into that of a Patriarch. In this background, the Catholicos of Seleucia began to be called Catholicos—Patriarch, also.

About the authority of this Catholicos, Dr. Alex Paul Urumpackal gives the following exposition:

"The Catholicos at the very beginning had all the authority which the Patriarch had. The Catholicos was juridically fully independent for the administration of the Catholicate and there was no interference on the office of the Catholicos or in the election of the Catholicos thereafter from the part of the Patriarch. William F. Malcombar has this to say about the authority of the Catholicos of Seleucia: "It can thus be seen that practically all the powers that the bishop of Rome has traditionally exercised in the Church Universal are attributed to the Catholicos Patriarch of the Seleucia-Ctesphon for the region under his jurisdiction—the powers to make laws, command obedience, to organize the Church,

51. Dr. Alex Paul Urumpackal. *The Juridical Status of the Catholicos of Malabar.* pp. 23.

to appoint bishops, to regulate monasteries and the liturgy, to teach, to censure books, to judge, to impose ecclesiastical censures and to absolve. Missing are canonisation of saints and the granting of indulgences and marriage, dispensations which seem to have been simply unknown in the ancient Chaldean Church.”<sup>52</sup>

His authority was so great that he needed no help from outside for the continuity and the administration of the Church. Thus the Catholicos was the Pope in the Persian Church in a sense.”<sup>53</sup>

### **Maphrian**

The Persian Church came to have Maphrian as its head at Tigris in the year 629. The Church was non-Nestorian non-Chalcedonian in character. It was Orthodox.

The Maphrian, at Tigris was the head of a Church, was a new creation distinct from the Catholicos of Seleucia. The Maphrianate was established by the Patriarch of the Church of Syria. The Maphrian owed allegiance to the Patriarch and was considered as the Vicar of the Patriarch, in Persia. However, the Maphrians’ used to uphold their independence and autonomy as under Catholicos. There have been agreements on protocol, equality of status and administrative independence as well as jurisdiction between the Maphrians and Patriarchs. The decisions of the Synod of Kaphthurtha stand prominent in the Maphrian—Patriarch relationship.

In course of time, the term Maphrian came to be used synonymous to Catholicos, especially since the time of Bar Hebraeus.

### **Decline of Maphrianate**

The course of history of the Church in Persia was once again affected by political upheavels in the seventh century. This time it was the politico-religious force of Islam that threatened the existence of Christianity in Persia.

### **Muslim Invasion**

Prophet Mohammed founded Islam in early seventh century. By the time he died in 632, the Muslims had become a

52. William F. Macomber. *I Patriarchate Orientalinel Primo Millimo* pp. 189 —Quoted by Dr. Alex Paul Urumpackal. pp. 25-26.

53. Dr. Alex Paul Urumpackal. *The Jurdical Status of the Malabar Church*. pp. 26.

force to be reckoned with, in 633 they burst out of Arab peninsula and invaded Persian Empire. The Muslim campaign lasted for twenty years. Seleucia Ctesiphon fell to the invaders in 638. In 652, King Yazdegard III was killed and the Sassanid dynasty came to an end. And the country came under the rule of Muslim Caliphs. Under the Muslim Caliphs the Orthodox received favoured treatment. "By the thirteenth century, this Jacobite Church under Arab Rule had twelve Metropolitans with over a hundred bishops spread over Syria, Turkey, Iraq, Iran and Arabia".<sup>54</sup>

During the centuries that followed the Muslims exerted all possible ways of force to strangulate the Christian religion and convert the Christians to Islam. Restrictions were mounted on the freedom of the Church to worship as a corporate body and disabilities were placed on individual Christians. Robin E. Waterfield says, "It (the Church) was forbidden to build new Churches, in towns or large villages, although old buildings could be repaired. All Baladhuri tells us that among the conditions made after the surrender of Edessa, were: Christians must no longer publicly strike clappers (the alternate to bells widely used in the Eastern Church), they must not openly celebrate Easter Monday nor must they display the cross in public. At different periods various other cramping regulations were imposed on the Church."<sup>55</sup>

However, with varied degrees of strength the Maphrianate continued to function. With the capture of Baghdad by Hulaghu Khan, the nephew of the warlord Chenghiz Khan in 1258, the end of Christian Church in Persia was in sight. The eclipse of Christianity was hastened when the Mongolian leader Ghazal Khan embraced Islam. The whole army was forced to accept Islam and the population of the invaded country also was asked to follow suit. When Timur stormed Persia in 1400 the Christians were massacred in thousands. They were also converted forcibly in large numbers to Islam.

The Maphrianate in such tragic circumstances continued to function in very limited strength till mid-nineteenth century. The last Maphrian 81st in succession was Behnam IV who expired in 1865 and with his death the Maphrianate was widowed. A list of the Catholicoses—Maphrians is given in Annexure I.

54. Dr. Paulos Mar Grogorios : The Indian Orthodox Church. pp. 18.

55. Robin E. Waterfield : Christians in Persia. pp. 34.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### INDO-PERSIAN CHURCH RELATIONS

The Indian Church as developed in Malabar in the early centuries had enjoyed ecclesiastical sustenance from the Church in Persia. Priests from this land used to go to Persia for ecclesiastical training and ordination. Priests, Metropolitans, Catholicoses from Persia had visited the Malabar Church from the early centuries to the 18th century. Christians from Persia had immigrated and settled in Malabar. Travellers from abroad found Christian communities in Kerala having relationship with Persian Church. Moreover, archaeological evidence of Persian Crosses and the use of Syriac liturgy substantiate the Indo-Persian Church relationship. Writings of Church fathers, historical records, and travellogues are extant to throw light on this relationship.

#### St. Thomas

The fundamental and vital link between the Indian and Persian Churches is St. Thomas, the Apostle. He preached in the present-day State of Kerala and also in parts of Persia before coming to Kerala. His relics were translated from Mylapore to Edessa in Persia at that time.<sup>1</sup> Given this background, St. Thomas is claimed as the founder father of both the Churches.

#### PERSIAN PRESENCE IN MALANKARA

##### Visitors :

##### Mar David — 295-300 A.D.

Ecclesiastical leaders from Persia and other travellers had visited Malankara Church at different periods. The earliest visitor from Persia recorded in history is Metropolitan David (Dudi) of Basra. He is said to have come “during the Patriarchate (?) of Shahalupa and Papa, say about 295-300”. He left his See and went to India, where he evangelised many people”.<sup>2</sup> Papa was Catholicos from 267 to 336 A.D.

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1. Please see Chapter One.

2. *Patrologia Orientalis*—iv. pp. 326, 392 quoted by Mar Aprem in *Nestorian Missions*. (1976) pp. 48

**Cana Thoma and Mar Joseph — 345 A.D.**

In 345, Cana Thoma and Mar Joseph, Bishop of Edessa, accompanied by priests deacons and others immigrated to India. They landed at Kodungallur in the north-west shore of Kerala. The immigration has already been described in Chapter two.

**Mar Yonan 390 A.D.**

Again, we find that Mar Yonan from Anbar (Baghdad) came to India as recorded in "a Syrian book called "Life of Hermit Yonan", written about 390 A.D. by Sadoe, who called himself priest monk and Archmandrite of the monastery of St. Thomas in India.

These three bishops, it may be observed, belonged to a period before the onset of Nestorianism in Persia.

**Theophilus 354 A.D.**

In 354 A.D., Emperor Constantine sent a mission with Theophilus, a native of the Maldive Islands (off the west coast of India) to South Arabia, Abyssinia and Ceylon. He visited the Christian Community in Malabar. Commenting on the proceedings of Theophilus, Moraes says:

"In 354. Malabar was visited by Theophilus, a native of the Maldives islands of the West Coast of India. He had been sent by the islanders when quite young as a hostage to the Romans during the reign of Constantine the Great (306-37 A.D). Baptised at Constantinople, Theophilus became a monk and was ordained a deacon by Eusebius of Nicomedia and was consecrated as Arian bishop about 350 A.D. He was sent out by Constantius for the express purpose of spreading the Arian doctrines in the Himyar, and in the country of Adon, in his own land and in India".

**Daniel, the priest**

We are told that a priest from India, named Daniel, actually helped Ishodad to translate from the Greek original into Syriac a commentary on the Epistle to Romans by Mar Koman (Mingana-P. 28).

On review, Moraes states: "The Indian Church was not connected with other centres and had possibly traditions of its own in the matter of observances in the church and surely it also had its

own ministers. But this church maintained friendly relations with Edessa and with Seleucia Ctesiphon on account of their almost common origin. It is, therefore, not surprising that Indian priests should be sent to Persia for ecclesiastical training”<sup>3</sup>.

#### **Cosmas 522 A.D.**

Cosmas, a merchant of Alexandria, known as Indicopleastus (Indian sailor), had visited India in 522 and given an account of the Christians in his work “Christian Topography”, as follows “In the country called Male (Malabar) where the pepper grows, there is also a church and at another place called Kalyana, (Kalyan, Bombay) there is more over a bishop who is appointed from Persia.

Taprobane is an oceanic island ..... it lies on the other side of the pepper country. This island has also a church of Persian Christians and a presbyter who is appointed from Persia and a deacon and all the apparatus of public worship”<sup>4</sup>.

#### **Mar Maruta 600 A.D.**

Further, the Nestorian Chronicle of Se’ert refers to the Christian community and “records that Marutha (Ex. 600 A.D) of Tagrit who later became the West Syrian Maphriana of the East received gifts from India and China”<sup>5</sup>.

#### **Persian Crosses**

The relationship between the two Churches has also been strengthened from the evidences of the four Crosses which are believed to be of Persian architecture and erected in Malankara in the Seventh or Eighth century. The Crosses have inscriptions on them in Pahlavi language which was in use during the reign of Sassanid kings in Persia in the seventh century. These crosses are still preserved in the Cnanaya Jacobite Church at Kottayam, in the Jacobite Church at Kadamattom (found in 1921) and in the Romo-Syrian Church at Muttuchira (found in 1924). The inscription on the Cross at Jacobite Church at Kottayam has been translated as “My Lord, Christ have mercy upon Afras, son of Chaharbukt, the Syrian, who preserved this”<sup>6</sup>. As regards the Cross at Kadama-

3. George Mark Moraes : A History of Christianity in India. P. 70

4. Cosmas Indico Pleastus : Christian Topography Books 3 & 11 quoted by William Young - Book of Source Materials-30-pp. 29-30

5. Dr. Paulos Mar Gregorios : The Indian Orthodox Church - An Overview (1982) P. 27

6. Keay F.E. : A History of the Syrian Church in India. page 28.

1911-1912



Persian Cross at Cnanite Jacobite Church, Kottayam



ttom Church, "the inscription reads as follows : I, a beautiful bird from Nineveh (have come) to this country, written Mar Shapur. I whom holy Messia, the forgiver, freed from thorn (affliction". Mar Shapur is identified with Maruvan Sapir Iso"<sup>7</sup>. Another Cross of the type in the Cnanaya Church is also seen in the Roman Catholic Church at St. Thomas Mount, Madras.

### **Mar Sabr Iso, Mar Piroz and Immigrants, 823 A.D.**

In the ninth century also another batch of Christians from Persia migrated to India. Two Persian bishops Mar Sabr Iso and Mar Piroz came along with them to Quilon in 823 A.D. They were well received and were given royal patronage. History does not throw any light on the allegiance of the bishops, either to the Maphrianate at Tigris or the Patriarchate at Baghdad. The arrival and other details about these immigrants are given in chapter two.

### **Gabriel Mar Youhanon**

Bar Hebraeus, the noted historian and Catholicos at Tigris, has recorded that the consecration of the Catholicos Basselius Mar Messiah (1189-1204) was attended by Gabriel Mar Youhanon from India.

### **Mar Yakoub Episcopa 1301 A.D.**

A Syriac manuscript maintained in the Vatican Library (Catalogue 186-189) indicates that it was written in 1301 at St. Kuriakose Church at Sengala (Kodungallur) in Malabar, India at the time of Catholicos Patriarch Abun Mar Yahhallah V (III) and Metropolitan Mar Yakoub Episcopa on the throne of St. Thomas of the East.

### **Travellers' Records:**

#### **Jordan Catallani 1321 A.D.**

Travellers to India in the succeeding centuries have given first hand accounts of the St. Thomas Christians and their contact with the Persian Church. The visit of Dominican friar Jordan Catallani to India in 1321 is an important event to be recorded. The story is that : "Four Franciscan missionaries, intending to go to China, had got stuck in the Port of Tawrus in 1320. There was a Dominican friar Jordan Catallani who had learned the Persian language well. Jordan joined the four Franciscans and went to India, landing in Thana near present-day Bombay in 1321.

7. A Sreedhara Menon. Gazetteer of India, Kerala Ernakulam 1965. Page 93

He discovered small Christian communities there under "Persian allegiance both in Thana and Gujarat. The Persians had neglected them for long. He found these Eastern Christians very susceptible to any form of Christian teaching. Jordan went back to Europe, gave an account of the Church in India to Pope and King as well as to the public in his *Mirabilica Descripta*. He was consecrated bishop of Quilon and sent back to India by Pope John XXII, with three letters : (a) one to all Christians of India, (b) another to Catholic converts from Paganism or hearsay and (c) a third one addressed to the Nazcarini (Nazarani) Christians of Quilon<sup>8</sup>.

### **Oderic of Udine 1321**

### **Ludovico de Vantheme 1505**

According to Oderic of Udine, a member of the Mission of the Franciscans and Dominican friars who visited Quilon in 1321, there were fifteen Nestorian families in Quilon. Ludovico de Vantheme, an Italian traveller who visited Malabar in 1505, noted that about every three years a priest from Babylon used to come to Kayamkulam<sup>9</sup>.

### **Francis Day**

If the briefs of the above travellers point to the presence of Nestorians in Malankara, other records are also extant indicating the Orthodox habitation. "While the Nestorian Patriarch of Seleucia were trying to exercise jurisdiction over India, the Jacobite Patriarchs of Antioch were also doing the same through their Catholicos. Francis Day in his "Land of the Perumals" mentions a Jacobite Bishop from Alexandria who came to India in 696 AD. In a note on page 25 of "India Orientalis Christiana", it is stated that Renadot quotes Allatius as saying that the Patriarch of Antioch claimed to have jurisdiction in India though there is no record that they ever sent bishops there. Nilus Doxopatrius (1043 A.D.) mentions that India was under the Patriarch of Antioch. The Nestorian Patriarch Alexander III sent up a petition to the Caliph of Baghdad stating that the Catholicos under the Patriarch of Antioch was sending bishops for countries under him"<sup>10</sup>.

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8. Dr. Paulos Mar Gregorios: The Indian Orthodox Church – An overview p. 28
  9. Brown L.W. : The Indian Christians of St. Thomas. p. 84
  10. V. Nagam : Aiya The Travaneore State Manual Vol II p. 124.

### Metropolitan for India

In the long innings of relationship with the Persian Church, did the Indian Church have an Indian Metropolitan? There is no mention of an Indian bishop either in the Nestorian Church history or Syrian Church history of Michael Rabo (Patriarch of Antioch) or Church History of Bar Hebraeus (1266-86). The lists of bishops at Council of Nicaea (325), Ephesus (381), Constantinople (431) and Chalcedon (451) do not indicate any Indian bishop. However, the See of India is understood to have been under the charge of the Metropolitanate of Fars (Riwardisher) in Southern Persia. The Nestorian Canonist Ibn al Tayyib says "In the time of the Catholicos Izhaq (309-410), the Metropolitans of Fars and Meru were created; and in the time of Ishu Yab, the Metropolitans of Halwan Harat, Samargand, India and China were established".<sup>11</sup>

It is not identified which Ishu Yab was this—whether Ishu Yab I (582-595), Ishu Yab II (628-643) or Ishu Yab III (650-660)? Taking into account these records, Church historians conclude that in the seventh century the Persian Church had in position a Metropolitan for the Church in India, but the Metropolitan city in India has not been identified. It is also a fact that the Metropolitans of Fars (Rewardisher) held an independent position not subject to the authority of the Patriarch of the East.

Two instances deserve mentioning. Yazdad was the Metropolitan of Rewardisher when the Church at Seleucia turned Nestorian at the time of Acacius (485-498); he, however, did not contribute to the Nestorian faith and refused to accept the Nestorianising decision.<sup>12</sup> The other incident is reflected in the struggle between Patriarch Ishu Yahb III, (650-660) and Shimun, Metropolitan of Fars. The rebellion and schism of Shimun were alleged by the Patriarch eight letters. In one of his letters to Shimun he is accused of "closing the door of episcopal ordination in the face of many peoples of India and impeding the gift of God for the sake of perishable gains which feed bodily desire" and further that, "As far as your province is concerned, since your revolt against ecclesiastical canons, the priestly succession has been broken for the people of India."<sup>13</sup>

11. William G. Young. Handbook of Source Materials (16). p. 21.

12. Dr. Paulos Mar Gregorios : The Indian Orthodox Church - An Overview. p. 18.

13. *ibid* : p. 25.

Mar Gregorios traces this independent and insubordinate stance of the Metropolitan of Rewardisher upto the time of Patriarch Timothy I (779-823) in the early ninth century and says, "If there was any Persian authority over the Church in India, it was the Metropolitan of Rewardisher and the evidence does not allow us to believe that this See accepted the so-called Nestorianism of the Patriarchate of the East."<sup>14</sup>

All these point to the fact that the South Persian Metropolitanate of Fars was not Nestorian till it was run over by the Muslims. However, the Nestorian Patriarchs continued to make attempts to create independent Nestorian Metropolitanate in India directly under them. From early eighth century onwards, a separate Metropolitanate for India came into existence, as is evident from the following statement of Mar Gregorios. "Babylonian Patriarch Sliba Zoha (714-728) raised the Indian Church back to its traditional dignity of a Metropolitanate freeing it from the jurisdiction of the Bishop of Rewardisher. The traditional title, by the eleventh and twelfth centuries of the primate of the Indian Church was "The Metropolitan and the Gate of All India. The Vatican Syriac Codex 22 written in Cranganore in 1301 A.D., written by a deacon Zacharias attached to Mar Jacob, the current Metropolitan in Malabar, says : Mar Jacob, bishop Metropolitan, prelate and ruler of the Holy see of the Apostle St. Thomas, namely, our ruler and (the Ruler) of the Entire Holy Church of the Christians of India."<sup>15</sup>

The St. Thomas Christians persisted in maintaining an Eastern tradition even when they failed to get continued ecclesiastical support and leadership. The fact that they took initiative in retaining the contact with Persia is evident in another Syriac document No. 204 taken by one Andreas Iskander to Rome in the 18th century. The story narrated in the document is as follows :

"The Christians of India had been without a bishop for several generations. Their head was an Archdeacon. The Malabar Christians sent a delegation of three of their people, asking them to approach any of the Eastern prelates, in Seleucia-Ctesiphon (Persia), Antioch (West Syria), or Alexandria (Egypt)

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14. *ibid* : p. 26.

15. *ibid* : p. 14.

with a request to restore the episcopate in India. They set out for Baghdad. One of the them died on the way. The other two met the East Syrian Patriarch at Gazirah, and were ordained priests by the Patriarch. They were asked to go to monastery of Mar Augen (Eugene) to select (and persuade) monks who could then be consecrated as bishops and sent to India. Two monks are chosen and consecrated as bishops-Mar Thoma and Mar Yuhanon. The two Bishops and the two Indian priests returned to India and were welcomed enthusiastically. They consecrated altars and priests, and the Syrian Church was thus restored at the end of the 15th Century".<sup>16</sup>

"Bishop Mar Thoma returned to Mesopotamia to report to the Patriarch. The previous Patriarch Simon V had died in the meantime and his successor Mar Elias V (1502-3) consecrated three more monks from the monastery of Mar Augen as bishops for the Indian Church-Mar Yahballaha, Mar Denha and Mar Jacob.

These three accompanied by Mar Thoma reached India safely in 1503 and the East Syrian Church was well-established in India by the first decade of the 16th century."<sup>17</sup>

In a letter which they sent to the Patriarch in 1504, it was mentioned that there were about 30,000 families of Christians in Malabar and a monastery of St. Thomas at Mylapore.

This was the situation that was obtained in Malankara at the time of the arrival of the Portuguese and the Roman Catholic prelates on the scene. It, however, cannot be conclusively held that the Malankara Church was entirely Nestorian before the Portuguese arrival. For, "at least upto the 14th century the Maphrianate in Mesopotamia representing the West Syrian Church was both numerous in membership and flourishing.

### **Catholicoses Yalda, Sakralla and Elias**

It is recent history that two of the later Catholicoses of Tigris came to Malankara. They were : Baslios Yalda (d. 1685) and Baslios Sakrallah (1751-1764). The former lies buried at Cheria Pally, Kothamangalam and the latter at Kandanand.

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16 & 17. *ibid.* p. 29.

Baselios Mar Elias III was the last but one Catholicos at Tigris who later became the Patriarch of Syria. It was from this Mar Elias that Palakunnath Mathews Mar Athanasius received consecration as Malankara Metropolitan in 1842.

Unfortunately, historical records are not extant the presence of the Persian prelates in India to prove. The history of Maphrianate also does not mention any Metropolitan to have come to India in the Portuguese period. It will not, therefore, be out of place or illogical to assume that prelates from both groups in the Persian Church had continued to visit Malankara Church and that followers of both Nestorian and non-Nestorian persuasion existed in varying degrees of strength. The Church as a whole, it could never be said, was Nestorian. Mar Gregorios, therefore, says, "especially if the Catholicate and the Maphrianate flourished parallel in Babylon, it is very difficult indeed to interpret the scanty references to the Persian connection as finally proving that the Church here was (Nestorian) during the period under dispute before 1490."<sup>18</sup>

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18. Mar Gregorios (Paul Varghese) *The Church in Kerala at the coming of Portuguese*. *The St. Thomas Christians Encyclopaedia of India* Vol. 2, p. 35.

## CHAPTER FIVE

# MALANKARA CHURCH AND THE CHURCH OF ROME

### Portuguese Power

By the middle of the fifteenth century, Portugal had grown to be a great maritime power in the Western hemisphere, and her enterprising and adventurous navigators had found their way into yet unexplored continents. The Roman Catholic Church had blessed and given unstinted support to all such endeavours. The Popes had emphasised the Christian element in the discoveries and conquests of new lands and had called upon the Christian powers to encourage missionaries and at a later date to found and endow bishoprics. "The intention of the Portuguese was to make sure that their country had the monopoly of trade relations between the Indies and Europe. The clergy who along with them had left the banks of Tagus had equally strong ideas of absolutism. Pope Celestus III, in his Bull *Inter Caetera* of 13 March 1455, had granted to the Grand Master of the Militia Christi jurisdiction over the whole of Africa from Cape Bojador onwards and also over the Southern parts of Asia."<sup>1</sup> Further in 1514, the Pope and the King of Portugal signed an agreement, known as *PADROADO*, by which prelates in regions under Portuguese influence in the East had to be jointly appointed, after mutual consultation.<sup>2</sup> The Portuguese ships, therefore, landed with a view to fulfilling this twin task of establishing trade contacts and evangelisation.

### Roman Influence over Persia

Towards the end of fifteenth century, the Roman Catholic Church had definitely extended its influence over Persian Church. Their fight against Nestorianism continued successfully. Large number of people and clergy of the Nestorian Church joined the

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1. Tisserant : *Eastern Christianity*: page 33.

2. Thomas : 'Churches in India'

Roman Catholic fold. A dialogue started between the Roman Catholic Church and the Chaldean Church. The Chaldean Patriarch Abdisho had accepted the supremacy of the Pope and his jurisdiction over India too.

### Archbishopric of Goa

The most famous among early Portuguese seamen to land on the shores of India was Vasco-da-Gama. On May 14, 1498, he set foot on Cranganore in Kerala. Later on, they entrenched in other places, especially in Cochin and Goa where they established their forts and trading centres. By 1560, they had fortified their position on the West and East coasts. Goa was, however, the centre of Portuguese dominion in India and was also made an archbishopric in 1557. The Archbishop of Goa was the representative of the Pope with relative power over the whole of India and he had the tacit backing of the Portuguese armed force. Also, the body of highest ecclesiastical power of the Roman Church in India, called the INQUISITION, was located at Goa. Consequently, the Malabar See inevitably came under the jurisdiction of the Archbishop of Goa. Brown writes, "The Council of Goa resolved that the diocese of the Serra (Malankara) should be governed by a bishop appointed by the king of Portugal and not by the Chaldean Patriarch or if this transfer of authority was not expedient, that the Archbishop of Ankamali (the traditional title of the bishop of St. Thomas Christians) should be bound to attend the Council of Goa...Any bishop coming to this Serra must first present his papers at Goa."<sup>3</sup>

### Portuguese and the St. Thomas Christians

At the time of the opening of the Portuguese front in Malankara, the Christian community had been so long established that there was nothing foreign in them. They were essentially indigenous Christians, the people of the land. Portuguese were at first surprised to see numerous Christians and over a hundred churches. "These churches belong to the Pope", they said. "Who is the Pope? We never heard of him", answered the Syrians.<sup>4</sup> Buchanan, who recorded the above statement, continues,

3. Brown L.W. : The Indian Christians of St. Thomas. page 23.

4. Dr. Buchanan : Christian Researches page 107 Quoted by Fr. K. David : 'Malankara Suriyani Sabha Charithram. page 47

“In a conversation with the Portuguese, the Syrians said, ‘We are of the true faith whatever you from the West may be, for we came from the place (Antioch) where the followers of Christ were first called Christians’. Thus it is seen that the Jacobite Patriarch also had some kind of supremacy, though interrupted, over the Church of Malabar and that there were many Jacobites in Malabar at the time of the coming of the Portuguese.”<sup>5</sup>

Further, “the discovery of the Syrian Christians on the Malabar coast was a fruitful source of perplexity to both sections of European Christianity” says Dean Stanley. “Their separation from the Western world, had left them in ignorance of the improvements or corruptions of a thousand years and their conformity with the faith and practice of the fifth century should equally disappoint the prejudices of a Papist or a Protestant.”<sup>6</sup> The distinctive characteristic of the Syrian Church in Malabar is the veneration for the text of the Gospel and the Syriac language in which it was revealed. It is said that “the Eastern Church was like the East, stationary and immutable; the Western, like the West, progressive and flexible. This distinction is the more remarkable because at certain periods of their course, there can be no doubt that the civilization of the Eastern Church was far higher than the Western.”<sup>7</sup>

The Christians, to revert to history, were in fact delighted to see the Portuguese and warmly welcomed them on the ground that they hoped the Portuguese would benefit them as a Christian ally and also help them against the Muslim aggressors. The Portuguese, however, could not regard as conceivable that any Christian community could exist independent of the Pope of Rome.

### **Portuguese Counter to Nestorianism**

When Vasco da Gama arrived in Cochin in 1502 the Malankara Church was under the influence of the Nestorian Church of Persia. Metropolitan Mar Yahb Alla with three saffragan bishops, Mar Denha, Mar Jacob and Mar John owing allegiance to the Nestorian Patriarch at Babylon were ministering in Malankara with their headquarters at Ankamali. The clergy

5. T.K. Velu Pillai, Travancore State Manual 1940. pages 673-674.

6. A.P. Stanley : Lectures on the History of the Eastern Church. pages 26,42

7. T.K. Velu Pillai : Travancore State Manual. pages 662-663.

who accompanied the Portuguese traders and navigators were not happy to accept the situation. Compared to the Roman Church, the Nestorian Church was heretical in faith and they differed in the practice of rituals; their liturgies were also, not the same. To contain the spread of Nestorian faith and practice, the Portuguese, "as soon as they arrived in India...under the pretext of suppressing the trade in spices along the route from Ormuz to Basrah, put an end to the regular renewal of the hierarchy in Malabar."<sup>8</sup>

### **Latinisation**

Simultaneously, they tried to impose their Latin customs on the Syrian Christians. With this aim in view, the Portuguese opened two theological institutions to educate and train clergy. One school according to the Italian Franciscan Order was opened in Cranganore in 1541 and another, according to the Order of Jesuits, at Vaippikota in 1581. Thus, there developed two centres of Roman Catholic influence each under different monastic orders in Cochin and Cranganore. It was, however, the Jesuits who rose in authority over the Malankara Church.

### **Mar Jacob 1503-1549**

With regard to their success in Latinising the Syrian Christians, Tisserant says that Mar Jacob, the last of the Nestorian Bishops, "submitted upto a certain point to the Latin customs and succeeded not without trouble, in keeping his position in spite of the efforts of some very enterprising missionaries"<sup>9</sup>. Mar Jacob, it appears, adopted a policy of expediency. In his helplessness in the light of Portuguese political power, Mar Jacob followed a compromising attitude and helped the Franciscan friars to open a theological seminary at Cranganore in 1541. "Later on he retired to the Franciscan Friary in Cochin in 1543. His retirement, however, may have been a forced one...His letters of 1523 and 1530 show what difficulties he had in resisting the attempts of missionaries to oust him"<sup>10</sup>. At last, Mar Jacob breathed his last under the enforced retirement.

### **Ordeals of Mar Joseph 1556-1569 : Mar Abraham 1568-1597**

In the circumstances, when Mar Joseph accompanied by Mar

8. Tisserant : Eastern Christianity. Page 102.

9. *ibid* : Page 31. 10. *ibid* : Page 34.

Elias came to India in 1556, they had to succumb to the Inquisition of Goa. They were forcibly sent to the Franciscan monastery of Bassein and kept there for eighteen months before they were allowed to pursue their journey Southwards"<sup>11</sup>. At Bassein they were taught Latin and to perform Latin ceremonies of Mass. Mar Joseph and Mar Elias were, however, released in the end of 1558 and they reached Cochin where they joined the Syrian Christians. The ordeal of Mar Joseph was, however, not over. "Mar Joseph... was again arrested and put on board a ship en route for Portugal and Rome...The suffering was full and Mar Joseph received the tomb of the Apostles (Rome) the crown which he had merited"<sup>12</sup>. While Mar Joseph was under bonds, Patriarch Abdisho appointed Mar Abraham as his successor in Malabar. But he too, "was soon put under arrest by the Portuguese authorities and placed on a ship bound for Lisbon"<sup>13</sup>. The Metropolitan, however, managed to come back to Ankamali. He served the Church under great pressure from the Archbishop of Goa. The Synod of Goa held in June 1585, to which Mar Abraham was summoned, directed him to reconcile to Roman Catholic Church, its liturgy and rituals. Mar Abraham was also constrained to sign the proceedings of the Synod"<sup>14</sup>. The Synod also appointed Fr. Francis Roz as co-adjutor to Mar Abraham. The Metropolitan, thereafter, returned to Ankamali, where he passed away in February 1597.

### Mar Simeon

Another Metropolitan by name Mar Simeon was sent by Mar Elia VII, Patriarch of Babylon to Malabar. He was also exiled to Rome and Lisbon. He is known to have died in 1599 while in the Franciscan convent of Lisbon.

### Archdeacon Geevarghese 1597-1637

Following Mar Abraham, Archdeacon Geevarghese of Pakalomattom clan, looked after the Christians. He lived in a crucial stage of Church history, for the Church was entering a period of virtual physical subjugation as a prelude to absolute absorption in the Roman Catholic Church. His period witnessed the arrival of Archbishop Menezes, the Udayamperur Synod, and

11. Tisserant : Eastern Christianity : Page 36.

12. *ibid* : Page 41.

13. *ibid* : Page 40.

14. *ibid* : Pages 44-45.

the subsequent rule of Jesuit Archbishops Francis Roz, Stephen de Britto and Francis Garcia.

### **Archbishop Menezes**

The idea of proselytisation found favour with the vigorous and devout thirty five year old Archbishop of Goa, DOM ALEXIO DA MENEZES, who arrived in Cochin on February 1, 1599. Menezes found that the Malankara Christians were ill-instructed and had fallen into heresy because of Nestorian hierarchy and hence “Wanted at all costs...to bring them back into the fold under the one true pastoral staff of Peter’s successor.”<sup>15</sup> Stephen Neil says, “Menezes had no doubt at all as to what was to happen, all Christians in India, must come under his jurisdiction; all must adopt the Roman Orthodoxy of the sixteenth century, as defined in the Council of Trent (1562) and there must be no nonsense about any independence.”<sup>16</sup>

With the aforesaid intention, Menezes started on a visit of the parishes. He spoke to the Christians and their Kathanars against the heretical Nestorians, the administration of Confirmation during Baptism as practised by the Eastern Churches, praying for Patriarch of Babylon, ascribing to him the title of “Universal Pastor of the Christian Church,” and about the need for education of the clergy. Menezes advocated naming the Pope instead of Patriarch of Babylon. Exercising his powers, Menezes summoned “the future priests of Diamper...and proceeded to ordain thirty eight priests.”<sup>17</sup> Archdeacon Geevarghese felt sore and advised the “priests to receive Menezes with due honour but only as a foreign prelate, just passing through.”<sup>18</sup> He objected to the Archbishop’s ordination of the clergies and excommunicated them. Menezes, however, was able to win the Christians by his overwhelming splendour. Archdeacon Geevarghese found himself helpless. Menezes took advantage of the situation and offered conditions for reconciliation to Archdeacon, which were: “to renounce the errors of Nestorius...to acknowledge that there was but one law, that of Christ and not several arbitrary ones differing one from one or other, for example, that of St. Thomas, of St. Peter etc; to make his profession of faith according to the

15. Tisserant : Eastern Christianity. page 50.

16. Stephen Neil : History of Christian Mission. page 146.

17. 18. Tisserant : Eastern Christianity. page 53.

formula sent to him at the time of his nomination as administrator of the arch-diocese of Ankamali; to proceed with the correction of the liturgical texts; to promise obedience to the Pope; to anathematize the Patriarch of Babylon; to undertake not to accept in his diocese any bishop not appointed by the Pope and not acceptable to the Portuguese authorities; to acknowledge the authority of the Archbishop of Goa; to prepare the summoning of a Synod and to accompany the Archbishop of Goa during his visitation.”<sup>19</sup> The Archbishop also desired the Archdeacon to sign a document acknowledging the conditions. At the meeting between the two, it was also decided to hold the famous Udayamperur Synod on 20th June, 1599, the third Sunday after Pentecost.

### **Udayamperur Synod 1599**

The Synod started its deliberations on June 20, 1599 and was attended by 153 clergy and 660 lay representatives. “At every meeting, first the doctrine was stated, then discipline determined and finally the decree was settled upon and read out<sup>20</sup>...The positive teaching was decreed and accepted in the third session of the Synod held on 24th June. Fourteen decrees give a conspectus of Christian doctrine, starting with the Holy Trinity and going on to deal with the incarnation and the place of the Blessed Virgin and Mother of God. Salvation is affirmed to be through Christ alone and the fact of original sin and its removal by baptism is explained. The next five decrees deal with the last things, heaven and hell, purgatory (of which the Indian Church had not known) the resurrection of the dead, and the last judgement, the fact of the faithful angels, the veneration and invocation of angels and saints, and the honour due to the relics of saints. Other decrees teach the doctrine and worship of Christ, the Virgin and the saints through the images, the work of the guardian angel, the supremacy of the Pope, successor of St. Peter, Vicar of Christ and the inspiration of scripture...The use of Crucifix and rosary was also enjoined.”<sup>21</sup>

Relevant extracts from a few important decrees settled in the third session are quoted below<sup>22</sup>.

19 Tisserant : Eastern Christianity. pages 55-56.

20. Brown : L. W, The Indian Christians of St. Thomas. page 33.

21. ibid page 35.

22. Kuriakose, K.M.: History of Christianity in India, Source Materials p. 40-42

**Session III. Decree VIII.**

For that, there was a certain heresy twice repeated in the holy sacrifice of the mass, and twice more in the divine office, in calling the Patriarch of Babylon, the universal pastor, and head of the catholic church, in all places, and as often as they happen to name him; a title that is due only to the most holy father, the Bishop of Rome, successor of the prince of the Apostles, St. Peter and vicar of Christ on earth: the Synod, therefore, command in virtue of obedience, and upon pain of excommunication to be *ipso facto* incurred, that no person of this bishopric, secular or ecclesiastical, shall from henceforward presume, by word or writing, either in the holy sacrifice of mass, or in the divine office, or in any other occasion, to bestow that title on the said Patriarch of Babylon, or on any other prelate, besides our lord, the Bishop of Rome: and whereas, the Patriarchs of Babylon, to whom this church was subject, are Nestorians, the heads of that cursed sect, and schismatics out of the obedience of the holy Roman Church, and aliens from our holy catholic faith, and are for that reason excommunicate and accursed: wherefore this bishopric, upon its having now yielded a perfect obedience to the most holy father, the Pope, Christ's vicar upon earth, shall not henceforward have any manner of dependence upon the said Patriarch of Babylon:.....and the present Synod, prohibit all priests, and curates, from henceforward to name the said Patriarch of Babylon in the holy sacrifice of the mass, or in any other divine office, in the prayers of the church, even without the false title of universal pastor; but instead thereof, shall name our lord the Pope, who is our true pastor, as also of the whole church, and after him, the lord Bishop of the diocese, for the time being;.....

**Session III. Decree XIX. (Oaths taken to submit to the Church of Rome)**

The Synod having been informed of several meetings that were in this diocese, upon the death of bishop Mar Abraham, in which both public and private oaths were taken against yielding obedience to the holy Roman Church,.....doth declare all such oaths, or any other taken, or that shall be taken in the same manner, to be void of no force;... this synod having above all other things promised and sworn to yield obedience to the commands of the Pope, and the holy apostolical see, according to the holy canons,

and never to receive any bishop or prelate, but what shall be sent by the holy Roman church, to which it of right belongs to provide prelates and bishops to all the churches in the world,.....

**Session III. Decree XX. (Condemning Nestorianism and subscribing to the doctrines of Rome)**

This present Synod, together with all the priests and faithful people of this diocese, doth embrace all the holy general councils received by holy mother church, believing and confessing all that was determined in them, anathematizing, rejecting, and condemning all that they have rejected and condemn but especially it doth with great veneration receive and embrace the first holy council of Ephesus, consisting of 200 fathers, firmly believing all that was therein determined, and rejecting and condemning whatsoever it condemned ; but above all, the diabolical heresy of the Nestorians, which has been for many years preached and believed in this diocese; which together with its author Nestorius and all his followers, the said council did reject and anathematize :...all which this Synod does condemn, reject, and anathematize, embracing the holy catholic faith, in that purity and integrity, that it is believed and professed in by the holy mother Roman church.

**Session III. Decree XXI. (Resolved to be governed in all things by the last council of Trent)**

Furthermore, this present Synod, with all the priests and faithful people of this diocese, doth embrace the last holy and sacred council of Trent, and does not only believe and confess all that was determined and approved of therein, and reject and anathematize all that the council rejected and condemned ; but doth moreover receive and embrace the said council as to all matters therein determined, relating to the reformation of the church.

**Session III. Decree XXII. (Subjects the Syrians to the Inquisition at Goa)**

This present Synod, together with all the priests and faithful people of this diocese, doth with great submission and reverence, submit itself to the holy, upright, just, and necessary court of the holy office of the inquisition, in these parts established.....

Thus perforce, the authority of the Pope of Rome, Latin doctrine of faith and Latin customs of worship were thrust upon the St. Thomas Christians and they were placed under the jurisdic-

ction of the Inquisition of Goa'. On June 26, 1599, the Synod concluded its deliberations.

“While the supremacy of the Roman Pontiff as the only true head of the Catholic Church was clearly enunciated, the Archdeacon and his associate priests were made to swear as follows :

‘I do also promise, vow and swear to God, on the Cross and these Holy Gospels, never to receive into this Church and Bishopric of the Serra any Bishop, Archbishop, Prelate, Pastor or Governor whatsoever, but what shall be immediately appointed by the Holy Apostolic See and the Bishop of Rome and that whosoever he shall appoint I shall receive, obey as my true Pastor, without expecting any message or having any further dependence upon the Patriarch of Babylon’.

Thus, the Synod severed the ties that bound the Malabar Church with the Persian Church and attached it to the Church of Rome.”<sup>23</sup>

“By far the most cruel of all the proceedings, was Decree XVI which read:

‘The Synod commands in virtue of holy obedience and under pain of excommunication, the priests and deacons and other whosoever of whatever dignity or rank, in this Bishopric to hand over to the most illustrious Metropolitan, in person or through deputies, all books whatsoever written in Syriac within two months after the publication of this decree has come to their knowledge. Under the same precept of obedience and excommunication it orders that no one in this Bishopric of whatever rank, he may be, shall dare to copy any book in Syriac unless the prelate has given him permission in writing to do it, the book to copy which permission is granted being expressly mentioned.’

“What history will not willingly forgive is the literary holocaust which was carried out on the authority of this decree, when all books that could be laid hands on were consigned to the flames. It was comparable in many ways with the vandalism of Omar, who by similar wanton destruction, ordered the noble library of Alexandria, to be consumed by the flames. The Syrian Christians of to-day believe, that because of this cruel decree, no records are

23. T.K. Velu Pillai : Travancore State Manual 1940. page 138.

available with them to recover and establish beyond all dispute, their past Church history. None will deny that there is some substance in this belief.”<sup>24</sup>

This vandalism of Menezes is confirmed by historian James Hough, who says that churches at Ankamali, Chengannur and Corigolongre (Cheppad) had the largest collection of religious books and Menezes put to flames all of them. “Archbishop Menezes proceeded to Catiapally (Karthikappally) in the dominion of the Rajah of Batimena (Vettumeni). His next visit was to Corigolongre in the kingdom of Panapalay. The church at this place was dedicated to a saint whom all the Syrians call Mar Barguila. Gouvea says that this was none other than St. George. Here, Menezes found a quantity of books which he committed to flames. From the Raja of Panapalay, he obtained permission to build a church on his lands for the use of Christians of the Latin communion.”<sup>25</sup>

### **Departure of Menezes**

Menezes continued his visits to the parishes till November, 1599. He held Mass, baptised and gave Confirmation in each of them. Invariably, “all the Syriac books, liturgical and others were brought in, and those already condemned were burnt at once, while the others were duly corrected.”<sup>26</sup> More or less satisfied that he brought the Malankara Church to the obedience of Rome, Menezes at last left Malankara for Goa on November 16, 1599.

### **Evaluation of the Synod**

Undoubtedly, 1599 was a fateful year and one of the darkest in the history of the Malankara Church and its relationship with the Church of Rome. In retrospect, the Synod’s proceedings were authoritarian calculated to transform the indigenous independent Malabar Church into a dependent submissive community of the Church of Rome, to metamorphose the traditionally Eastern Church into a Latinised Western Church and to isolate the St. Thomas Christians from the mainstream of social life of Malabar.

24. Pothen S.G. : *The Syrian Christians of Kerala* (1963) pages 45-46.

25. James Hough Rev. : *History of Christianity in India* (1839) Vol. V. page 175.

26. Tisserant : *Eastern Christianity*, page 65.

Sheer force of circumstances by way of threatening political pressure and splendour of the wealthy and generous Roman hierarchy, prompted the St. Thomas Syrian Christians to accept the sovereignty of the Church of Rome.

The major impact, however, of the Synod was the removal of Nestorian influence on the Malabar Church, its faith and customs on the whole on the one hand and the Latinisation thereof and the imposition of Papal authority on the other. In the process, the Latin hierarchy suppressed the Orthodox element and many of the socio-religious aspects of the indigenous Malabar Church. The Synod went a long way in breaking the caste-structure among Christians and in repudiating un-Christian superstitions and customs which were the hangovers from the Hindu society. This approach of the Synod was evident in the Portuguese from the early days of their arrival, as one reads Cardinal Tisserant: "The Portuguese did not tolerate very long the fact that the Christians of their empire of the Indies followed usages different from their own. Several points shocked them: the use of leavened bread, the shape of the liturgical vestment, the calendar of feasts and fasts days, the ceremonies of the sacraments. Hence they launched a wholesome campaign of latinisation."<sup>27</sup> Further, "writing in 1604, Bishop Francis Roz gave an account of how a part of the population of Cranganore had fled to the hills, the Ghats in order to escape the Latin missionaries who compelled them to eat fish on fast days contrary to their discipline, forbade them to begin Lent before Ash-Wednesday, and prevented the Kathanars from using leavened bread at Mass."<sup>28</sup>

### **Roman Period**

Following the Udayamperur Synod, the Malankara Church virtually came under the administrative control of the Roman Catholic hierarchy for the next fifty four years (1599-1653)—until the Church walked out of her fold. Three Jesuit prelates of the rank of Archbishops, namely Francis Roz, Stephen de Britto and Francis Garcia were in position one after another representing the Pope. The Roman hierarchy had divided the Malankara See into two bishoprics—one was the Arch bishopric of Ankamali and the other was the Latin bishopric of Cochin.

27. *ibid* page 174. 28. *ibid.* page 176.

### Francis Roz 1601-1624

Mar Abraham died on February 26 1597. Thereafter, the Malankara Church did not have a bishop of the Eastern Church. Menezes, Archbishop of Goa, was, however, bent upon installing a Latin prelate "in order to prevent the Patriarch of Alexandria and that of Babylon—the former, Menezes considered to be a heretic and the latter a Nestorian as was Mar Abraham—from appointing a prelate of their own."<sup>29</sup> Consequently, Fr. Francis Roz a Spanish Jesuit, who was professor of Syriac at the Jesuit Seminary at Vaippicotta at Cochin and who was already functioning as the administrator of the arch-diocese of Ankamali on the orders of Menezes, was consecrated as Archbishop of Ankamali at Goa on January 25, 1601. Here began the Roman Catholic hierarchical authority over the Church. For the next fifty two years till 1653, the Latin authority weighed over the Malankara Church.

Roz was a disciplinarian, who wanted that the Malankara Church as well as the Archdeacon conform to the decisions of the Udayamperur Synod. The Archdeacon Geevarghese, although he had submitted to the Papal authority by subscribing to the Udayamperur Synod, resented the growing Jesuit influence. He felt that his rightful authority and jurisdiction as the head of the Church were being usurped. To strengthen his cause, the Archdeacon gained the support of Raja of Cochin. But later on the Raja withdrew his support and the Archdeacon was in trouble. Twice Roz excommunicated the Archdeacon. Still he had a good following and continued his struggle with the Jesuits.

### Stephen De Britto 1624-1641

Archbishop Roz died in 1624 and was succeeded by Stephen de Britto. Britto was already functioning as co-adjutor to Roz. His attitude towards Geevarghese Archdeacon, was not as stiff as that of Roz. "He thought he (Archdeacon) could be won by kindness, which Roz considered showed an entirely wrong assessment of the Archdeacon's character."<sup>30</sup> As is evident from the above statement, Britto followed a policy of sympathy and compromise than tough tactics. In the meanwhile, Italian Dominican missionaries arrived and established themselves in Cochin. Britto

29. *ibid* page 71.

30. Brown L.W. : The Indian Christians of St. Thomas. page 96.

did not look upon this new establishment with favour. The Archdeacon, however, developed friendly relations with them and wrote to the Papal envoy in Lisbon against the Jesuits complaining of oppression and unsympathetic treatment and asked that other Orders may be allowed to work among St. Thomas Christians suggesting that a Dominican be appointed co-adjutor to the Archbishop."<sup>31</sup> The reason may be "they did not want any Westerners ruling them, but a return to the old ways of their people. They had experienced the severity and efficiency of the Augustinian Menezes and Jesuit Roz and they thought they could achieve their ends more readily from another Order which was not Portuguese nationality."<sup>32</sup> To nullify Archdeacon's power and status, Britto tried to withdraw the documents which spelt the powers attributed to the Archdeacons of St. Thomas Christians. The Archdeacon, did not part with the original document but gave copies thereof to Britto. In 1637, Arch deacon Geevarghese died.

#### **Archdeacon Thomas 1637-1670**

Bitto in all fairness, appointed Thomas of Pakalomattom nephew of Archdeacon Geevarghese as Archdeacon in succession as the leader of the Christians. Britto too died on December 2, 1641 without being able to diminish in any way the discontent of the St. Thomas Christians.

#### **Francis Garcia 1641-59**

Archbishop Garcia, who took up the reign after Britto, was fully conversant with the situation obtained in the Malankara See. "He seems to have been conscientious but without any appreciation of or sympathy with the Indian point of view. He responded to the disloyalty and antipathy of the Archdeacon's party with arbitrary and harsh action, probably in reaction from the fruitless forbearance and mildness of his predecessor."<sup>33</sup>

During Garcia's period, the Christians became very restless. "The autocracy of the Jesuit Archbishop Garcia had fanned the fire of discontent. About this Archbishop, it is stated by D'Orsey that he ruled the Christians with a rod of iron and "attempted to abolish the Syriac language and introduce Latin in the Church

31. *ibid* page 97.

32. *ibid.* page 97.      33. *ibid.* page 99.

service and that he persecuted every one who differed in the minutest trifle from the rituals of Rome.”<sup>34</sup> Consequently, Jesuits were hated by the St. Thomas Christians; they longed to get away from their hold. “The situation which was growing explosive, was described by the General of the Carmelite Order who visited Malabar in 1636-37 and whose impressions have been stated by Whitehouse, as follows :

“The enforced celibacy of the clergy, the introduction of images into their churches, and attempts to supersede the Syriac language by the Latin in their religious services were especially offensive to them, as also the pride arrogance and intolerance of the Jesuits towards all who could not conform to their injunctions.”<sup>35</sup> They were, therefore, on the alert to find out some source of outside help to do away with their harsh masters. In this context they wrote to the Pope bringing out their grievance under Jesuit’s rule. “As they got no reply, at last wrote to the Nestorian Patriarch of Babylon, the Jacobite Patriarch at Diabekr and the Coptic Patriarch at Alexandria, asking for a bishop.”<sup>36</sup>

It was obviously in answer to these letters that a bishop Ahatalla of the Syrian Orthodox Church sailed for India from Syria. The arrival of Mar Ahatalla, provided the Archdeacon and his community a much needed emotional strength in their struggle with Archbishop Garcia and to finally break off their relationship with the Roman Catholic Church; with him, a chapter in the long chequered history of the Malankara Church closed; a new one opened with an excited eagerness for freedom and self assertion.

34. Gazetteer of India, Kerala, Ernakulam. page 141.

35. Whitehouse : Lingerings of Light in a Darkland. page 158.

36. Brown L.W. : The Indian Christians of St. Thomas. page 99.

## THE KOONEN KURISH SATHYAM

### Mar Ahatalla 1652 A.D.

The acts of Archbishop Menezes were undoubtedly high-handed, arbitrary and arrogant. The independence of the ancient Church of Malankara was crudely crushed. But in the long history of the Church, the Papal yoke was only momentary; for, the feelings of resentment and the desire to regain independence among the St. Thomas Christians which were very real, could not be contained for long. The pent-up sentiments were given vent in 1653. They had all along continued their efforts to get a Metropolitan from the Eastern Church for their rescue. The Portuguese who were masters of the sea in those days, many a time intercepted their letters of appeal for Syrian prelates and there were occasions when attempts of Middle Eastern clergy to come to Malankara were physically thwarted. This fact is explicit in Cardinal Tisserant's own words. The local defectors in the Roman Catholic Seminaries were advised to be "on their guard against the arrival of a bishop sent by the Catholicos of Seleucia. For inspite of the watch set up by the Portuguese at Ormuz and Goa, such an event always remained a possibility".<sup>1</sup> However, Metropolitan Mar Ahatalla from Syria is said to have landed at Surat in 1652 and thence came to Mylapore, where he was arrested by the Jesuits on August 3, 1652. While at Mylapore, Mar Ahatalla met two Syrian Christian deacons, viz : Chengannur Itty and Kuravilangad Kizhakkedath Kurien from Malankara who were on a pilgrimage to the tomb of St. Thomas and sent a letter through them to the Church of Malankara saying :

"At Calamini, I have been taken prisoner by those whose profession is persecution. Soon they will make me leave for Cochin and then for Goa. Arm up some of your people to save me".<sup>2</sup>

1. Tisserant : Eastern Christianity. page 51.

2. Brown, L.W. : The Indian Christians of St. Thomas. page 100.

In the same letter, Mar Ahatalla is also said to have appointed Archdeacon Thomas as the head of the Malankara Church. As feared, the Metropolitan was taken on board a Portuguese ship at Madras bound for Goa. En route, it touched Cochin. The Syrian Christians heard of the arrival of the ship at Cochin. They marched 25,000 strong to the harbour demanding the immediate release of their Metropolitan. The Portuguese, however, rushed the prelate to Goa, under cover of darkness, without acceding to their demand. "In order to prevent any attack on the town, they spread the less palatable story that the unfortunate prelate had been accidentally drowned... In the meantime, Ahatalla was condemned as a heretic by the Inquisition of Goa and died at the stake in 1654".<sup>3</sup> Dr. Cyril Malancharuvil gives a different version. To quote: "In a letter written on 3rd January, 1659 to the Pope by Bishop Garzia, he declared that the Syrian bishop died on his way to Rome".<sup>4</sup>

It may be interesting to note that the Orthodox Church parish of Mavelikara observe the death anniversary of Mar Ahatalla on January 15 (Makaram 3) every year.

The summary disposal of Mar Ahatalla, however, shocked the Christian community and their wounded feelings effervesced into a mass upsurge which heralded the breaking off from the Papal yoke.

### **The Sathyam (Oath) 1653**

The incident of Mar Ahatalla presented an occasion for the St. Thomas Christians to retaliate. When they came to know that Mar Ahatalla was drowned carried off, they could not tolerate the imperious Portuguese and their arbitrary actions; they assembled in thousands around a big granite cross, the Coonen Kurish (Leaning Cross) in the Mattanchery parish church grounds near Cochin on January 16, 1653 and took an oath to submit no longer to the ecclesiastical authority of Rome and to obey none save their Archdeacon Thomas until they get a bishop from the Eastern Church. The number of people who took part in the Sathyam (Oath) being large, all could not touch the granite Cross at the same time. Therefore, they held on to ropes tied to the Cross in all directions. According to tradition, out of a population of

3. Tisserant : Eastern Christianity. page 79-80.

4. Cyril Malancharuvil : The Syro-Malankara Church (1974). page 10.

200,000 St. Thomas Christians, only 400 remained loyal to the Roman Archbishop Garcia. The event in 1653 broke the fifty-four year old yoke of Roman supremacy imposed at the Udayampalur Synod of 1599.

The Mattanchery incident has been narrated by "a priest named Abraham from the Jacobite point of view to W.A. Mill" in 1821 and cited by A. Mingana in his work "The Early Spread of Christianity in India (pp 50-53). The narration is reproduced below:

"In the year 1653, our Father Ignatius, Patriarch of Antioch came to Mylapore. Two deacons went from Malabar to the Church of Mylapore, in order to worship before the grave of St. Thomas, the Apostle.

When our Father Mar Ignatius saw the deacons, and recognised them, he wept; and they also wept with him. This scene having been noticed by the Franks, they set up watchmen over them, in order to impede the deacons from seeing and speaking to our Father Mar Ignatius ; there was no bishop from our own race, and they were the masters of the dioceses of India. Once, however, our Father Mar Ignatius made a secret sign to the deacons, and granted them a letter of recommendation to elect a bishop, the Archdeacon Thomas, and gave them leave to depart. When the deacons reached Malabar, they delivered the Patriarchal letter to the Archdeacon Thomas, who despatched letters to this effect to the churches. When all the priests, deacons, and Christian laymen of Malabar came to him, and heard our Father, Mar Ignatius, had arrived at the fortress of Cochin, they repaired there without delay and implored the pagan king of Cochin to summon their Father Mar Ignatius, and deliver him to them. The king answered them : 'To-morrow I will summon him and deliver him to you.' This, however, became known to the Franks who gave much money to the king of Cochin, and he permitted them to do as they wished.

In that very night, the Franks tied a large stone round the neck of the blessed Patriarch, and threw him in to the depth of the sea. The moment the blessed Patriarch died, the pagan king also died. After these events, all the Syrian parties assembled in the church of Mattancheri, and each one of them swore in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, that they will have no

more love for, nor union and communion with the Franks, and they established Archdeacon Thomas, the head of all the churches of the Syrians, in accordance with the order of our Father the Patriarch Ignatius. After this, in the year 1660, Bishop Joseph came to Malabar, but we did not follow him. A short time after this, bishop Joseph called a priest named Alexander from the family of bishop Thomas, and by fraud and deceit he persuaded him to receive episcopal ordination ; this divided the Syrians of Malabar into two camps.”<sup>5</sup>

E.R.Hambye has referred to the letter<sup>6</sup> which was claimed to have been written by Mar Aithalaha (Ahatallah) to Archdeacon Thomas Palliveetil leader of St. Thomas Christians. The letter reproduced by M.K. Kuriakose is as follows:

“In the name of the eternal essence of the Almighty, The Patriarch of the Holy Thomas the Apostle. The peace of God the Father, and the blessing of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit—Hereby, I, Ignatius Patriarch of All India and China, send you a letter through some deacons, who came here from your place. After having read the letter with care, send me two priests and forty men. In case you send them, do it with prudence, as well as soon as possible. For, if these here see you, they will let them go without obstacle. Come, sons, listen to me and learn from me for all power was given to me by the Lord Pope i.e. Ignatius is endowed with all power. Therefore, do not be afraid because I have come having many treasures and a lot of other riches, according to your needs. Therefore, try your best to bring me to you, in the name of Mary, the Mother of God, your priests and deacons of the holy flock, as well as all the leaders. And know that I came to Maylapore city, because I learned that several men and priests used to come here who could bring me to your region of the Indies. In the year 1652, I arrived at Mylapore on August the 2nd. To the monastery of the Jesuits i.e. (text illegible). I live in the same monastery, and they treat me very well may their generosity increase all over. Peace be with them, with you and with us for ever. Amen. (signed) Ignatius Patriarch of India and China.”<sup>7</sup>

5. Kuriakose K.M. : History of Christianity in India Source Materials. pp. 100-1.

6. Hambye E.R. : An Eastern prelate in India, Mar Aitallaha 1652-53.

7. Kuriakose K.M.: History of Christianity in India. Source Materials (48) p:54.

Western historians have tried to identify the credentials of Ahatalla whom the Malankara Christians believed to be Patriarch from Antioch on the strength of the personal witness of the two deacons who met him at Mylapore and the letter he wrote and handed over to them. Dr. Malancharuvil has reproduced a letter purported to be from Mar Ahatalla which has much variations from what referred to by Bishop L.W. Brown. In the letter, Ahatalah put his position as I, Ignatius, Patriarch, of all India and China". Ignatius is the title of Patriarchs of Syrian Church, not of the Popes of Rome or of any other Church. India and China were known to the Chaldean Patriarch and the Maphrian of Tigris. The claim of Patriarch of Antioch as Patriarch of India and China is, however, not true to reality.

It also advises the Malankara Christians to "proceed according to the rite of the holy Roman Church". At the same time it does not refer either to the retention by the Jesuits or to the call to make preparations to release him when he arrives at Cochin. On the whole, the letter quoted by Malancharuvil does not agree with the Kerala tradition on many points and hence it is open to question. A copy of this letter is at Appendix.II.

The Orthodox Church of Syria, however, does not reckon Mar Ahatallah as the Patriarch of Antioch. Neither was there any Patriarch of his name nor had any Patriarch of his name died in 1653 or near about that year. The Patriarch in 1653 according to the Syrian Church was Simaun (1640-59), the 124th Patriarch.<sup>8</sup>

### **Mar Thoma I**

The aggrieved Christians assembled at Aalangad near Angamalee on May 22, 1653 and raised their leader Arch Deacon Thomas Parampil as the head of the Church with the title of Mar Thoma (I) on the strength of Mar Ahatallah's letter. It is said that twelve priests consecrated him by imposing their hands.

At the assembly, a Committee of four priests namely, Kadavil Alexander Kathanar of Kadamattom, Abraham Thomas Kathanar of Kallicherry (Aanjilimoottil Itty Thomman)<sup>9</sup>, George Kathanar of Vengur and Palliveetil Alexander Kathanar of Kurvilangad, was appointed to assist Mar Thoma I.

8. Paret: Malankara Nazranikal. Vol. II. ch. 10.

### Carmelite Mission

On hearing these developments, Pope Alexander VII was vexed and tried to reconcile Mar Thoma to Arch Bishop Garcia. Also, "Two Apostolic Commissaries Guissepe a S. Maria O.C.D. (known to the Christians of Malabar as "Sebastiani") and Hyacinth (Giacinto) de Vicentio were sent to Malabar by the Roman Congregation of Propaganda Fide endowed with special powers from Pope Alexander VII to investigate and settle the matter."<sup>10</sup> But the efforts proved futile.

In the meanwhile, Garcia had influenced the Raja of Cochin and Raja of Purakkad to issue specific orders that the Syrian Christians should submit to none other than himself. Soon after their arrival in 1657, the Carmelite fathers told the Syrian Christians in a conference summoned by them that they have come to set right the grievances which they had written to the Pope and also that "not only was the Archdeacon (MAR THOMA)'s consecration sacrilegious but that all his subsequent acts were null and void. The Syrian Christians replied that the whole matter could be set right by arranging for the proper consecration of Mar Thoma whom the whole community had chosen as their prelate. The missionaries had to reply that this was impossible".<sup>11</sup>

This tactical struggle between the Carmelite Missionaries on one side and Mar Thoma on the other continued for a few years more. "The result of these disputes was to divide the Christians of St. Thomas sharply, some remaining loyal to the Holy See, others insisting that the Church must return to its former obedience. In many places the opposing parties resorted to violence."<sup>12</sup> To bring out an acceptable formula for every one concerned, a meeting was convened at Cochin on September 23, 1657 which was attended by the Carmelite Fathers, the Syrian Christians and the vicar of Arch-bishop and his supporters. "The deposition of Mar Thoma was not discussed; but it was agreed that Fr. Joseph should assume the Govt of the Christians. Objection was made to

9. Ittythomman Kathanar belonged to Aanjilimoottil family of Thalavady. and served as Vicar of St. Mary's Church at Kallissery. On May 10, 1659, he expired and was buried in the same church premises. (P.C.Andrews, Malankara Sabya - December 1966 Pp. 9-10)

10. Cyril Malancharuvil : The Syro-Malankara Church (1973) P : 22

11. Brown L.W. : The Indian Christians of St. Thomas. page 102.

12, 13 ibid : pages 104-5. Note : Guissepe a S. Maria (Fr. Joseph of St. Mary)

this by the Portuguese who said that the Christians must be told to obey the archbishop but this was over ruled and the Christians accepted the Father as their prelate, embraced him and took him back to his house in procession.”<sup>13</sup> Fr. Joseph in such circumstances persisted in his efforts to bring a complete acceptance of Pope by the reluctant parishes. These parishes were invited for a final meeting in Cochin in December, 1657 which was represented by forty-four parishes. “The St. Thomas Christians at the meeting then declaring their adherence to Rome, executed a document for Fr. Joseph to take with him (to Rome) explaining why they could not submit themselves to the Jesuit archbishop.”<sup>14</sup>

### **Bishop Joseph**

On January 7, 1658 Fr. Joseph left for Rome and submitted his report to the Pope in due course. The position in Malankara was reviewed. Pope acting wise, consecrated Fr. Joseph as a bishop, for the Romo-Syrians, on December 15, 1658. Bishop Joseph returned to Malankara after three years on May 14, 1661.

During the period Fr. Joseph was away from 1658 to 1661, the Malankara See was administered by another Carmelite Fr. Hyacinth. He died in 1660 before Bishop Joseph’s arrival. Archbishop Garcia too had expired on September 3, 1659.

With the arrival of Bishop Joseph, there appeared a shift in the attitude of a good number of Syrian Christians. The Bishop set out on a visitation of the parishes on August 22, 1661 and wherever he went, Bishop Joseph first made the clergy and the parish members take an oath of obedience to the Pope of Rome. Consequently, Kadavil Chandy Kathanar and Palliveetil Chandy Kathanar and eightytwo parishes went back to the fold of Roman Catholic Church and only thirty-two parishes remained loyal to the Koonen Kurishu Sathyam. Those who went back to the Roman Catholic fold styled themselves as the Pazhaya koottukar (Members of the Old Faith) in the sense that those who betrayed Mar Thoma disregarding the Koonen Kurishu Sathyam were allegedly adherents of the Roman Catholic Church prior to the episode and called the latter the Puthen koottukar (Members of the New Faith) just because they broke off the Papal yoke and jurisdiction of a bare span of fifty years beginning with Udayamperur Synod of 1599.

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14. Brown L.W. : The Indian Christians of St. Thomas. page 105.

Mar Thoma and his supporters, however, stood committed to their integrity. “Neither negotiations, nor threats, nor forcible measures” admits Tisserant, “used by the Portuguese authorities curbed in any way the resistance of the archdeacon’s party”.<sup>15</sup>

### **Arrival of the Dutch and Decline of the Portuguese**

At this juncture, the supremacy of the Portuguese in the Indian waters was challenged by the Dutch, another maritime power of Europe. This resulted in the waning of the Portuguese in Malabar also. The Dutch captured Quilon in 1661, Cranganore in 1662 and Cochin in 1663. Immediately after the capture of Cochin, the Dutch ordered all foreign priests and monks in their jurisdiction to leave the country.

### **First Schism — Romo-Syrians 1663**

Before leaving the shores of Cochin, Bishop Joseph consecrated Chandy Kathanar of Pakalomattom family, a cousin of Mar Thoma from Kuravilangad with the title of Alexander de Campo on February 1, 1663. At the consecration of Alexander, Bishop Joseph excommunicated Mar Thoma. This wounded the Syrian Christians and led to a complete separation of those who accepted the Papal supremacy from the mainstream of Syrian Christians of Malabar. Thus, the undivided Malankara Church was divided into two. Those who went to the Roman Catholic faith, came to be known as Romo-Syrians.

The Syrian Christians undeterred by the mass betrayal of their brethren, however, were happy at the opportunity to come off the supremacy of Rome and stand independent but still serving the Orthodox faith of Eastern tradition.

The Dutch, who displaced the bigoted Portuguese, were tolerant and fair minded in their religious outlook. The first act they did concerning religion was to order the externment of all foreign priests from Cochin. Thus with the arrival of the Dutch, and the exit of the Portuguese prelates, the Syrian Christians obtained a much needed interval of peace. While the Portuguese had adopted all fair and foul means to prevent bishops of the Eastern Orthodox Church in the Middle East from coming to Malankara, the Dutch actively assisted them.

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15. Tisserant : Eastern Christianity.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

# RELATIONS WITH THE ORTHODOX CHURCH OF SYRIA

Till the arrival of the Portuguese, Metropolitans from the Persian Church used to come to Malankara and attend to episcopal functions. How this connection was severed by the Portuguese, has been described in an earlier chapter. When the Syrian Christians shook off the Papal yoke and the Portuguese supremacy waned, the Church revived efforts to get an "episcopa" from the Eastern Orthodox Church.

### **Initial contact with the Syrian Orthodox Church**

Also, there was a growing realisation among the members of the Church that they must have a duly consecrated local Metropolitan as their head if they were to continue as a strong and independent Church having apostolic succession. Accordingly Mar Thoma had sent appeals to Babylon, Alexandria and Antioch to send a Metropolitan to Malankara. However, only the Syrian Orthodox Church at Antioch responded. Patriarch Abdul Messia I sent Mar Gregorios Abdel Jaleel, Metropolitan of Jerusalem to Malankara. The Metropolitan landed in Cochin in 1665. Mar Gregorios, in due course consecrated Mar Thoma I as Malankara Metropolitan. This event was the first definite and important link in the long chain of Malankara-Antiochene connection.

At this juncture, it would be pertinent to consider certain issues which are vital to understand the further course of history of the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church. Hereafter, the Church of Syria plays a crucial part in the polemics of the Malankara Church history. Antioch, which once made spectacular contributions to the universal Church, is depicted as representing the ancient Church of Syria. As a city, how is Antioch prominent? What is the importance of Antioch in the annals of Church history?

To what extent is she related to Malankara? Did she pose herself as the mother-Church or as a benefactor to the Malankara Church or consider the Malankara Church as a sister Church? What is the nature of her authority over Malankara? What was the situation which originally existed? Was there any gradual development towards any tangible objective? Taking into account the events which greatly shook the Church in the nineteenth and in the first half of the twentieth centuries, was there any valid reason for any hostile attitude? An attempt is made in this chapter to discuss these issues against the overall structure of the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church.

### **Antioch**

The secular history of Antioch begins with the Macedonian luminary Alexander the Great. The city was not just there when he conquered Syria in 333 B.C.; but his General Seleucus-Nicator built the city in 300 B.C. and called it ANTIOCH after his father ANTIOCHUS. The new city was inhabited by settlers of all shades and texture—Athenians, Greeks, Macedonians, Jews and Syrians in due course of time.

### **Cultural Development**

Founded as an outpost of Greek civilisation in Semitic lands, Antioch was one of the cities in which ancient civilisation reached its peak of glory. Although it could not claim the antiquity of Athens in its foundation and history, Antioch possessed a living link with the great age of Greece and this link only grew stronger as time went by. Culturally, Antioch was slowly transformed from Hellenic to a Graeco-Roman city. The Roman power, by bringing commercial prosperity and by preserving the city with little real interference with its cultural life, had also ensured the continuation of the Greek Hellenic social and cultural traditions.

### **Climate in First Century**

During the days of Christ, therefore, a special religious situation had grown up in Antioch, preparing it as a peculiarly fertile ground for the spread of the Gospel. When Christianity reached it, Antioch was on the threshold of an age "in which the old religious cults and philosophies were tending to become matters of individual belief, as people sought religious satisfaction for their own problems and aspirations. Another factor of prime impor-

tance was the presence of a large and ancient Jewish community. This community had attracted to its ceremonies and its teachings numerous gentiles who found in Judaism an ethical doctrine that was more satisfactory to them than the pagan teaching. Thus Antioch was peculiarly receptive to the new message".<sup>1</sup>

### **St. Peter Establishes Church at Antioch 41 A.D.**

In the annals of Church history, Antioch came into prominence with the emergence of Christian community some time in 41 A.D. It was here the followers of Christ were called Christians for the first time. Impressed by the performance of Christians of Antioch, St. Peter visited the city and installed LAODIUS as the first Metropolitan of Antioch. Hence, St. Peter is revered as the founder of the Syrian Orthodox Church. A traveller Willibrand of Oladerburg, who visited Antioch in 1211 was shown the church in which Peter presided, which still contained his episcopal throne<sup>2</sup>.

### **Mar Ignatius**

In 115 A.D. Emperor Trajan, reached Antioch on an expedition to Parthia, when a great earthquake damaged the city considerably; and also imperilled the life of the Emperor. The exasperated people threw the blame on the Christians. The Emperor's advisers had instigated that if Ignatius, who had succeeded Laodius as Metropolitan of Antioch, was condemned to death, the Christians would be paralysed. Consequently, Ignatius was brought before the Emperor who interrogated him and finally condemned him "to be food for wild beasts in Rome". In course of time, the Patriarchs of Antioch took the title of Ignatius in honour of the holy martyr.

In the third, fourth and fifth centuries, the Universal Church was struggling against all kinds of heresies. The Antiochene Church had by this time raised powerful thinkers and theologians. The Antiochene School of thought had established itself in the realm of development of Christology. As a result, the Antiochene Church had made definite contributions to the decisions of the ecumenical Councils of Niceae (325) Constantinople (381) and Ephesus (431). The Council of Niceae ranked Antioch among the four Patriarchates of Christendom.

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1 & 2. Downey : Ancient Antioch, page 128.

### **Impact of Chalcedonian Schism**

It is part of history that the prelates of Syria took great exception to the theory of Diophysitism or the dual nature of Christ adopted by the Chalcedon Council of 451 A.D. Emperor Justinian (527-565), Justin II, Tiberian II and Maurice, wishing unity in their realm, used powerful machinery to harass and bring to nought the opposing faction of the Non-Chalcedonian Churches. Syria, being within the Roman Empire, was easily accessible to the long arm of the state machinery and it reached every where at once.

### **Jacob Baradaeus**

Almost all the bishops of the Syrian Orthodox Church were either arrested or put in gaol or exiled. At this critical juncture of Syrian Church history, there arose a remarkable monk in the Pesinta monastery by the name JACOB BARADAEUS who got ordained in very adventurous circumstances. Metropolitans Constantine Youhanon and Petra who were in prison contrived to consecrate Jacob Baradaeus by laying on their hands as Metropolitan of Edessa. With the full sanctity of a Metropolitan but disguised as a beggar to escape the vigilant arrogance of Roman soldiers, Jacob Baradaeus travelled on horse-back all over the Asiatic provinces of the Empire consecrating bishops and ordaining priests for the strengthening and preservation of the Nicene faith. The Emperor engaged police constabulary to catch him, but he always managed to escape. In his adventurous life, Mar Jacob Baradaeus "succeeded in making two Patriarchs; twentyseven bishops and thousands of priests and deacons."<sup>3</sup> Thus after spending a hectic and devoted and fruitful life, the venerable old Metropolitan died in 578 A.D.

Owing to the ingenuity of Mar Jacob Baradaeus, the Syrian Church was rejuvenated and it survived the political havoc wrought by the Chalcedonian Emperors. The Church was greatly enhanced in strength and stature by Mar Jacob that the Chalcedonians called her jestingly JACOBITE SYRIAN CHURCH. The appellation came to be equally applied to the St. Thomas Christians of Malankara in course of time.

### **Decline of Antioch**

The years of glory of Antioch were, however, turned into a

3. Nicholas Zernov : Eastern Christendom. page 68.

spell of desolation with an unparalleled series of disasters—A devastating fire, two major earthquakes, a sack by Persians, a visitation of plague—all within the period from 525 to 542 AD and finally its capture by Moslem in 637 A.D. Thereafter, Syria was under the occupation of different muslim forces. With the constant change of political authority over Syria, the city of Antioch lost its entity and also changed territorial loyalty. To-day it is no more Antioch of Syria but a desolate and ruined Antakya of Turkey. Its place has been taken by Baghdad and Damascus.

### **Syrian Church Today**

Historically, Syria came into Moslem hands in 637 A.D. when Turks defeated the Byzantine Emperor Heraclius. The Moslem rulers had unleashed endless persecution of Christians, because of which the Patriarch had to leave Antioch. The strength of Christians were depleted.

That the Church of Syria survived in such unfavourable and antagonistic circumstances is in itself a miracle. The Syrian Christians are spread over Dier Becker, Nardia, Edessa, Mosul, Baghdad, Damascus, Aleppo and Jerusalem. According to a World Council of Churches publication of 1980, the Church has a population of 142,000<sup>4</sup> only. From Antioch, the Patriarchate was shifted to Murdeen, Homs, Beirut in the succeeding centuries because of socio-political reasons and today it is in Damascus, capital of Syria. Hence, the office of Patriarch of Antioch is understood in a notional sense only vis-a-vis its grand stature at Antioch in the early centuries.

The present Patriarch is Ignatius Mar Zacha who came to position in 1980. The Patriarch paid a visit to Malankara in 1982.

### **Patriarch-Pope Joint-declaration 1971**

The Patriarch of Antioch Mar Ignatius Yakoub III (1957-80) had a historical audience with His Holiness Pope Paul VI in October 1971 at Vatican, after which they issued a Joint Declaration. This Declaration throws light on which direction the Patriarchate is moving in their relationship with Rome. At that time, Fr. Paul Varghese (Metropolitan Dr. Paulos Mar Gregorios) made the

4. Iop Bria (Ed) Martyra Mission (1980) P : 255.

following statement, as quoted by O.M. Thomas in Church Weekly, in this regard.<sup>5</sup>

“Progress has already been made and Paul VI and the Patriarch Mar Ignatius III are in agreement that there is no difference in the faith they profess concerning the mystery of the Word of God made flesh and became really man even if over centuries difficulties have arisen out of the different theological expressions by which the faith was expressed. They, therefore, encourage the clergy and faithful of their Churches to even greater endeavours at removing the obstacles which still prevent complete communion among them.”

### **Malankara Church, Syrian**

Beginning with Mar Gregorios (1665-1671), more Metropolitans and Patriarchs continued to arrive in Malankara in the succeeding centuries. Fourteen prelates of the Church of Syria including Mar Gregorios are known to have been in Kerala till the establishment of a Catholicate in 1912. To enumerate, Mar Andrews (1678-92), Mar Baselius Yaldo (1685), Mar Ivanios (1685-94), Catholicos Baselios Mar Sakrallah (1751-64), Metropolitans Mar Gregorios (1751-72), Mar Ivanios (1751-94), Mar Dioscoros (1806-8), Mar Athanasius (1825), Yuyakim Mar Kurilos (1846-75), Mar Athanasius Stephen (1849), Patriarchs Moran Mar Peter III (1875-77), Mar Abdulla (1875-77 1910-11) and Mar Abdul Messia II (1912-13). Their continued presence over a span of three centuries exerted a steady and permanent influence on the people, on the form of worship, liturgy in use and even on the existence of the Church. Consequently, the West Syrian dialect came to be used in place of the Chaldaic Syrian; in matters of faith also, the Malankara Church adopted the traditions of the Church of Syria.<sup>6</sup> All these contributed to the Malankara Church becoming Syrian in character.

### **Rich Heritage**

Despite the fall of the city, Antioch stands synonymous with the Church of Syria. The Church had an unblemished record of Apostolic tradition and played important roles in the development

5. Thomas O.M. : Fugitive Patriarch of Antioch Church Weekly March 23, 1975 P : 7.

6. Samuel Dr. V.C. : Malankara Sabhayude Antiochean Bandham (Malyalam) P. 28.

of Christian thought. Hence, the Malankara Church, in establishing a connection with the Syrian Orthodox Church, stood to gain in every way. This relationship helped her to retain apostolic succession which she had enjoyed with the Persian Church and to inherit centuries of Christian thought, Orthodox faith and form of worship. Also, she came to possess an unassailably rich liturgy.

At the time when the Malankara Church courted Antioch, she was independent, and autonomous, owing allegiance to none. What, therefore, she looked for from Antioch, was ecclesiastical and spiritual alliance and relationship with a sister Orthodox Church which she had once obtained from the Persian Orthodox Church and which unfortunately was snapped by forces beyond her control.

The aura of divine sanctity attending ecclesiastical offices of Antioch, may not be interpreted to mean sanction to extend temporal authority over the independent Malankara See. Malankara Church accepted the spiritual primacy of Antioch without the latter. This emphasis on temporality was not evident at the time of the early history of relationship. It was a development of thought as Antioch began to be aware of the dependence on them on the part of Malankara Church at one time or the other for causes of political or factional expediency. The issue came up during the time of Mar Thoma V and thereafter, it plagued the Church in varying degrees, as may be seen hereafter.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

# MAR THOMA I TO MAR THOMA IX 1653—1816

### Mar Thoma I—1653-70

The Syrian Christians who took the oath at Koonen Kurish at Mattancherry, assembled a week later at Alangad on May 22, 1653, the Pentecost Day. Their aim was to elect the Head of their Church. The choice obviously fell on Archdeacon Thomas Parampil of Pakalomattom family. In fact, Archdeacon Thomas was ecclesiastical head of the Syrian Christians since 1637. He had witnessed the attempts of the Roman Catholic Church hierarchy to Latinise the Syrian Christians, struggled as best as he could to thwart the advances and had achieved liberation of the Syrian Christians. His choice as the head of the Malankara Syrian Church was, therefore, a merited one.

As regards the mode of raising Archdeacon Thomas as the head of the Church and titling him as MAR THOMA, Metropolitan of the Malankara Syrian Church, there are conflicting reports among historians. According to one version, Mar Thoma was raised only as the administrative head of the Church subject to an anticipated proper consecration in the immediate future. As to the procedure adopted in installing him, the story known to historians is that "since no Bishop was available to perform the ceremony, twelve Syrian priests laid their hands on the head of the Archdeacon and performed consecration. A letter claimed to have been received from Ahatalla authorising the Syro-Malabar communities to choose a bishop for themselves was laid on his head."<sup>1</sup>

The former view may be given due weight on the strength of later incidents. Mar Thoma had continued his efforts with the Eastern Churches of Antioch and Alexandria to send one Metro-

<sup>1</sup> Sreedhara Menon A : District Gazetteer Ernakulam, page 141.

politan to Malankara. Secondly, as soon as Metropolitan Mar Gregorios came from Syria, the first response on the part of Mar Thoma, was to receive due consecration from him.

### **Metropolitan Council**

The assembly at Aalangad had also elected four members to assist Mar Thoma in the administration of the Church. They were Kadavil Alexander (Chandy) Kathanar of Kaduthuruthi, Abraham Thomas Kathanar (Aangilimootil Itty Thomman) of Kallisseri, Geevargheese Kathanar of Vengoor, Ankamali and Palliveetil Alexander (Chandy) Kathanar of Kuravilangad. This council may be considered as the earliest step towards setting up any administrative machinery in the Church.

### **Importance of Aalangad Meeting**

A significant fact to be observed in regard to the Aalangad meeting is that Malankara Church asserted its independence and exercised its power of autonomy when it elected one among them as head of the Church at the level of Metropolitan. This was the first occasion when the Church raised its own Metropolitan in place of Archdeacon. With the Metropolitan coming into position, the office of Archdeacon ceased to be.

### **Persecution**

An incident in the life of Mar Thoma I shows how much the Portuguese persecuted him. Once, he had taken shelter in the Marthomman Church at Mulanthuruthy, along with Itty Thomman Kathanar. The Portuguese bishop Sebastiani and Rajah Goda-Varma of Cochin confided and sent soldiers to arrest both of them. Aware of the danger, two aged Christians who had beard, disguised themselves as Metropolitan and Kathanar while Mar Thoma I and Itty Thomman Kathanar escaped *inognito*. The two old people in disguise were caught and killed for their loyalty.

### **Mar Gregorios 1665-71**

In response to Mar Thoma's entreaties to the Eastern Churches, Mar Gregorios, Metropolitan from the Church of Syria arrived in Malankara in 1665. The first act Mar Gregorios did was to consecrate Mar Thoma as Malankara Metropolitan and head of the Church with the title of Mar Thoma I. The prelate was helpful in guiding the Church in Eastern tradition. He

repudiated the Latin stipulation that priests should be celibate and removed the statues installed by the Roman Catholics in the churches. In 1668, Mar Gregorios issued an order that the faith, tradition and practices of Malankara Church prior to the arrival of the Roman Catholics, were according to the Nicene Creed<sup>2</sup>. On 28th April, 1671, after spending about six years in Malankara, Mar Gregorios died and was duly buried at Paravur.

### **Mar Thoma II—1670-86**

Mar Thoma I anticipating his end, consecrated his nephew as Metropolitan to succeed him. Historians vary in their opinion as to who consecrated him either Mar Thoma I or Mar Gregorios. It is said that Mar Thoma I did it with the assistance of Mar Gregorios. However, the validity of the consecration was never in doubt. Mar Thoma I died in 1670 and Mar Thoma II succeeded.

Mar Thoma II remained as the head of the Church for sixteen years. During this period, three Metropolitans from Syria arrived in Malankara namely, Mar Andrews (1678), Mar Baselios Yaldo (1685) and Mar Ivanios Hidayatullah (1685). The former two do not appear to have contributed in any way to the growth of the Church, except for their presence and appreciation in Malankara. Mar Andrew, whose bonafides as a Metropolitan were doubtful, was drowned at Kallada near Quilon in 1692. Mar Baselios, a venerable prelate of advanced age, breathed his last within thirteen days of arrival at Kothamangalam. Mar Ivanios lived in Malankara till his death in 1694.

Mar Thoma II's life was cut short by lightning in 1686 and was buried at Niranam Church.

### **Mar Ivanios 1685-94**

Mar Ivanios had contributed valuable services to the continuity of the leadership of the Malankara Church twice during his sojourn in Malankara. Mar Thoma II and Mar Thoma III died unexpectedly and without being able to consecrate a successor. Mar Ivanios saved the situation by consecrating Mar Thoma III as well as Mar Thoma IV. Mar Ivanios also had convened a meeting of the Syrian Christians at Chengannur in 1886 and exhorted them

to follow the faith and tradition of the Eastern Church<sup>3</sup>. In September, 1694 Mar Ivanios died and was buried at the Mar Thoma Church at Mulanthuruthi.

### **Mar Thoma III—1685-88**

Mar Thoma III followed Mar Thoma II. He was consecrated by Mar Ivanios. His reign was very short for, barely two years after his ascension, in April, 1688 Mar Thoma died.

### **Mar Thoma IV—1688-1728**

Mar Thoma IV succeeded Mar Thoma III. As mentioned earlier, he too was consecrated by Mar Ivanios. The reign of the Mar Thoma was noted for two events. One was the passing away of Mar Ivanios in 1694. The second, was the arrival in 1708 of a Nestorian Metropolitan Mar Gabriel. Owing allegiance to Nestorian Patriarch Mar Elias of Baghdad, Mar Gabriel began preaching schismatic doctrines in churches. Mar Thoma resisted Mar Gabriel and was not in friendly terms with him. To counter Mar Gabriel's Nestorian influence, Mar Thoma requested the Patriarch of Antioch to send a Metropolitan of learning in 1709 and 1720.

In the first letter in Syriac and translated by Thomas Yeats in his book *Indian Church History* (P.152.4), Mar Thoma IV wrote: Thoma, the infirm, bishop of the ancient and Orthodox Syrian Christians of Hendo to the Primate of the Royal Syrian-priesthood ..... Mar Ignatius Patriarch triumphing with the triumphs of Apostles ... President of the illustrious throne of Antioch, the fourth Patriarchate by the decree of 318 fathers assembled in the city of Nicene ... My Lord, I implore thy benediction with thy right hand full of Cordial love, professing obedience and submission to your high authority wherefore God bless thee in thy throne... I am utterly unworthy to write this letter becoming your eminency but I wrote solely on account of the great distress of the Syrian believers, well worthy of praise now dwelling in Hindoo; and that you, would be pleased to send unto us a Patriarch and a Metropolitan and two elders, such as are learned and qualified in the reading of the Holy Scriptures"<sup>4</sup>. To this letter, there was no response from the Patriarch. Some years later, he again approached him in 1720 for learned Metropolitans without success.

3. *ibid* p : 5.

4. Cyril Malancharuvil : *The Syro-Malankara Church* (1973) P. 30.

### **Last Days**

Mar Thoma towards the close of his life, consecrated his nephew to succeed him. In this, he wisely out-manouvered Mar Gabriel for the latter had gained some influence in the Syrian community. In 1728, Mar Thoma died. He lies buried at Kandanad.

### **Mar Thoma V — 1728-65**

In 1728, the nephew of Mar Thoma IV, who had received consecration from the latter, became the head of the Church with the title of Mar Thoma V. His period of rule witnessed the continuous presence of Antiochene and Nestorian Metropolitans in Malankara. It had its own advantages and disadvantages.

Mar Thoma was consecrated by his predecessor without the assistance of any Metropolitan of the Church of Syria which was considered as a flaw in the validity of the esteemed post. This prompted Mar Thoma V to write to the Patriarch of Antioch for a learned Metropolitan, although he did not personally subscribe to the idea of any further consecration. The letter was delivered through a merchant named Antonius Deacon.

### **Nestorian Mar Ivanios of Basra**

In the meanwhile a Nestorian Metropolitan Mar Ivanios from Basra arrived in Malankara in 1748. The prelate was found to be a tactless, short-tempered person addicted to liquor. Besides, he began to interfere in the internal administration of the Church. Mar Thoma resented the acts of Mar Ivanios and hence, with the assistance of the Dutch authorities, sent him back to Basra.

### **Baselios Mar Sakralla, Catholicos**

In 1751, the Patriarch of Syria sent Baselios Mar Sakralla, Catholicos at Mosul, Metropolitan Mar Gregorios and Ramban Mar Youhanon with a few deacons to Malankara. The Patriarch had also given a letter of authority to instal Mar Thoma as Malankara Metropolitan with the title of Mar Dionysius. The Ramban was made a Metropolitan with the title of Mar Ivanios by the Catholicos in 1752, while in Malankara.

### **Dutch Diplomacy**

Meanwhile, the Dutch, who had arranged the passage of the Syrian prelates and who were earlier promised the travelling expenditure of the prelates, promptly asked for a cash-down payment

of a sum of Rupees twelve thousand from Mar Thoma V. The Dutch, it is said, did not allow the prelates to land before this payment was made. Mar Thoma V who could not raise this huge amount, was sued by the Dutch and was also imprisoned. According to the local tradition, the whole Syrian Christian community at Niranam, hearing the predicament of their Metropolitan, rose as one man, raised the required amount and bought the release of Mar Thoma V as well as the Metropolitans.

### **Antiochene Demand**

The unkindest cut of all came when, in return for all these tribulations the Antiochene prelates who met Mar Thoma V in St. Mary's Church at Mavelikara, held that the consecration of Mar Thoma was invalid for want of sanction from the Patriarch of Antioch and, therefore, he should be re-consecrated. Mar Thoma, however, did not yield.

Reacting to this situation, the Patriarch sent a stiff command to the Mar Thoma. "This is dated 25th Chingam 1751 A.D. The Patriarch in this command after pointing out the impropriety of Thoma's disobedience to the Delegates and the imperfection in his consecration as Metran by his predecessor in that office, proceeded to say: By that authority vested in us through the Holy Ghost being the power of Jesus Messiah, the Lord who has empowered and weakness in the Supremacy of the Apostolic Throne of Peter at Antioch, I now command unto you, by that authority, We command unto you that you should acknowledge the supremacy of the Apostolic Throne of Antioch ... Behold you must obey the Brother, the Venerable Mar Baselius and Mar Gregorius, who are in your midst and all that they command or counsel unto you; for we have placed the word given unto us into their mouth.... You should become obedient and go to the aforesaid Venerable Father and get your Episcopal title confirmed and that you should be on terms of reciprocal union and amity". The Patriarch in this remarkable document denounces the consecration of Thoma V as utterly invalid and opposed to law. It contains condemnation of the Dignity assumed by Thoma without a proper Imposition of Hand"<sup>5</sup>.

5. Judgement of the Royal Court of Appeal (1880) Para. 99 – P. 32

### **Mar Thoma-Antiochene Compromise—1754**

Mar Thoma, however, did not yield. There was no rapprochement between Mar Thoma and the Antiochene prelates in his life time in this regard. A compromise, however, was struck for convenience in 1754. (18 Dhanu) between them, according to which Mar Thoma was acknowledged as the Malankara Metropolitan and the Antiochene prelates also agreed not to ordain priests for Malankara without Mar Thoma's sanction<sup>6</sup>. P. Cherian concedes, "The foreign prelates had to enter into a compromise under which Mar Thoma acknowledged the supremacy of the Jacobite Patriarch while the foreign prelates undertook not to ordain priests among the Syrians without Mar Thoma's sanction".<sup>7</sup> Mar Thoma V was thus acknowledged as Metropolitan and head of the Malankara Church.

### **Last days**

As advanced in age, Mar Thoma V consecrated his nephew as Malankara Metropolitan in 1761 at Niranam to succeed him. He lived few years more without any further incidents till his death in May 1765 (Medam 27, 940). Catholicos Sakrallah too had died a year earlier in Sept. 1764 (Thulam 9, 939).

### **Mar Thoma VI (Mar Dionysius I)—1765-1808**

Mar Thoma VI succeeded Mar Thoma V in 1765. It appears that there was a continued effort to belittle the consecration performed by Mar Thoma V. The agreement of 1754 had acquitted any misgivings on the subject when Mar Thoma V was accepted as Metropolitan and head of the Malankara Church. Public feeling was, however, not quenched. The presence of the Antiochene prelates served only to raise the emotional pitch. Submitting to expediency and desiring peace and concord within the Church, perhaps, Mar Thoma VI had agreed to be reconsecrated as Malankara Metropolitan at the hands of Antiochene representatives, Mar Gregorios and Mar Ivanios in July 1770 (Midhunam 29,945) at St Marys Church, Niranam with the title of Mar Dionysius, a title which the Patriarch of Antioch had earlier suggested in a letter to Mar Thoma V in place of the traditional title of MAR THOMA. The Antiochene prelates gave him the

6. Paret Malankara Nazranikal Vol. III, P. 19-20

7. Cherian P. : The Malabar Syrian Christians P. 53

staff Mitre, Crosier, Stacion and Moorone that had been brought from Antioch.<sup>8</sup> By his becoming Malankara Metropolitan at the hands of the Syrian prelates, Mar Dionysius achieved peace in the Church and avoided a confrontation with the Church of Syria.

### **Formation of Independent Thozhiyur Syrian Church 1772**

An important development during the time of Mar Dionysius was the foundation of an independent small Church at Thozhiyur. Mar Gregorios, the Syrian Metropolitan, who had consecrated Mar Dionysius, consecrated a certain Kattumangat Kurien Ramban also as Metropolitan Kurilose in the Mattancherry church on *Vrischikam 17, 945* (December 1772.)

### **Ancestry of Kattumangat Clan**

The ancestry of Kattumangat clan of prelates has been recounted in an article titled 'Mulanthuruthy Palli by Varghese Kcippallil published in Malayala Manorama Weekly of May 16, 1964. He traced the family to one of the brothers of Mar Andrews from Syria who had arrived in 1676 at the time of Mar Thoma II. One of these brothers came to Mulanthuruthy, married and settled down. He had two sons, one established the Kattumangat family and the other, Thanangaat. In this Kattumangat family, a century later in 1772, two brothers came into position. These brothers, Abraham and Gevarghese, learned syriac under Mar Ivanios Episcopa from Syria at Mar Thomma Church at Mulanthuruthy. Abraham subsequently received ordination from Mar Ivanios. In 1772 he was a Ramban. This Ramban was identified as Kattumangat Kurien Ramban in the Seminary case.

It is said, "this Kattumangat Ramban, a designing man, obtained Dionysius's permission to remove Mar Gregerios who was old and sickly, to Mulanthuruthy on the pretext of giving him proper medical treatment there. Having thus succeeded in getting Gregorios out of the influence of Dionysius, he prevailed on him to consecrate him as Metropolitan. Mar Gregorios who had himself a grudge against Dionysius, was only glad to do so and accordingly consecrated him as Metran with the title of Mar Kurilos. He received the crossier, crown and other monetary benefits from Mar Gregorios.

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8. Judgement of the Royal Court of Appeal Para 104-p 33

Disputes then arose between Mar Dionysius and Mar Kurilos. Mar Dionysius protested against the clandestine consecration because it was performed without the consent of the Church. The dispute was settled by arbitration of the Dutch Commodore in favour of Mar Dionysius, while Mar Kurilos removed to British Malabar area.

Mar Kurilose, meanwhile, obtained recognition of his consecration from the Rajah of Cochin and consequently, authority over the parishes in Cochin State. However, he withdrew to Thozhiyur in British Malabar and there established an independent separate Church. Thus, there came to exist the Thozhiyur Independent Syrian Church. This Church proved to be a blessing in disguise, to Malankara Church for on more than one occasion it served the Church in maintaining a continuous episcopacy without the need for depending upon the Church of Syria.

In matters of faith, sacraments, forms of worship and practices it follows the Orthodox tradition.

Mar Kurilose expired on July 10, 1802 and was buried at Thozhiyur. The Church raised eleven Successive Metropolitan, since then and the present incumbent, the twelfth Metropolitan is Geevarghese Mar Kurilose.

The Church has about 6 parish Churches and 10 chapels. Clergy number about 10. 1 High School, 2 upper Primary Schools and 1 Lower Primary School are administered by the Church. A Child Welfare Centre is also being managed.

### **Invasion of Tippu Sultan 1789-92**

Political factors were once more destined to have an influence on the Christians of Malankara. A major political catastrophe struck the Church with the invasion of Travancore and Cochin by the fanatic Muslim ruler Tippu Sultan of Mysore during the period 1780-92. His troops reached as far south as Alwaye and Paravur. The ruthless soldiers set fire to churches at Kunnankulam, Ankamali and also plundered the houses of Christians and others and forced many of them to embrace Islam. The further onslaught of the fanatic was, however, repulsed by the great floods of the river Periyar. Meanwhile, the troops of the British East India Company threatened to attack Mysore. In such circumstances, the invaders retraced their steps.

### **Headquarters Shifted to Kottayam**

One of the results of the Sultan's attack was the shifting of the headquarters of the Church from Ankamali to Kottayam. Since then, it has been at Kottayam.

### **Consecration of Rambans 1784**

In 1784, Mar Ivanios of Syria who was in Malankara, elevated two priests of the Church to the monastic order of Ramban. They were Philipose Kathanar of Kayamkulam and Mathan Kathanar, the nephew of Mar Dionysius.

### **Attempts of Reunion With RCC<sup>9</sup>**

In his analysis, Mar Dionysius found that the Christian community in Malankara was divided into two groups, one owing allegiance to the Pope of Rome and the other to himself. The Metropolitan was also not happy over the influence of the prelates from Syria. At the same time, he visualised a happy state if all the Roman Catholics and the Syrian Christians lived together under one umbrella. He proceeded with the idea and contacted Kariattil Joseph Malpan and Paremmakal Thoma Kathanar of the Roman Catholic Church. The conditions which Mar Dionysius laid were that the united Church should be autonomous-independent with freedom of internal administration, that he would himself head the Church and that his own nephew should be consecrated to succeed him. To this end Mar Dionysius was prepared to owe allegiance to the Pope. Kariattil Malpan and Paremmakal Thoma Kathanar went to Rome and met Pope in this context in 1778. Mar Dionysius's scheme was presented to the Pope, but was declined. Instead, Kariattil Joseph Malpan was consecrated as Metropolitan and sent to Malankara.

As the outcome of the Roman trip was known, Mar Dionysius felt cool towards any detente with the Roman Catholic Church. The latter, however, continued to promote the idea. As a result, a dialogue between the two Churches started. Leaders of both denominations met at Chengannur in February 1791, at Kayamkulam in September 1792 and later at Niranam in November 1792. The talks held at Kayamkulam were crucial. As they were not heading towards any satisfactory goal in Mar Dionysius's views, the meeting ended in a stalemate. In short, Mar Dionysius

9. Paret : Malankara Nazranikal : Vol: III Pp : 72-78.

did not give in to the bait of the Roman Catholic Church which aimed at the absorption of the Syrian Church within its monolithic structure.

### **Consecration of Successor**

Following the failure of Kayamkulam talks Mar Dionysius decided that he should not lose any time in choosing his successor. The choice fell on his nephew Ramban Mathew. Mar Dionysius consecrated him as Metropolitan at Chengannur in May 1796.

### **Mathoo Tharakan**

One of the key public figures who participated in the Romo-Syrian dialogue on the side of the Roman Catholic Church was Mathoo Tharakan—a Syrian Catholic and a whole sale dealer in salt for the State of Travancore. He planned to bring the Church under the Pope inspite of the breakdown of the talks. To gain his end, he resorted to political pressure. He involved Mar Dionysius in a fabricated case and won a court verdict levying a fine of Rs. 25,000. Mar Dionysius was unable to pay such a huge fee. Tharakan reacted quickly and confiscated the episcopal staff, cross and mitre of Mar Dionysius and also other landed properties of the parishes of Niranam, Chengannur etc. The Metropolitan was also brought to Alleppy, the hometown of Tharakan and kept under house-arrest. There, the Metropolitan was prompted to celebrate the Mass at Tathampally Church according to the Roman rites and liturgy. This was on June 22, 1799.

Tharakan, however, soon fell from the favour of the ruling Maharaja. As his power waned, Mar Dionysius managed to escape from captivity and reached Niranam. The Metropolitan who sensed the reproach of his people for having celebrated the Eucharist in the Roman way, publicly apologised for his conduct.

### **Dr. Claudius Buchanan's visit 1806-7<sup>10</sup>.**

Towards the close of Mar Thoma VI's life, Dr. Claudius Buchanan, Principal of the Fort William College, Calcutta visited Malankara in 1806-7. He had received a special commission from Lord Wellesley, Governor General of India, to study and report on the Malankara Church. Accordingly, he called on Mar Thoma at Kandanad Church on November 23, 1806. On the next

10. Paret : Mulanthuruthy Sunnahadoss (1966) pp : 62-63.

day, Buchanan held wide-ranging discussions on a possible unity with the Church of England evangelisation, forms of worship, prayer, rites and practices of the Church, with the Malpan and other priests. The discussions were cordial; in the matter of unity, the priests were anxious about the ordination and maintained that the Church enjoyed an unblemished apostolic succession and tradition and this position of the Church should be acknowledged in any scheme of unity. Later in his meeting with Mar Thoma, Dr. Buchanan reviewed his discussions with the clergy and said that the “missionaries ordained by the Church of England might be permitted hereafter to preach in the numerous Churches of Syrians” and this will enable the Church to withstand the stride and force of Roman Catholic Church. The Metrán replied, “I would sacrifice much for such an union only let me not be called to compromise anything of the dignity and purity of the Church”.<sup>11</sup>

Another important point of discussion was translation of the Holy Bible into Malayalam. Mar Dionysius showed Dr. Buchanan, a translation in Malayalam of the Syriac Bible rendered by Ramban Philipose of Kayamkulam. Impressed with the translation, Dr. Buchanan agreed to get it printed. This Malayalam translation was later printed in Bombay in 1811 and copies thereof were distributed in the churches. Mar Dionysius also presented to Dr. Buchanan a copy of the Syriac Bible which was more than a thousand years old. The book had apparently escaped the vandalism of the Portuguese and Mar Dionysius was anxious to preserve it. The same is now preserved in the Buchanan collection in Cambridge University.

Dr. Buchanan had recorded a true description of his visit to Malankara Church and discussions with Mar Thoma in his book “Christian Researches in Asia”, which went a long way in projecting the ancient Malankara Church to the western world.

### **Aarthat Padiyola 1806<sup>12</sup>**

It is interesting to observe here that the parishioners of St. Mary's Church at Aarthat Kunnamkulam executed a pledge similar to the Koonen Kurish Sathyam but wider in connotation,

11. Buchanan C : Christian Researches in Asia pp : 106-148. Quoted by K.K.M. kuriakose. History of Christianity in India Source Materials p : 79.

12. Mathew P.V. : Sugandha Naadu Nazrani Charithram. P. 158.

before the metropolitan Mar Dionysius on a Sunday in Makaram 981 (1806). This is reported by P.V. Mathew. The pledge declared loyalty to the St. Thomas tradition of faith and practices and repudiated any connection with any of the Metropolitans and their teachings of either the Roman Catholic Church or the Babylonian Church or the Antiochian Church. The Padiyola refers to a provocation caused when a few members of the Church defected to the Roman Catholic faith.

The declaration is recorded in old Malayalam script in a copper plate and preserved in the Oriental Manuscript Library of the Trivandrum University.

### **Obituary of Syrian Prelates**

Two of the Syrian prelates who had come along with Catholicos Sakralla in 1751, died during Mar Thoma VI's tenure—Mar Gregorios in 1772 and Mar Ivanios in 1794.

### **Mar Dioscoros—1807**

In 1807, one Mar Dioscoros from Syria came to Malankara. A brief entry in para 114 (p: 35) of the Judgement of the Royal Court in 1889 regarding him is interesting as well as revealing. To quote : "On his arrival here, he went into churches and tried to deal with the funds thereof freely as he chose without any sanction. The Metropolitan very rightly objected to such a course and had him deported by the Sircar. Here is another instance of the Metran and the people objecting to Bava's interference with the temporal affairs of the church".

The East India Company at the orders of Col. Macaulay, the British Resident, deported Mar Dioscoros in April 1807.

### **Establishment of The Trust Fund—1808**

Yet another significant incident of Mar Dionysius's reign which cast its long shadow over the history of the Church for all time to come, was the establishment of the TRUST FUND. Diverse descriptions denote its origin. But authentic proofs establishing the Fund are extant. Mar Dionysius had decided to entrust the British Resident Colonel Macaulay with three thousand star Pagodas for investment in the East India Company in perpetuity at eight percent interest annually in the name of the Malankara Syrian Church. It was, however, his successor who actually

handed over the money to Col. Macaulay.<sup>13</sup> This is evident from the Cash Receipt dated December 1, 1808.<sup>14</sup>

### **Death**

Mar Dionysius (MAR THOMA VI) passed away on May 13 1808 while at Niranam at the age of eighty after a very eventful and fruitful life.

Popularly known as Mar Dionysius the Great, the Metropolitan served the Malankara Church for forty-three years from 1765 to 1808. On many counts, Mar Dionysius was really great. Political enemies threatened him; Antiochene Church pressurised him to give up the temporal powers in their favour; a desire to forge a union of the Malankara Church and the Roman Catholic Church with himself at the head, independent of any foreign authority which proved futile and served only to welcome retaliatory measures from Mathu Tharakan on his person the beginning of an interaction with the Church of England all these and more strangled his thoughts and energy; still the Metropolitan came out of the woods unscathed and led the Church with renewed strength.

In all solemnity Mar Dionysius's body was interned in the church at Puthencav, Chengannur. Incidentally, the church was built at his expense. It was, therefore, his wish that he should be buried there. This church was raised as Cathedral in 1985 following the creation of Chengannur Diocese.

### **Mar Thoma VII—1808-9**

Mar Thoma VI was succeeded by Mar Thoma VII. The former had consecrated him as a Metropolitan in 1796. Unfortunately, the Metropolitan had a very short span of life. The only events worth recording are deposit of the Trust Fund money with the East India Company and the drawal of the interest thereon for the first time. In 1809, the Metropolitan succumbed to death while at Kandanad and was buried at Kolencherry.

### **Mar Thoma VIII—1809-16**

Before he had breathed his last, Mar Thoma VII had on his death bed, it is said, laid his hands on one Fr. Thomas of Pakalomattom family, who was there upon declared as Metro-

13. Paret : Malankara Nazranikal Vol. III Pp. 17, 112

14. Appendix III

politan Mar Thoma VIII. The consecration was, consequently, criticised.

### **Kandanad Meeting 1809**

Soon after assuming office, Mar Thoma VIII convened a meeting of the Church members at Kandanad. The assembly acknowledged Mar Thoma VIII as their Metropolitan. It also resolved that Pulikottil Joseph (Ittoop) Kathanar should be ordained as Ramban and that he and Ramban Philipose of Kayamkulam should function as advisers to the Mar Thoma.

### **Pulikottil Ittoop Ramban - Metropolitan 1815**

Unfortunately, the Mar Thoma and the advisers broke off within a period of two years. Consequently, there arose two parties in the Church—one in support of Mar Thoma and the other, the Rambans. In the meanwhile, Ittoop Ramban had met Col. Munroe in 1810 and discussed with him the need and urgency for establishing a school for training the clergy. Col. Munroe was impressed. He shortly helped the Ramban to establish the school for theological training—the seminary.

On March 22, 1815, Joseph Ramban was consecrated as Metropolitan Mar Dionysius II by Metropolitan Kidangan Mar Philoxenos at St. Mary's Church Pazhanji with the support of Col. Munroe. A Royal Proclamation recognising Mar Dionysius II as the lawful Malankara Metropolitan was also issued in January 1816. Mar Thoma VIII protested, but proved helpless.

The establishment of a Seminary and the rise of Pulikottil Mar Joseph Dionysius weakened the prestige and power of Mar Thoma VIII considerably. At last, he expired in May 1816 at Niranam after consecrating his uncle Kadamattath Iype Kathanar as Metropolitan Mar Thoma IX to succeed him.

### **Mar Thoma IX—1816-17**

When Mar Thoma IX came to position, Pulikottil Joseph Mar Dionysius was already functioning effectively, as Malankara Metropolitan. Therefore, finding himself in a peculiar situation of ignominy and ineffectiveness, Mar Thoma IX discarded all power and spent the rest of his life in seclusion as a monk in the Kadamattom church till his death in 1817.

### **Eclipse of Pakalomattom Lineage**

Thus ended the ecclesiastical rule of a period of a century and a half of the Malankara Metropolitans from the Pakalomattom family over the Malankara Church. The Pakalomattom family based at Kuravilangad traced its origin to Palayur. According to tradition, the four families of Pakalomattom, Sankarapuri, Kalliankal and Kalli which accepted Christ through the works of St. Thomas at Palayur, left it by the end of third century and came down to Ettumanur where a number of their own tribe who had not converted to Christianity, had settled down and established the Ettumannoor temple. With the assistance of these temple authorities, they settled in areas north of 'Kaali Kav' temple at Kuravilangad, where the present church is located. It is also a legend that this church was blessed by the bishop Joseph who came along with C'nai Thoma in 345 A.D. The Pakalomattom family descendants had settled in the area which lay north to the Church. This branch came to be known as Palliveedu.

The Pakalomattom family had provided Archadiakons (Archdeacons) and Malankara Metropolitans till 1817. According to tradition, the Archadiakons ordained close relatives to succeed as head of the Church. It is held that Mar Thoma I and Mar Thoma II were brothers and Mar Thoma III was their nephew. Mar Thoma IV hailed from Araackal family, Mar Thoma V and Mar Thoma VI from Pallippurath family and Mar Thoma VII from Palli Vadakkedath family—all the three families being branches of Pakalomattom Clan. Mar Thoma VIII and Mar Thoma IX also traced their heredity to Pakalomattom. Mar Thoma IX was uncle to Mar Thoma VIII.

It may be stated in all fairness that the Pakalomattom family offered to Malankara Church a long line of indomitable and deeply devoted prelates who were admirably able to guide the Church during very critical and turbulent days. With them an era ended.

## CHAPTER NINE

# MALANKARA CHURCH FACES PROTESTANTISM

### Arrival of the English 1795

With the arrival of the English on the scene, the foreign domination of South India again changed hands. The English displaced the Dutch from Cochin in 1795. Soon, the erstwhile State of Travancore also came under their sway. The East India Company, under which forum the English operated in India, appointed a British Resident for Cochin and Travancore. The first two Residents viz : Colonel Macaulay and Colonel John Munroe were men of strong Christian convictions and they were anxious to help the local Christians in enhancing their standards of living.

The Malankara Church was then having a comparatively peaceful time. A spirit of enthusiasm to develop its educational avenues was very evident. The Malankara Metropolitan, Mar Dionysius the Great, was deeply interested in instituting schools in the parishes. In this, the British Residents proved very helpful. They also extended a wide range of financial concessions.

With the stabilisation of their political power in India, the English started extending their activities into the religious field also. Church Missionary Society, under the patronage of the Church of England was started in 1788 with their main fields of gospel work in India at Calcutta and Madras. In Malankara, the missionaries of the Society joined the Theological Seminary, Kottayam. They started educating the clergy under training as well as preaching to the Syrian Christians in their churches. Thus started a regular contact between the Malankara Church and the Church of England. The first missionary joined the Theological Seminary in 1816 and the period of contact lasted till 1836. The relationship was perforce ended when it caused a schism in the Church.

During this period, the Church was led by three able Metropolitans, but for whom the Church would not have been what it is

to-day. They were Pulikottil Mar Dionysius II (1815-16), Punnathra Mar Dionysius III (1817-1825) and Cheppad Mar Dionysius IV (1825-1855).

### **PULIKOTTIL JOSEPH MAR DIONYSIUS II (1815-16)<sup>1</sup>**

#### **Early Days**

In the days of Mar Dionysius, the Great (Mar Thomas VI), there arose a clergy known for his ability, uprightness and loyalty to the Church. He was Pulikottil Joseph Kathanar of Kunnankulam.

Fr. Joseph, known as Ootoop in early days was born to Chummar Paulose and Cherchy of Pulikottil family on 15.1.1742. His mother belonged to Pazhanji. Ootop had his early education in Syriac and theology under the Vicar of the church of Pazhanji. Malankara Metropolitan Mar Dionysius later ordained him as a priest and put him as Vicar of Chhatukulangara St. Mary's Church.

On December 9, 1806, Rev. Dr. Claudius Buchanan, Principal of Fort William College, Calcutta visited Aarthat Church, at Kunnankulam. There he met Fr. Joseph. During their talk, Fr. Joseph had expressed the need for an institution which would provide facilities for education in English and in theology and also for printing the Bible in Malayalam. Later Dr. Buchanan reported the above needs of the Church to Lord Wellesly, Governor General of India.

#### **Malayalam Bible 1811**

During the time of Mar Dionysius, Fr. Joseph had taken considerable interest in translating the Bible into Malayalam from the Syriac version. In this task he was assisted by Ramban Philipose of Kayamkulam and another Thimmayya Pilla. The four gospels were translated in 1807 and a handwritten copy of it was sent to Dr. Buchanan for printing. Dr. Buchanan got it printed in Bombay in 1811 and copies thereof were sent to Fr. Joseph.

#### **(Old) Seminary 1815**

On August 15, 1808 Fr. Joseph was ordained as Ramban. In the assembly of the Church convened by Mar Thoma VIII at

1. Fr. Jose P.M. : Pulikottil Joseph Mar Dionysius Malankara Metropolitan (1983)

Kandanad in 1809 Joseph Ramban along with Philipose Ramban spearheaded a motion calling for the establishment of theological seminaries in North as well as South Malankara to train and educate the clergy in Theology.

Fr. Joseph discussed the project with the British Resident Col. Munroe. He offered Rs. 3360/- on account of interest accrued on the Trust Fund deposited with the East India Company. The amount was received by the trustees of Aarthat Church viz. Vadakkoott Varu Iype and Kakkassery Iype, and the trustee of the church of Mulanthuruthy. Further on the persuasion of Col. Munroe, Rani Gowri Lakshmi Bai of Travancore donated 16 acres of land in Govindapuram Kara on the Southern bank of the Meenachil River at Kottayam on 19.11.1813 and also a sum of Rs. 29,000/-. Later, an amount of Rs 21,000/- was also sanctioned by the Diwan Peshkar Venketa Rayar on Kumbham 20, 993. The island which came to later be called Munroe Island near Kottayam, was also transferred to the Ramban. The Resident also caused the Hindus of Tiruvalla to pay Rs.8,000/- to the Ramban for having burnt the church at Palliakara.

Having come to possess enough funds and an enviable site, the Ramban proceeded with the construction of a building to house a theological seminary. Foundation was laid on Kumbham 3, 989 (February 1814). The three storied structure was completed in Meenam 990 (March 1815).

Soon classes were started for theological trainees in the new building. The official headquarters also came to be housed in the Seminary till 1951 when a new location was acquired at Devalokam, Kottayam.

### **Advent of CMS Missionaries**

Col. Munroe, as seen earlier, had evinced keen interest in building the Seminary. He also desired a well qualified team of persons on its staff and hence made "an appeal to the Church Missionary Society (CMS) which had been founded in 1788 to send out missionaries to help in educating the Clergy for the Syrian Church".<sup>2</sup> Dr. Claudius Buchanan who visited Travancore and had gained a first-hand knowledge about the Church also played a part in influencing the CMS. P. Cherian informs us,

2. Keay F.E. : A History of the Syrian Church in India, p.63

“On his return to England, Buchanan warmly advocated the cause of the Puthencoor Syrians. The earnestness of his advocacy roused the interests of the newly formed CMS in this church. In their 12th Annual Report, the CMS Committee suggested that a few learned zealous and prudent clergymen would be received as there is ground to hope, with open arms by the venerable Church. Their labours, it was added, would tend under Divine blessing to revive and confirm the influence of the faith in that oppressed community and might lead ultimately to a union between the churches”.<sup>3</sup>

As a result, the Society provided the services of Rev. Norton (1816), Rev. Benjamin Bailey (1816), Rev. Joseph Fenn (1818-26), and Rev. Henry Baker (1819)—all of whom joined the Seminary teaching staff. The curriculum included the study of Sanskrit, Hebrew, Syriac, Malayalam and Theology. It was in the Seminary School that the study of English was introduced for the first time in the erstwhile Travancore State.

“After the arrival of Baker, they made a division of labour amongst themselves, each taking up the task most suited to his own particular gifts. Bailey, besides devoting his time to the Syrian clergy, plunged into literary work. He set up a press at Kottayam. He translated the Bible and the English prayer Book into Malayalam and brought out two Malayalam dictionaries. Baker’s work was in connection with education. He started village schools in about seventy-two different places where there were Syrian congregations. A school for higher education was established at Kottayam. The Seminary at Kottayam for the training of Syrian clergy was placed under the supervision of Joseph Fenn. The instruction which was not only theological but included the element of a general education.”<sup>4</sup>

### **CMS Missionaries in Seminary**

The missionaries, who had joined the Seminary teaching staff, had strict instructions from the Church Missionary Society not to meddle with the doctrines and traditions of the Malankara Church and also not to interfere in its administration. They were rightly

3. Cherian P. : The Malabar Syrian and the church Missionary Society. 1816-1840-p.73

4. Keay F.E. : A History of the Syrian Church in India : P. 65.

engaged in the teaching of Seminarians, in organising gospel work in parishes, in encouraging teaching of English in schools and in providing biblical and other related books in Malayalam. Use of the Malayalam Bible, which was translated by Ramban Philipose of Kayamkulam and printed in Bombay by Dr. Buchanan, was introduced in the parishes. Missionary centres were also opened in different places. Thus the advent of CMS missionaries had given the Church an awakening, a new dimension.

In later years, the missionaries shifted their activities to the school mentioned above, when they and the Church parted their ways. The Seminary which had an older standing came to be called Old Seminary. Today, this Seminary stands as the pioneer theological institution and also has grown into a college offering degree courses in theology.

### **Malankara Metropolitan**

Meanwhile, the Govt. of Madras took objection to the payment of the interest on the Trust Fund to the Ramban Joseph, instead of the Malankara Metropolitan (Mar Thoma VII) as required under the terms of the deposit. Within the Church also, there were protests over the procedure adopted. In these circumstances, the Church members at a meeting, where Col. Munroe himself was present, decided to request Ramban Joseph to accept the office of Metropolitan. He agreed to the request, although rejected it initially. Subsequently, on March 22, 1815, at the Pazhanji St. Mary's Church, Ramban Joseph was consecrated as Metropolitan with the title of Mar Joseph Dionysius II by Kidangan Geevarghese Mar Philoxenos of the Thozhiyur Church.

Although Mar Thoma VIII objected to the extra-ordinary measure, Col. Munroe prevailed over him. A royal proclamation accepting Mar Dionysius II as the lawful Malankara Metropolitan was issued from the Regent Maharani Laxmibai in January 1816. Thereafter, Mar Dionysius took over the reins as Malankara Metropolitan.

### **Last Days**

Mar Dionysius lived a fruitful life. As a man, the Metropolitan was known for his ascetic and devout life and steadfast purity. Aged 76, the Metropolitan passed away on November 25, 1816. Punnathra Kurien Ramban conducted the last rites. The grave is located in the Old Seminary Chapel.

### **Kidangan Geevarghese Mar Philoxenos of Thozhiyur 1816-17**

Following the death of Mar Dionysius II, Malankara Church was faced with the problem of raising the next Malankara Metropolitan. At this period, the autonomous Thozhiyur Syrian Church played a very important role. Kidangan Geevarghese Mar Philoxenos, Metropolitan, the fourth in the line of succession, rendered valuable services for the benefit of Malankara Church. The Metropolitan first came into the mainstream of history when he was called upon to consecrate Mar Dionysius II. Soon after the latter's death in 1816, Mar Philoxenos is found again at the helm of the Malankara Church. Apparently, Mar Dionysius II had not named or groomed a successor to him. Mar Thoma IX was no more an effective head of the Church. In the circumstances, Rev. Norton of the Theological Seminary with the consent and advice of the British Resident contacted Mar Philoxenos and proposed the episcopate to him. The Resident effectively persuaded Mar Philoxenos to come to Kottayam and head the Church. The Resident also issued a Royal proclamation installing Mar Philoxenos as the Malankara Metropolitan. Thus Mar Philoxenos of the Thozhiyur See became the Malankara Metropolitan in 1816, and was in position till November 1817.

At the end of nearly a year in 1817, the Metropolitan consecrated Punnathra Kurien Kathanar as Metropolitan of the Malankara Church. After having fulfilled his requisitioned service, Mar Philoxenos retired to Thozhiyur. In May 1825, Punnathra Mar Dionysius met with an untimely death. In this context, for the third time, Mar Philoxenos was requested to guide the Malankara Church. Meanwhile Cheppad Aanjilimoottil Philipose Kathanar was chosen as the next Malankara Metropolitan. Mar Philoxenos, accordingly, consecrated Philipose Kathanar as Mar Dionysius IV in September 1825.

Once more Mar Philoxenos retired to Thozhiyur. The Metropolitan may be seen as one who had the rare distinction of raising three successive heads for the Malankara Church, namely Pulikotttil Mar Dionysius II, Punnathra Mar Dionysius III and Cheppad Mar Dionysius IV. He himself had headed the Church for one year. The blessed soul breathed his last in 1829.

### **Punnathra Mar Dionysius III<sup>5</sup> 1817-25**

Born to Kochacko Tharakan of Thazhath Punnathra,

5. Kora Dr. T.C. : Punnathra Mar Dionysius Metropolitan 1984

Kottayam, the young Mar Dionysius III (known as Kurien) was called to God's Ministry in 1794. (970 Mal : era). In that year Mar Dionysius (I) ordained Kurien as a priest and appointed him as vicar of Cheriapalli Parish, Kottayam.

On 1817 Thulam 26 (November) Kurien Kathanar was consecrated as Malankara Metropolitan by Mar Philoxenos of Thozhiyur (Aanjoor) at Cheria Palli, Kottayam. The Travancore Government had issued a proclamation on his ascension as follows:

“Whereas Philoxenos, the Metropolitan, is ill and indisposed and Mar Dionysius has been consecrated by Mar Philoxenos as his successor to govern the Syrians and the Syrian Churches, this is to inform all the Syrians in this country that they should obey Mar Dionysius Metropolitan”.

(Travancore State Manual Vol. : I P : 732)

Mar Dionysius held cordial relations with the British Resident and the CMS Missionaries. While a priest, the Metropolitan had held detailed discussions with Bishop Middleton of Calcutta at Karingachira in 1816 on behalf of Mar Dionysius and also later in 1921 regarding the participation of CMS Missionaries in the Malankara Church.

### **Mavelikara Assembly 1818<sup>6</sup>**

The Missionaries with their Protestant background considered many of the rites and practices in the Church as absurd, myths and unbiblical. They, therefore, wanted to introduce reforms as followed in the Church of England in the liturgy and worship. With this in view, they influenced the Metropolitan to convene a meeting of clergy and laity on December 3, 1818 at Mavelikara to consider reforms in the Church. The meeting was held at St. Mary's Church, Mavelikara. It is said 40 priests and 700 laity attended this meeting. In the meeting Rev. Joseph Fenn presented the proposals which were, mainly, the desirability of priests getting married, reformation in the forms of worship, rites etc, and conduct of prayer in a language understandable by the people. The intercession of St. Mary was another tradition of the Church which was decried. He had also emphasised the need for both the Churches to come together. The meeting concluded with the decision that a Committee of the Metropolitan, Malpan, CMS Missionaries and

6. Paret : Mulanthuruthy Sunnahados (1966) P. 20

six learned priests, may be constituted to suggest reforms in the forms of worship, rites and practices in the Church.

The meeting amply revealed the intention of the CMS Missionaries to reform the faith and character of the Church. The situation reached a climax with the famous Wilson proposals, 18 years later.

### **Mar Dionysius Succumbs**

The period of Mar Dionysius's episcopacy was a very peaceful one. The Church was directed at improving the educational standards of the schools opened in the parishes. The Metropolitan's term was, however, cut short for, he died of Cholera on May 16, 1825 at the age of forty. He lies buried at Cheriapally, Kottayam.

### **Cheppad Mar Dionysius IV — 1825-55**

As the next Metropolitan, Aangilimootil Philipose Kathanar of Cheppad (Pallipad) was elected. As the story goes, names of four\* nominees were put to lot and Philipose Kathanar's name was drawn twice successively and he was, therefore, unanimously elected. Soon, Metropolitan Mar Philoxinos II of Thozhiyur See consecrated him as Malankara Metropolitan Mar Dionysius (IV) in August 1825 at Cheriapally, Kottayam. The major events which took place during his tenure were the arrival of Mar Athanasius from Syria, a meeting at Kottayam, Mavelikara Synod, the Cochin Award, the emergence of the Anglican Church in Malankara and rise of reform movement in the Church under Malpan Abraham and Palakunnath Mathews Mar Athanasius.

### **Mar Athanasius from Syria 1825**

In 1825, a Metropolitan, Mar Athanasius by name, accompanied by Ramban Abraham arrived in Malankara from Syria. He was found to be unacceptable to the Church as well as the British authorities because of his actions and objectives. It is said that on his way to Malankara, he halted at Bombay with the Anglican bishop Heber and had received communion from him. Later on arrival in Malankara, Mar Athanasius staked his claim to be the Malankara Metropolitan and held that the ordination of

\*1. Konat Abraham Malpan.

2. Aanjilimoottil Philipose Kassissa

3. Kallooppa Adangaprath Panickerveetil Ouseph Kassissa

4. Eruthikal Markose Kassisa.

Metropolitan Mar Dionysius IV was invalid. He is also said to have re-ordained priests who were already ordained. Because of these questionable actions, disputes arose between Mar Athanasius and Mar Dionysius. A meeting was also held at Kottayam on 29th December 1825 to ascertain the credentials of Mar Athanasius. This we learn from Howard's *Christians of St. Thomas and their Liturgies* (Pp.78-83). In view of the dissention caused in the Church, the local Govt. expelled Mar Athanasius and Abraham in 1826. Their stay in Malankara lasted only one year approximately. The CMS missionaries also had favoured Mar Athanasius's expulsion.

The episode of Mar Athanasius caused formation of a group of people in the Church dissenting with and opposed to Mar Dionysius and CMS missionaries.

### **CIRCUMSTANCES LEADING TO MAVELIKARA SYNOD**

#### **Shift in the Attitude of CMS Missionaries**

During the episcopacy of Mar Dionysius IV, there appeared an obvious change in the attitude of the CMS missionaries towards the Syrian Church. By 1833 the early missionaries were replaced by two young missionaries viz: Rev. Joseph Peet and Rev. Woodcock. They were zealous Protestants and began to teach in the Seminary classes and preach in churches doctrines contrary to the Orthodox faith. Intercession of the saints, prayers for the departed and observance of commemorative feasts were derided by them. Reformation of the liturgy on the model of Protestant practices was advocated. Such activities created a tension between the missionaries and Mar Dionysius. The gulf of differences grew wider as time passed.

Thus it will be observed that the missionaries, if they were a source of strength to the Syrian Church in the first decade of their arrival, in the second and third, proved a stumbling block in the preservation of the purity of faith, independence and integrity of the Church. The Syrian Christians had the bitter experience of the Portuguese still fresh in their memory. Quite naturally, therefore, they were apprehensive about the growing influence of the missionaries. The obvious change in attitude was contrary to what Rev. Norton tried to make clear to the Metropolitan that the Church Missionary Society had not come to proselytise but to help the Syrian Church.

**Kerr Mission 1806**

In fact, the English had an objective approach from the very beginning. To mention : Richard Kerr, Senior Chaplain of the Madras Government, was sent to Malankara in 1806 "to investigate the Syrian Church". He reported : "to unite them to the Church of England, would in my opinion, be a most notable work"<sup>7</sup>.

**Col. John Munro, British Resident and Dewan 1810-19.**

Col. Munro, too had similar ideas. "Munro, not content to be the patron of Jacobites in political and material things only, was planning a reformation of their religious life also. For this purpose, he invited CMS missionaries to work in the Syrian churches and to teach in the Seminary where they would influence the rising generation of their clergy. Working in close connection with himself, they would, he hoped, be able to bring about the revival and reformation of the Church of which it seemed to him to stand in need."<sup>8</sup>

These intentions became evident soon after Mar Dionysius II died in 1816. Col. Munro gradually began to interfere in the Church affairs. Rev. Norton met Mar Philoxenos of Thozhiyur See at Munro's behest and "asked him whether he was willing to assume the office of Metropolitan and if so, whether he would unite with the Missionaries in adopting whatever measures which they might deem necessary for the prosperity of the Church."<sup>9</sup> Later in 1816 itself, Col. Munro wrote to Rev. Bailey to "assume control and direction over the whole system of the discipline of the Church and Church administration, employing of course, the Metropolitan as his co-adjutor."<sup>10</sup>

Further, in a letter dated May 23, 1818 from Col. Munro to Rev. Baily, we find the following instruction. "The translation of the English Liturgy is another object of primary importance, for I think if it were well translated it might, without any difficulty, be substituted in all the churches for their present forms of worship. You will, of course, gradually prepare the minds of the Syrians by a

7. & 8. Firth C.B. : An Introduction to Indian Church History. pages 167-168.

9. & 10. Brown L.W. : The Indian Christians of St. Thomas. page 134.

Letter dt 6.8.1817 from Col. Munro to Baily

reference to the Scriptures to abandon the seven Sacraments, the Mass, and other remnants of Roman Catholic usage".<sup>11</sup>

### **John Tucker-1835**

John Tucker, Secretary of the Madras Corresponding Committee, who visited the Church in early 1835, "realized that what were considered to be the errors and corruptions of the Church did not arise from its short connection with the Church of Rome but from Antioch. He pointed out that in eighteen years' labour not one reform had been effected in the Church and that since the missionaries were not under the obedience neither of Antioch nor of Rome, nothing stood in the way of their building their own Church."<sup>12</sup>

This corrective tendency manifested in the famous Wilson proposals and Rev. Peet's highhandedness.

### **Bishop Wilson's Proposals-1835**

On November 15, 1835 Bishop Daniel Wilson, fifth Anglican Metropolitan of India at Calcutta, came to Travancore (Quilon) and held a meeting with Cheppad Mar Dionysius and other priests on November 21, 1835. He presented a scheme to the Metropolitan which was intended to introduce certain reforms in matters of discipline, faith and administration of the Church. The proposals were :-

1. "The Metran should as a general rule only ordain those who had passed through the College at Kottayam and had obtained a Certificate of proficiency and of good conduct.
2. Accounts showing the produce of the land and other property belonging to the Church should be submitted annually to the British Resident, so that none should be misappropriated, or lost, or alienated.
3. A permanent, endowment should, if possible, be substituted for uncertain fees.
4. Schools should be established in connection with every parish church.

11. Cheriyan P. : The Malabar Syrians and the Church Missionary Society. 1816-46. Appendix A. Letter No. 25. Pp : 364-365-; K. M. Kuriakose : History of Christianity in India-Source Materials. P : 95.

12. Gibbs M.E. : The Anglican Church in India. P. 112.

5. The clergy should expound the Gospel each Sunday to the people during Divine Service.
6. Prayers should be in Malayalam and instead of in Syriac.”<sup>13</sup>

### Mavelikara Synod 1836

“In less than six weeks after Bishop Wilson left Travancore with high hopes, the Puthenkur Syrians met in synod at Mavelikara in January (16) 1836 to consider the suggestions put forward by the Anglican bishop. The assembly was a large one. Fifty Kathanars attended. Mar Cyril (Kurilos) of Thozhiyur, the successor of Mar Philoxenos, was also present. Mar Dionysius presided over the meeting and regulated its deliberations. But his desire for the continuance of the amicable relationship with the missionaries and a spirit of compromise with the six points of Wilson did not commend itself to the assembly. The clergy who had mustered strong passed strongly-worded resolutions. While grateful recognising the good work done by the missionaries for their advancement, they deplored their action in ‘managing the Seminary without consulting the Metropolitan, dispersing the deacons instructed in the Seminary, conducting affairs in opposition to the discipline of our Church and creating dissensions amongst us, all of which have occasion to much sorrow and vexation’. They affirmed the supremacy of the Jacobite Patriarch of Antioch and declared that they would not deviate from the liturgies, ordinances and discipline of their own Church. It was also emphatically declared that an individual belonging to one persuasion was not authorised to preach and admonish in the Church of another following a different persuasion without the permission of the Patriarch. They held the Malabar Christians could not permit such a thing being done among them. “For this reason” they said, “we would not follow any faith or teaching other than the Orthodox faith of the Jacobite Syrian Christians to the end that we may obtain salvation through the prayers of the ever happy, holy and ever blessed Mother of God, the redresser of all complaints and through the prayer for all saints.”<sup>14</sup> The conclusion of the Synod, therefore, was that the proposals were aimed at bringing the Syrian Church slowly under the Anglican hierarchy. The decisions of the Synod are known as the

13. Keay F.E. : A History of the Syrian Church in India. page 75.

14. Velu Pillai : Travancore State Manual. 1940. Pp. 737-8.

MAVELIKARA PADIYOLA of 1836. Briefly, the Synod resolved to reject the scheme entirely, not to accept any faith other than the Orthodox faith and also not to have any relations with the missionaries of the Church Missionary Society.

A copy of the Padiyola is placed at Appendix IV.

### **Peet's Adventure**

The relations between the Syrian Christians and the missionaries reached a breaking point when the indiscreet and imprudent young missionary Rev. Joseph Peet broke into an upper room of the Old Seminary on Palm Sunday in 1836 in the absence of the Metropolitan who had gone to a neighbouring church to celebrate the Palm Sunday services. Peet, then, removed all books and documents including historic Copper Plates to the Residency bungalow at Quilon by boat. The incident enraged the Syrian Christians. (This wanton act was later condemned by the Church Missionary Society). As a result, it became difficult for the Syrian Christians to cooperate with the missionaries any further.

In 1838, Peet settled at Mavelikara where he remained till death in 1855. The Anglican Church at Mavelikara was opened in 1850.<sup>15</sup>

### **Cochin Award 1840<sup>16</sup>**

In these circumstances, the Correspondence Committee of the CMS at Madras decided on January 11, 1837 to discontinue the cooperation with the Malankara Church and to request the British Resident to apportion the Seminary property etc between the Church and the CMS. The Resident agreed and ordered to deposit the funds concerning the Seminary in Govt. Treasury. Further, he appointed a Royal Court of Arbitrators to decide the share of dues to each party. The Court was composed of Baron D'Albedhyll, Bishop J.S. Vernede and W.H. Horsely, nominated by the CMS, Mar Dionysius and the Govt. respectively.

The Court gave its award on April 4, 1840, known as the COCHIN AWARD, which decreed in principle that :

- (i) the property acquired by the Church in relation to the Seminary shall remain with the Church.

15. Gibbs M.E. : The Anglican Church in India. P : 165.

16. P.A. Oommen : Malankara Sabhayile Casukal—Malankara Church of the 20th Century (Ed. Fr. T.G. Zachariah and K.V. Mammen—1977). Pages 202-205.

- (ii) there shall be three trustees viz. the Malankara Metropolitan, a clergy trustee and lay trustee selected by the Church to administer the property of the Church.
- (iii) the funds and properties acquired by the Church after the arrival of the Missionaries shall be formed into a Trust which should be managed by the CMS Missionaries at Kottayam, the Corresponding Committee at Madras, the British Resident and another member appointed by the Resident.

According to this Award, Malankara Church received :

- (i) The Trust Fund, established in 1808.
- (ii) Rs. 2,520/- as share of sale proceeds, and as interest accrued on the Trust Fund.
- (iii) Rs. 8000/- which the Govt. had given to the Church in 1816 in compensation of the church burnt down at Tiruvalla.
- (iv) Rs. 4134/- received on sale of articles of gold of late Metropolitans.
- (v) The landed properties at Kadamattom and Old Seminary site, including the buildings.

The funds and properties apportioned to the CMS Missionaries were :

- (i) Rs. 20,000/- donated by the Tranvancore Govt.
- (ii) Rs. 14,035/- donated by European benefactor.
- (iii) Rs. 500/- in lieu of the Old Seminary.
- (iv) Munro island.
- (v) Rs. 1,000/- gifted by Joseph Fenn to the Seminary.

### **Trusteeship 1870**

This system of Trusteeship of Church properties was introduced in 1870 by Pulikottil Joseph Mar Dionysius. The representatives of the Church met and elected Mar Dionysius as the Metropolitan Trustee, Punnathra Chacko Chandapilla Kathanar as the Clergy Trustee and Kulangara Ittychan Piley as the Lay Trustee.

## FORMATION OF A NEW CHURCH UNDER CHURCH MISSIONARY SOCIETY

### Anglican Congregation-Second Division

The immediate effect of Cochin Award was the breaking away of a group of people who stood with the CMS missionaries from the main stream of St. Thomas Syrian Christians. The first Anglican congregation of Protestant faith in Kerala took shape in Mallapally. In fact, soon after the Mavelikara Synod, the missionaries had laid the foundation of an Anglican church there on March 8, 1836.<sup>17</sup> Those Syrian Christians who could not abide by the traditional values of the Syrian Church, found solace in the Western way of worship and formed similar congregations at other places too, under the aegis of Church Missionary Society. "Eventually in 1878, an Anglican diocese of Travancore and Cochin was formed."<sup>18</sup> The Church of England finally approved the diocese. This was the second division in the Malankara Church.

### Church of South India 1947

In early twentieth century, the idea of union of Churches of Protestant oriented faith gained acceptance among the Anglicans, Presbyterians and the United Church of South India. The union was based on four points called "the Lambeth Quadrilateral", as defined by the Lambeth Conference of Anglican bishops in 1888 as the necessary minimum of agreement between Christian people considering reunion. These are :

1. "The Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as containing all things necessary for salvation.
2. The Apostle's Creed and the Nicene Creed.
3. The two sacraments ordained by Christ Himself, Baptism and the Lord's Supper.
4. The historic Episcopate, locally adapted."<sup>19</sup>

On "the Lambeth Quadrilateral" was erected a system in which the episcopate, the presbyterate and the congregation of the faithful all had their due places as necessary elements in the life of the Church. The first three of the four received little elaboration, doctrinal definition being kept down to a minimum. Much

<sup>17</sup> & <sup>18</sup>. Keay F.E. : A History of the Syrian Church in India. page 83.

<sup>19</sup>. Firth C.B. : An Introduction to Indian Church History. pages 240-241.

freedom of worship was permitted; but a time was clearly envisaged when the united Church would want to draw up common forms of service, especially for Holy Communion. The eucharistic liturgy of the Church of South India was first published in 1950.<sup>20</sup> As regards the fourth point, viz the historic episcopate “it was provided therefore, that all the ministers of the Church of South India, with the right to minister anywhere within it; but a pledge was given that none of them would be imposed upon a congregation which could not conscientiously welcome his ministrations; and further it was laid down that after thirty years during which all new ordinations in the Church of South India would of course be episcopal—the Church should decide whether it would continue to allow exceptions to the rule of episcopal ordination or not. These provisions—the initial mixed ministry, the pledge and the thirty years’ period before decision—are the distinctive features of the South Indian method of handling this problem.”<sup>21</sup> Consequent on these unity talks, “the Church of South India was inaugurated on September 27, 1947 when the South Indian diocese of the Anglican Church, the South Indian Provincial of the Methodist Church and the South Indian United Church (with the exception of the North Tamil Council) became one Church”.<sup>22</sup>

### **Church of North India<sup>23</sup>**

Similarly, the Church of North India also “came into being as the result of a union of six Churches on 29th November 1970. The six Churches were :

- (1) The Council of the Baptist Churches in Northern India.
- (2) The Church of the Brethren in India.
- (3) The Disciples of Christ.
- (4) The Church of India (also formerly known as the Church of India, Pakistan, Burma and Ceylon).
- (5) The Methodist Church (British and Australian Conferences).
- (6) The United Church of Northern India.

### **The Union**

The Union of the six Churches was inaugurated, as planned,

20. & 21. *ibid.* page 242-3.

22. Thomas P. : *Christians and Christianity in India and Pakistan.* page 242.

23. *The Joint Council of the Church.....(1984) Pp : 18-29.*

on Sunday, November 29, 1970, at All Saints' Cathedral, Nagpur. The Services included the Declaration of the Union and the Representative Act of the Unification of the Ministry. At this memorable Service the, duly authorised lay representatives of the six uniting Churches read out the declarations of their respective Churches accepting the Plan of Church Union in North India. The presiding minister solemnly declared that "these six Churches within the area of union have become one CHURCH OF NORTH INDIA".

### **The Basis of the Union**

The basis on which the six Churches united may be summed up as follows :

- (i) The recognition by the uniting Churches that "the restoration of the visible unity of the Church on earth is the will of God" and the "the Holy Spirit is leading us to resolve the differences which at present separate us".
- (ii) Acceptance of the divinely inspired scriptures of the Old Testament and the New Testament as containing all things necessary for salvation and as the supreme and decisive standard of faith and conduct.
- (iii) Acceptance of the creeds commonly known as the Apostles' Creed and the Nicene Creed as witnessing to and safeguarding the faith of Church.
- (iv) Acceptance of the two sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper (or Holy Communion).
- (v) Mutual recognition and acceptance, by the uniting Churches, of each other's Ministry.

### **The Ordained Ministry**

According to the Representative Act, through prayer and mutual laying-on-hands, the Church of North India received from God a unified ordained ministry acceptable to the whole Church from the very beginning. It is the threefold ministry of bishops, presbyters and deacons within the broader framework of the 'priesthood of all believers'. The episcopate is both historical (i.e. in historic continuity with the early Church) and constitutional (i.e. the bishops are appointed and they exercise their functions in accordance with the Constitution of the Church of North India).

The Church of North India is not committed to any one particular theological interpretation of episcopacy, nor does it demand the acceptance of such an interpretation from its ministers or members.

The Fourth Synod of the Church of North India meeting on 4th October 1980, gave its approval to the ordination of women and resolved that, "The Church of North India admit women into the ordained ministry".

### **Inter Communion**

The Church of North India is in full intercommunion relationship with all Churches with which the former six uniting Churches were in communion at the time of the Union. Soon after the Union, it was in full inter-communion relationship with the Church of South India and the Malankara Mar Thoma Syrian Church.

## **REFORM MOVEMENT IN THE CHURCH**

Mar Dionysius freed the Church from the Protestantism of the CMS Missionaries although in the process their supporters left the Church. Nevertheless, there were people in the Church who thought that the Church needed reforms without losing its eastern outlook, Mar Dionysius faced this Reform Movement in the Church which was spear-headed by Malpan Abraham and taken up by Mathews Mar Athanasius, who received consecration from Patriarch of Church of Syria in 1842 and claimed to be Malankara Metropolitan in 1843.

In order to stem the thrust of the Reformers, Mar Dionysius invited the intervention of the Patriarch of Antioch. In response Mar Koorilos from Syria arrived in 1846. Consequently Mar Dionysius abdicated his office and gave up the reign of the Church to him. Meanwhile, Mar Athanasius was proclaimed Malankara Metropolitan. Reckoning with the times, Mar Dionysius retired to his parish church at Cheppad, where he spent the rest of his life till he passed away on October 12, 1855.

The course of Reform Movement and its consequences in the Church are dealt with in the next chapter.

### **Relation with the Church of Syria Church 1653-1842**

Before this chapter is closed, it would be relevant to make an appraisal of the relation which developed between the Malan-

kara and Syrian Churches during the span of nearly two centuries it covered from the time of Mar Thoma I (1653) to Mar Athanasius (1842) when for the first time some one from Malankara went to the Patriarch and received consecration as Malankara Metropolitan. A few points deserve observation.

- (i) At the point of time when Archdeacon Thomas became Mar Thoma I, (1653), the St. Thomas Christian community was independent and self-competent to elect its own leader and head with freedom of self-government.
- (ii) When it contacted the Eastern Churches what the community desired was a valid and apostolic episcopacy (priesthood) of Eastern tradition without any strings of temporal or administrative prerogatives in its internal affairs.
- (iii) Mar Thoma (I), when he received consecration from Mar Gregorios of Jerusalem in 1655, became the first Malankara Metropolitan of that order, ending an era of Archdeacons and ushering a period of Malankara Metropolitans. Receiving consecration at the hands of Syrian prelates was not deemed as submission to the jurisdiction of Patriarch of Antioch (Church of Syria).
- (iv) During the 189 year period, only four Metropolitans were consecrated by the prelates of the Church of Syria-viz.

1665	Mar Thoma I	consecrated by	Mar Gregorios
1686	Mar Thoma III	„	Mar Ivanios
1688	Mar Thoma IV	„	Mar Ivanios
1770	Mar Thoma VI	„	Mar Ivanios, Mar Gregorios (Mar Dionysius I)

In fact, Mar Thoma VI was consecrated by Mar Thoma V. But later, Mar Thoma VI was re-consecrated by Mar Ivanios on pressure from local and Antiochene lobbies.

In contrast Metropolitans viz. Mar Thoma II, Mar Thoma V to Mar Thoma IX and Mar Dionysius II to Mar Dionysius IV were consecrated in Malankara by Metropolitans of Malankara and Thozhiyur. A table indicating the position from Mar Thoma I to Mar Dionysius VI is given at Appendix VI.

The prelates-Metropolitans and Catholicoses who came from the Church of Syria during this period were :

<i>S. No.</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Period</i>	<i>Duration</i>
1.	Mar Gregorios, Metropolitan	1655-71	16 Years
2.	Mar Andrews, „	1678-92	} 16 Years
3.	Baselios Mar Yaldo, Catholicos	1685	
4.	Mar Ivanios, Metropolitan	1685-94	
5.	Mar Sakralla, Catholicos	1751-63	
6.	Mar Gregorios, Metropolitan	1751-72	} 43 Years
7.	Mar Ivanios, „	1751-94	
8.	Mar Dioscoros, „	1806-08	2 Years
9.	Mar Athanasius „	1825-26	1 Year

It will be observed from the table above that four prelates from Syria were in Malankara for 32 years in the latter half of the 17th Century and three for 43 years in the latter half of the 18th Century. These periods of their presence in groups and their acceptance in the community provided them the necessary climate and opportunity to introduce in Malankara the liturgy, the sacraments, the rites and the liturgical forms of worship of the Church of Syria. Other teachings included, the ‘one incarnate nature’ doctrine, objection to the use of images vis-a-vis paintings, marriage of priests, standing posture while praying, etc. During this period, the entire community became oriented to the Syrian tradition. The Church’s adoption of Syrian tradition was fully endorsed in the Mavelikara Padiyola of 1836 that “we the Jacobite Syrians being subject to the supremacy of the Patriarch of Antioch and observing as we do the liturgies and ordinances instituted by the prelates sent under his command cannot deviate from such liturgies and ordinances and maintain a discipline contrary thereto.....”. The Mavelikara Padiyola, in fact, was an official declaration of the adherence of the Malankara Church to the Eastern tradition of worship and liturgy as followed by the Church of Syria, and a negation of the moves of the CMS Missionaries to bring the Church on Protestant lines of Western tradition. The Syrians were treated as their benefactors and authority for all their ills and blessings. All these led eventually to the adoption of the epithet ‘Syrian’ by the Malankara St. Thomas community and consequent transformation of the Malankara St. Thomas community to the Malankara Syrian Church.

The Syrian Patriarch and the prelates were quick to exploit the fertile Malankara Church. They made positive efforts to

bring the Church under their jurisdiction. The source was provided by a weak Malankara Church by seeking at times a valid episcopal consecration. It is also pertinent to point out that the Church was satisfied temporarily without the perspicacity to find means of stabilising the priesthood once received for its proper continuity. The result was that the Syrian prelates whenever they came to Malankara, on request or otherwise, tried to enforce their jurisdiction over the Church by holding the trump card of spiritual authority. This tendency was evident in the letter dated 25th January 1751 from the Patriarch carried by Mar Baselius for enforcing the title Mar Dionysius and the claim of Mar Athanasius (1825) to be Malankara Metropolitan (and Mar Kurilos later in 1845). This tendency on the part of Syrian prelates, the Malankara Church and their leaders resisted. Their attempts to bring about Patriarchal supremacy did not succeed. The Church struggled with the Syrians to preserve its autonomy, a feature which continued to overshadow the Church for another century and more.

## CHAPTER TEN

# MALANKARA CHURCH VERSUS REFORMATION

### Malpan Abraham

By mid-nineteenth century, Malankara Church entered into a period of upheaval in Christian thought. Cheppad Mar Dionysius was confronted with an internal uprising which threatened the faith of the Church as well as its authority. The Protestant missionaries had sown seeds of reformation in the Church. Although most of their adherents had left the Church, there still remained a few who had imbibed elements of Protestantism. They desired to reform the Church while remaining within it. Father Abraham Palnkunnath of Maramon was the foremost among them. Fr. Abraham was Malpan i.e. Syriac Professor in the Theological Seminary at Kottayam. He revolted against the Church by attacking the teachings about and demanding an end to the prayers for the departed, intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the Saints, and the celebration of festivals. He reduced the number of Holy Sacraments and also devalued their mystical significance. Maintaining the externals he made alterations in the ancient liturgy of St. James and took off the sacrificial aspect of Holy Qurbana. While the canons of the Church sanction administering of the Holy Qurbana by mixing the Blood with the Body, the Malpan stood for giving them separately as in the Protestant tradition.

In the circumstances, Mar Dionysius issued a circular to all parishes instructing them not to be misled by Malpan's teachings and to stand steadfast in Orthodox faith. The reformers in a countermove, submitted a long Memorandum against Mar Dionysius to the British Resident in 1836 praying to dislodge Mar Dionysius. The Resident, however, took no action on the Memorandum.

### Excommunication<sup>1</sup>

Malpan Abraham in order to give widespread publicity to his reforms, took leave of the Theological Seminary and went to his home parish in Maramon. There, he celebrated the Qurbana using his reformed liturgy and thus started reformation in 1837. Parishes of nearby areas viz. Kozhencherry and Ayroor followed suit. Mar Dionysius promptly excommunicated the Malpan for his unethical and disloyal acts, flagrant violation of the authority and sanctity of the Church as well as disobedience to the Head of the Church. The Malpan, realised that without the support of a Metropolitan, the reformation move will not progress. He, therefore, sent his nephew, Deacon Mathew of Palakunnath to the Patriarch of Syria, for consecration as Metropolitan.

### Palakunnath Mathews Mar Athanasius 1843-77

While a college student at Kottayam, Mathews Mar Athanasios was selected in 1837 for the office of a deacon. Later, the deacon joined the Church Missionary Society's College at Madras for further studies; but was dismissed for irregularities and found unfit for further ministry<sup>2</sup>. Fortunately, his uncle Malpan had other plans for him. The Malpan sent him to the Patriarch in Syria who was in Mardin at that time. When deacon Mathew reached Mardin in 1841, the Patriarch Mar Elias was agitated in his mind over the numerous petitions and representations received from Malankara concerning the disrupted state of affairs of the Malankara Church. Being unaware of the disposition of Deacon Mathew, the Patriarch felt relieved at the sight of the deacon from the trouble spot and welcomed his arrival. The Patriarch lost no time in consecrating the deacon as a Metropolitan, through the stages of deacon, priest and Ramban, on February 2, 1842 with the title of Mathews Mar Athanasius. Mar Athanasius also was authorised to be the Metropolitan of the Malankara Syrian Church. It is important to note that Mar Athanasius was the first national of Malankara who received full consecration as a Metropolitan direct from the Patriarch of the Syrian Church. In 1843, Mar Athanasius returned to Malankara.

The Staticon dated Kumbhom 1, 1842 given by Patriarch Mar Elias to Mar Athanasius. reads as follows :

1. Paret : Malankara Nazranikal Vol. III Page 197.
2. George Milne-Rae : The Syrian Church in India. page 307.

“Our loving and beloved children! We further bid unto you that:- In the letters sent by you, you have said in complaint, that we have no shepherd, nor priesthood, nor baptism, nor ruler and used several other expressions of the kind. But when we heard that you who are believers live dispersed, we felt very sorry and grieved for you. We strove to send one to you so that a true shepherd may come and see you, and a ruler possessing knowledge for the spiritual protection of our trusted people of Malayalam ..... While we were labouring with all these thoughts, as to who may be sent to Malayalam; with these came our dear son Kassisa Mathai (Mar Athanasius) from you in peace. On seeing him, we were much pleased with him and said that, as one has come from among them, it is best above all that he should be the father and ruler of them.....First we ordained him as Deacon; thereafter, as Kassisa (Kathanar); subsequently as Ramban and afterwards as Metropolitan..... (P. 33) Furthermore, we lovingly make known unto you, O our children! that, We have sent through Our son Mathews Metropolitan Holy Morone after the great fast Morone for the use of your youths. Further, we desire to prepare Morone after the great fast of the Resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Messiah from the tomb and to send you same.” (p. 34). This document is dated 1st Kumbhom 1842.”<sup>3</sup>

Prior to obtaining ordination, Mar Athanasius had given in writing his confession of faith and submission to the Patriarchal see.<sup>4</sup> (Ref. letter dated 15.1.1844 from Mar Athanasius to the British Resident)

### **Representative Meeting at Kandanad 1843**

Soon after his coming back to Malankara, a representative meeting of the Church was held at Kandanad in 1843. This meeting was convened especially to be appraised about the appointment of Mar Athanasius as the Malankara Metropolitan by the Patriarch. The sthathicon issued by the Patriarch Mar Elias was read out in the meeting.

### **Juridical consequences**

On February 17, 1843 Mar Athanasius returned to Malankara armed with the authority of the Patriarch over the Malankara

3. Judgement of the Royal Court of Final Appeal. Para 154 page 47

4. *ibid*—Para 162 (vii) P : 49

Church. But the reigning Metropolitan Mar Dionysius did not oblige him on the ground that the consecration was obtained clandestinely without the knowledge and the approval of either the ruling Metropolitan or the Church. The Patriarch was duly apprised of the impropriety of consecrating Mar Athanasius and the latter's exercising himself over Mar Dionysius.

Mar Dionysius was sceptical of the views and activities of Mathews Mar Athanasius and issued an Order to the parishes on Edavom 29 1019 (1844). In that Order the Metropolitan wrote;

“You all know that Deacon Palakunneth Mathan of Maramon went abroad, came back consecrated as Metropolitan and is spreading words that the consecration of the current Metropolitan is defective and hence the person who has valid consecration should be accepted. But the priesthood of Malankara is that which was received from St. Thomas..... Although Mathews Metropolitan has been consecrated abroad, since he has the apostolic priesthod, we have no objection to accept him as our successor. But we doubt that this step will lead to Metropolitans from abroad to visiting us and thereby issues that will harm the independence of the Church will be generated. After reviewing the activities of Mathews Metropolitan so far we inform you that till we are convinced of the competence of Metropolitan Mathews to safeguard the independence of the throne of this Church, and of his earnestness to maintain the tradition and cutoms followed by our forefathers, none of you shall have any relation with him or accept him.”<sup>5</sup>

Mar Athanasius, however, presented his case to the British Resident, Major General Cullen, that he was consecrated by the Patriarch on 1.2.1842 as Metropolitan of all Syrian Christians in Malankara and also requested for grant of Royal proclamation recognising him as Malankara Metropolitan in a series of letters.

The basic argument on which Mar Athanasius laid his claim for the office of Malankara Metropolitan in the works of the Judges of the Royal Court was as follows:- “It must be noted that Mar Athanasius prayed to have Mar Dionysius, a Metropolitan that had been ruling over Malankara, removed on the only ground that he

5. Oommen P.A. : Cheppad Mar Dionysius — Pp. 113-4.

had not received the Imposition of Hand either from the Patriarch or his Delegate and consequently, he was not properly consecrated Metran, while his own claims to the Dignity of Metropolitan, he (Mar Athanasius) based upon the sole ground of his ordination and appointment by the Patriarch of Antioch”<sup>6</sup>.

### **Mar Kurilos Arrives — Mar Dionysius Abdicates 1846**

With a view to bring rapprochement between the two local Metropolitans, the Patriarch sent his secretary Yoyakim Mar Kurilos to Malankara with full powers to do the needful on his behalf. It is said, blank papers with the seal of the Patriarch were with him to be used when occasion demanded. Mar Kurilos arrived in Malankara in 1846. Both Mar Kurilos and Mar Dionysius joined hands in disproving Mar Athanasius. An ecclesiastical order was issued by Mar Kurilos proclaiming himself as the Malankara Metropolitan. To make things easy for Mar Kurilos Mar Dionysius gave up his office in favour of the former and informed the British Resident of the position in a Memorandum submitted on Chingam 30, 1846. It said;

“Though Abraham Kathanar.....and his Anandaravar Deacon Mathai (Mar Athanasius) and some others having forsaken the observances of the Syrian persuasion and having, of their own pleasure, created certain religious observances and Pallikramams and followed the same, were dismissed from the Sabha and though the matter was communicated in writing to the Most Venerable Mar Ignatius Patriarch Bava of Antioch, the Head of the Syrian Metropolitans, he (Athanasius) has come down as Metran having presented himself before the Patriarch Bava with a fabricated letter purporting to be one from the Syrian Church people in Malayalam and by having misrepresented facts and given false name, and is causing troubles has been already communicated in writing. As on writing to, and informing, the Very Venerable Patriarch Bava with reference to his case, the Venerable Mar Kurilos Joachim Metropolitan of the country of Thurabbudien, has been sent with Staticon to govern the Churches according to the religious customs of the Syrian and to conduct religious observances and has arrived on the 26th of this month; charge has been given over to the Venerable Mar Kurilos, with consent thereto, that as written in

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6. Judgement of the Royal Court of Final Appeal. Para 164. P : 52

the Very Venerable Patriarch Bava's Staticon, he may govern the Syrian Churches in Malayalam and conduct religious affairs..... Therefore, prays that all orders that may have to be sent relating to the churches or the Seminary may be addressed to him (Kurilos).....”<sup>7</sup>

### Quilon Committee 1848

The Travancore Government came to have, therefore, two rival claimants before them for the post of Malankara Metropolitan. “The Travancore Sirkar with the Counsel of the British Resident appointed a Commission composed of four Sirkar Officers viz., the Appellate Court Judge, Secretary to Dewan, Chief Secretary (Ananathan Pillai), Police Commissioner (Venkataramanayar)—in January 1848, to enquire into the allegations of both parties. The Committee after a review of the allegations concluded :

That the letters produced by Mar Kurilos as addressed by the Patriarch are papers with only the first two lines which form the headings of them inscribed therein and the Patriarchal seal stamped immediately under the headings and were afterwards filled up with the matter forming their subjects;

That the charges which are made the grounds for the alleged supersession of Mar Athanasius are utterly unfounded;

That independently of his Staticon being unquestionable, his selection as a native of this country being in strict accordance with former precedents, it is but just and reasonable that Mar Athanasius should be recognised and proclaimed by the Sirkar as Metropolitan of the Syrian Church in Malabar. (Para 171).

73. This decision was followed by the issue of the Proclamation (on July 28, 1852) which runs thus :

“Whereas, Mar Dionysius Metropolitan resident at Kottayam has resigned his Dignity on account of old age, and whereas, Mar Athanasius, who has brought letter from Antioch for that Dignity, has been appointed as Metropolitan, it is here by proclaimed :

That all comprising the Puthencoor Syrians in the Edavagai

<sup>7</sup>. *ibid.* Para 165—page 53.

of Malankarai should acknowledge the said Mar Athanasius Metropolitan and conduct themselves in conformity with past customs".<sup>8</sup>

Concurrently, Mar Kurilos was directed to stay out of Travancore and Cochin. He left and lived in British Malabar where he died in 1875 (Chingom 20). His tomb is at Mulanthuruthy church.

### **Mar Athanasius Stephen 1849**

Meanwhile, the Patriarch sent another Metropolitan Mar Athanasius Stephen to Malankara with the overall direction to maintain the Church according to the "Apostolic Canons of the Syrian Church". He reached Malankara in 1849. The Patriarch wrote to Mar Dionysius on 28.9.1848 from Kurkuma Dayara in this regard, saying:— "We have sent the Bishop Mar Athanasius Stephen together with Ramban Simon as Apostolic delegate and faithful bishop. We have given them orders to meet you and all the Syrians and all our people who dwell there in towns and cities and to visit all the churches and to order and execute everything and everywhere according to the Apostolic Canons of the Syrian Church. But since, I send them as it is written in their credentials and common letters, as our procurators none of you shall resist them".<sup>9</sup>

Mar Stephen also worked for getting Mar Athanasius derecognised and began asserting his prerogatives as a Syrian Metropolitan.

The British Resident, however, ordered that the Metropolitan should not interfere in the affairs of the Syrian Church in Malankara. Thereupon, Mar Athanasius proceeded to London and appealed to the Court of Directors in England. They directed the British Resident that he should not meddle with the internal affairs of the Malankara Syrian Church. Hereafter, one finds a shift in the attitude of the Government, in the sense that it refrained from any positive encouragement to one or the other partisan claims in the Malankara Church.

### **Malankara Metropolitan<sup>10</sup>**

With the Metropolitans from Syria sent by the Patriarch

8. *ibid.* pp 58-59.

9. *ibid* : P. 178 Quoted by Cyrial Malancharuvil : *The Syro Malankara Church*. P. 56

10. *Mar Thoma Syrian Church Directory-1969* Pp. 29-30.

removed from the scene and Mar Dionysius IV leading a retired life, Mathews Mar Athanasius remained the virtual Malankara Metropolitan fully supported by the British Resident and the Travancore Government. He continued as Malankara Metropolitan with headquarters at (Old) Seminary till he was deposed by the Patriarch and the Travancore Government in 1876.

As Malankara Metropolitan, Mar Athanasius took care in improving the general administration of the Church, encouraged Bible study, Sunday School movement, evangelical meetings, gave specific attention to using Malayalam in the liturgy for worship and strengthening the theological course of study in the Seminary; at the social level, the Metropolitan attended to removing various social disabilities of Christians. He also consecrated two Metropolitans during this period—one was Aalathur Joseph Kassis as Metropolitan for the independent Thozhiyur See and the other his own nephew, Malpan Abraham's son, Palakunnath Thomas Kassis in 1868 (1043 Edavom) with the title Thomas Mar Athanasius.

Mar Athanasius, however, made it clear that he was following the measures for reforming the Church traditions and faith as put forward by his uncle Malpan Abraham.

### **Consecration of Successor**

Mar Athanasius, in his life-time had gathered a strong group of followers in his stride of reforming the Church. Foreseeing the continuation of his efforts, the Metropolitan had chosen a successor to carry on the reform movement namely Thomas Mar Athanasius.

### **Derecognition 1876**

In 1864 Pulikottil Mar Dionysius was also consecrated as Malankara Metropolitan by the Patriarch Mar Elias with the intention of displacing Mar Athanasius. The Patriarch Peter III himself came to Malankara in 1875. Subsequently, the Patriarch removed him from the office of Malankara Metropolitan as a result of which the Travancore Government also derecognised him on March 1876. (Kumbhom 23, 1051.). In the circumstances, Mar Athanasius lost many of his followers.

### **Death 1877**

On July 15, 1877 (Karkadakam 2, 1052) Mar Athanasius breathed his last.

### **Thomas Mar Athanasius succeeds**

Thomas Mar Athanasius succeeded Mar Athanasius and claimed the status of Malankara Metropolitan. He continued to function from Old Seminary till he was dispossessed following the Royal Court Judgement of 1899.

### **Representative Meeting 1870 Introduction of Triumverate Trusteeship.**

The Cochin Award of 1840 outlined a triumverate trusteeship for the administration of the Church properties. The three were the Malankara Metropolitan, a representative each of the clergy and laity. Although the Award was decreed in 1840 during the time of Cheppad Mar Dionysius, the triumverate system of trusteeship was not introduced. In 1870 a representative meeting of the Church for electing a clergy trustee and lay trustee was held. The meeting elected Punnathra Chacko Chandapilla Kathanar from Kottayam as the Clergy Trustee and Kulangara Ittychan Paily as lay-trustee. They continued in position till their successors were elected by the Malankara Association in 1886.

## **PULIKOTTIL JOSEPH MAR DIONYSIUS V 1864-1909**

### **Church at Crossroads**

Looking back, one finds the Church in a dilemma at the period of its history when Pulikottil Joseph Mar Dionysius took up the rein. The erstwhile head of the Malankara Church, Cheppad Mar Dionysius, had by an irony of events given up the office in favour of a Patriarchal delegate. The attempts of the Patriarchal delegates to install themselves as the Malankara Metropolitans were nullified. With the removal of Cheppad Mar Dionysius and the Patriarchal delegates Mar Kurilos and Mar Athanasius from the scene of contention and shielded by the Royal proclamation, Mathews Mar Athanasius became the virtual head of the Malankara Church; and having come to power, the Metropolitan hastened to introduce the reform measures of his late uncle Malpan Abraham.

Mathews Mar Athanasius, whose sole aim was to reform the Church, was not acceptable to the Syrian Christians as a whole. At the same time, the Church was in need of a leader of Orthodox orientation to guide the Church. A greater issue was posed: Reformation at the hands of Mar Athanasius or Orthodoxy

of the Syrian Church. The Church was at crossroads. Anyway, as later events proved, the Church was not kept wanting and in dark for long. There arose in the horizon still another stalwart builder of the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church, in the person of Pulikottil Joseph Mar Dionysius V of Kunnamkulam.

### **Early Life**

Joseph Mar Dionysius made his first appearance in history as a young Kathanar on the side of Mar Kurilos, the Patriarchal delegate who had staked his claim as Malankara Metropolitan against Mar Athanasius. The young priest was ordained by Mar Kurilos on August 18, 1852. He was born on 24.4.1008 (December 1832) and was a grant nephew of Pulikottil Joseph Mar Dionysius II.

### **Thozhiyur Confrontation**

It so happened that when Mar Philoxenos of Thozhiyur expired in 1855, Mar Athanasius reached the spot. The Metropolitan found the church locked up, but opened it forcibly. On this apparent excessive action, Mar Kurilos filed a suit against Mar Athanasius alleging forceful occupation of Church properties. This suit was handled by the young Joseph Kathanar. The Church had found its man of the hour.

### **Metropolitan 1864**

Joseph Kathanar soon found himself proposed by Mar Kurilos and his people for consecration as Metropolitan and on way to the Patriarch. Accompanying him on the journey were Mookencheril Geevarghese Kathanar, Pukadiyil Ittoop 'Writer' and Kumarakam Muripurakkal Kuruvilla. They embarked from Bombay on Edavam 10 1038(1863).<sup>11</sup> Patriarch Moran Mar Yakoub I received the Kathanar and soon consecrated him in April 1864 (Medam 26,) at Diarbek. Titled as Mar Dionysius, the new Metropolitan returned to Malankara the same year. The Patriarch had given him the authority (Sthathicon) over the Malankara Church.

The reign of Mar Dionysius is important for it projected into Church history two historic events. These events clearly indicated the direction in which the Church was to proceed. If one event showed the track of faith the Church was to follow, the other laid down the foundation of Church administration. In other words,

. Varkey, M.P. Sabha Chandrika. September 1 71.

the Church, on the one hand, discarded the protestant-oriented faith of Mathews Mar Athanasius and, on the other hand, at the Mulanthuruthy Synod of 1876, laid the basis for the constitution of a parliament for the governance of the Church. The Mulanthuruthy Synod in effect strengthened Mar Dionysius's hands to achieve his aims.

## MULANTHURUTHY SYNOD 1876

### Circumstances Leading to the Synod

When he received consecration as Metropolitan from the hands of Patriarch, Pulikottil Joseph Mar Dionysius had before him the twin objects of arresting the rapid sliding of the Orthodox Church towards Protestantism and dislodging Mathews Mar Athanasius from the office of Malankara Metropolitan since the latter was responsible for introducing reforms of Protestant fashions in the Church. To achieve these aims, Mar Dionysius was armed with the authority of the Patriarch recognising him as the Malankara Metropolitan in place of Mathews Mar Athanasius. On June 25, 1866, soon after arriving in Malankara, Mar Dionysius submitted a representation to the Dewan of Travancore praying to annul the proclamation which recognised Mar Athanasios as Malankara Metropolitan and staking his own claims to the same office instead. The Dewan, however, in his letter dated July 4, 1866 declined to disown Mar Athanasius and accept Mar Dionysius on the grounds of the decisions of the Quilon Committee and further announced that the State Government will no longer involve itself in the Church affairs and directed that the claims may be fought in civil courts.<sup>12</sup> Not discouraged, Mar Dionysius submitted another Memorandum in 1869 to the Madras Government proving his claims as well as requesting not to disburse the interest on Trust Fund to Mar Athanasius. They too, however, stuck to the advice of the Travancore Government.

Mar Dionysius thus found himself placed in an unhappy situation. According to him, (i) the Church was rapidly eroding into Protestantism, (ii) his own counter attempts were not bearing fruits and (iii) so long as Mathews Mar Athanasius remained as the Malankara Metropolitan and enjoyed the patronage of the British, the faith of the Orthodox Church will be in jeopardy. All

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12. Judgement of the Royal Court of Final Appeal : Para 194-5.

these weighed heavily on Mar Dionysius. To him, the only course open in getting the recognition given to Mar Athanasius withdrawn was to invite the Patriarch of the Syrian Church to Malankara. The Metropolitan was fully aware of the dangers and advantages of such a step. Above all, Mar Dionysius was anxious to hold high the integrity and independence of the Malankara Church. But the present impasse proved to be a vicious circle. In the circumstances, though painfully, the Metropolitan decided to invite Moran Mar Ignatius Peter III, Patriarch of the Church of Syria. The invitation was accepted.

### **Patriarch in Malankara 1875-77**

The Patriarch arrived on June 24, 1875. As the pontiff was fully posted with the problems facing the Church, he took a series of steps to sort them out. First of all, en route to India, the Patriarch had called on the Archbishop of the Church of England; thereafter, when he set foot in Bombay, the Patriarch along with Mar Dionysius proceeded to Ootacamund and met the Governor of Madras, William Robinson. Later, immediately after reaching Cochin on June 24, 1875 (Mithunam 10, 1050), the Patriarch and Mar Dionysius went to Trivandrum and called on the Maharajah Aayilliam Thirunal of Travancore. The long and short of these meetings was that the Travancore Government withdrew the earlier Proclamation of 1852 which accepted Mar Athanasius as Malankara Metropolitan and issued another royal Proclamation dated March 11, 1876 (Kumbhom 23, 1051) referring the whole matter to the decision of the courts. The Proclamation runs as follows:

“Whereas by a Proclamation dated 15th Karkadakam 1027, it was notified that Mar Athanasius has been appointed to the post of Metran of the Syrian Church by letter from Antioch; and whereas representation has been made that the Patriarch of Antioch or his predecessor claims to have deposed the said Mar Athansius and to have appointed another Metran; this is to inform all whom it may concern that:

“The former Proclamation is not to be considered as in any way precluding the entertainment and decision by the ordinary Court of Law or any question as the right in ownership to, any churches or property connected therewith, or as to the power of appointment or removal of officers connected therewith.

“With regard to all such matters and to any other disputes that may arise from the alleged deposition of one Metran and appointment of another the action of His Highness the Maha Raja’s Government will be confined to the maintenance of peace and good order.

Any apparent connection with appointments relating to the Syrian Church which Proclamations issued under times and circumstances now altered may seem to indicate will henceforth be avoided.

“All parties will be very clearly given to understand that they are to seek such remedies as they may deem themselves entitled through the established courts of the country.”<sup>13</sup>

### **Excommunication**

The Patriarch’s arrival had created an encouraging climate in the Church. Mar Athanasius’s influence waned. The Patriarch further excommunicated the erring Metropolitan, which was a blow to his personal prestige.

### **The Synod 1876<sup>14</sup>**

As the culminating action, the Patriarch decided to hold a meeting of the Syrian Christians. An invitation dated June 5, 1876 (Edavam 22, 1051) was issued to all the Syrian Christian churches desiring each parish to send one priest and two laymen as representatives to meet at Mar Thoman Church Mulanthuruthy on June 29, 1876 (Mithunam 15, 1051).

The delegates met at the church and deliberated for three days—June 29, 30 and July 1, 1876 (Midhunam 15, 16 and 17, 1051). 150 parishes were said to have been represented at the Synod. The synodical documents, however, show names and signatures of 118 priests, 11 deacons and 150 laymen representing 102 parishes only. It is presumed that the others may not have cared to set their signatures.

### **Canons**

Coming to the proceedings of the Synod, more important

13. Velu Pillai T.K. : Travancore State Manual 1940. pages 748-9. See Appendix VI

14. Paret : Mulanthuruthy Sunnahados.

decisions were adopted on the third and last day, viz July 1, 1876. The documents are still extant as is understood from the elaborate description of events and personalities given by the learned Church historian Z.M. Paret in his book 'Mulanthuruthy Sunnahadoss' (Synod). The Synod adopted eighteen canons for the administration of the Church. They were far reaching decisions. An attempt is made here to mention the more important canons which are relevant.

The First Canon enjoined each parish to execute a bond expressing its will to continue steadfast in the faith of the Orthodox Syrian Church and to give a registered copy of the bond of allegiance to the Patriarch.

The Second Canon desired a census of each parish which could be utilised to collect Resissa due to the Patriarch, annually.

The Seventh Canon decided that the Syrian Christians shall have a body for their governance and it shall be called the SYRIAN CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION with the Patriarch as its Patron and the ruling Metropolitan as its President.

The Eighth Canon proposed a Managing Committee for the Association consisting of twenty-four members with a Secretary. Eight elected priests and sixteen elected laymen were to constitute the Managing Committee.

Canon Fourteen vested full powers on the President of the Association to conduct all legal suits on matters concerning the Church affairs and its properties and also to raise funds to finance such court proceedings.

According to Canon Seventeen, the Managing Committee of the Church of Syria and the Church of Malankara shall have equal right over the Patriarchate and all decisions taken and all transactions entered into by the Managing Committee for and on behalf of the Church shall be held valid.

With the adoption of the Canons, the Synod completed its task. The Church heaved a sigh of relief and looked forward hopefully unaware of approaching dark shadows.

*Note :* **Marthommen Church. Mulanthuruthy**

Mulanthuruthy had attained a significant position in history of the Church, Following the Koonen Kurishu Sathyam it had

developed as a strong centre of the St. Thomas Christians against the Portuguese overtures.

The Marthommen Church at Mulanthuruthy was dedicated to St. Thomas on July 3, 1125. It is the resting place of three prelates namely, Catholicos Mar Gregorios of Jerusalem (1751), Metropolitan Mar Ivanios from Syria (1694) and Metropolitan Yuachim Mar Kurilos (1875).

Patriarch Peter III consecrated Holy Mooron in this church on Chingam 10, 1051.

### **Evaluation**

The Mulanthuruthy Synod is an outstanding event in the history of Malankara Church. It laid a remarkable mile-stone in its long history. The status and foundation of the Church were once again reaffirmed in the Synod. It, however, struck at the autonomy of the Church.

The Synod had met in a critical juncture when the faith and tradition of the Church were being re-examined by a group of Reformers within the Church, Mar Athanasius remaining at the helm. The objectives before the Synod in such apprehensive circumstances, therefore, were mainly edification of the faith of the Church, and affirmation of its administrative authority and evolution of a machinery to lead, administer and govern the Church in Orthodox tradition. The Canons show how far the Synod succeeded in fulfilling them.

Canon one confirmed the faith of the Church in the Eastern Orthodox tradition as followed by the Church of Syria; Canon one along with Canon two envisaged allegiance of Metropolitans and parishes to the Patriarch through loyalty bonds and payment of Resisa due to the head of the Church and Canons seven and eight, laid the foundation for a democratic infra-structure for the administration of the Church viz. the Malankara Syrian Christian Association and the Managing Committee both of which continue and function very effectively till today. The ruling Metropolitan is the President of both these bodies.

It may be observed that Canons one and two vested the Patriarch with ecclesiastical powers over the Malankara Church. These two canons which were moved by the Patriarch, reflected a definite and positive attempt on the part of the Patriarch to

bring the Malankara Church to the obedience of Antioch and were therefore detrimental to the integrity of the Malankara Church. In introducing these controversial Canons, the Patriarch had not reached before-hand any personal or informal understanding with the Metropolitan. They did not reflect the conscience of the Church and went beyond the objectives of the Synod. On the contrary, they evinced a definite move of the Patriarch to hold both ecclesial and temporal powers over the Malankara Church. In other words, Malankara Church was expected to give up her integrity and independence and remain accountable to the Patriarch and under his jurisdiction. Dr. V.C. Samuel, therefore, says, "the Mulanthuruty Synod resulted in a situation where the Malankara Church was deemed to be a part of the Church of Syria".<sup>15</sup> In spite of all these implications, the Synod adopted the Canons, bowing before the threat of expediency enlarged by the Reformers under the leadership of Mar Athanasius.

Malankara Church, on the conclusion of the Synod found itself placed in a very peculiar position of subjugation and elation. Dr. V.C. Samuel has pointed out that the Mulanthuruthy Synod brought about a turning point in the history of the Malankara Church, for the Church of its own volition, subjected itself to the authority of Patriarch Ignatius Peter III, which the Antiocheans were striving to secure over the Malankara Church till then. He was satisfied. The Malankara Church too was pleased to have brought the Reformists to their knees.<sup>16</sup>

In the Mulanthuruthy Synod, history was repeated in the Malankara Church. It is unavoidable to make a comparison of the Mulanthuruthy Synod with the Diamper Synod, which took place in 1599, nearly 300 years before the Mulanthuruthy Synod. In that Synod, Archbishop Menezes enacted certain decrees by which the Malankara Church was placed under the authority of the Pope of Rome. In Mulanthuruthy also nothing else happened except with a slight difference that this time the Church was brought under the obedience and jurisdiction of the Patriarch of the Church of Syria instead of Pope of Rome.

15. Samuel Dr. V.C. : Malankara Sabhayude Antiochean Bandham. (The Antiochean Connection of Malankara Sabha). P.17

16. *ibid* : Page 66.

### **New Bishops and Bonds**

The Patriarch continued to stay in Malankara for a number of months more following the Synod. He appeared to nourish more expectations about the Malankara Church under his obedience as was proved by his later actions. Mar Dionysius, however, stood opposed to the designs of the Patriarch since he held the view that the canons were means of interferences in the affairs of the independent Church and detrimental to its integrity. He could not reconcile to the idea of a servile Malankara Church. He, therefore, neither executed the Bond nor asked the parishes to do so. The Patriarch, sensing the resistance of Mar Dionysius, acted quickly to lessen his importance as well as to muster support for himself. To manifest his supremacy, the Patriarch on his own divided the Malankara See into seven dioceses, namely, Ankamali, Cochin, Kandanad Kottayam, Niranam, Quilon and Thumpamon, consecrated six more Metropolitans and placed them each in charge of a diocese. On December 10, 1876 (Vrischikom 27, 10522, four Metropolitans were consecrated at Parur. They were: i) Kadavil Paulose Mar Athanasius for Kottayam ii) Konat Geevarghese Mar Julius for Thumpamon; iii) Ambat Geevarghese Mar Kurilos for Ankamali and iv) Chathuruthi Geevarghese Mar Gregorios for Niranam. Later in May 1877 (Idavom 2.1052) two more Metropolitans, Murimattom Paulose Mar Ivanios for Kandanad and Karot Simeon Mar Dionysius for Cochin were consecrated at Kunnamkulam (Chiralayam). Mar Dionysius, for all his passive attitude, was slated the least important diocese of Quilon. Nevertheless, he enjoyed the office of Malankara Metropolitan and President of the newly constituted Association according to Canon Seven.

The Patriarch, in order to ensure the loyalty of the new Metropolitans to him had insisted for a Registered Bond executed before a Registrar/Sub-Registrar from each Metropolitan candidate pledging his loyalty, much earlier than the event of consecration. Besides the Metropolitans, the Patriarch managed to get similar bonds from at least twelve parishes also.

### **Dionysius, the Statesman**

In spite of the above derogatory steps taken by the Patriarch, it is noteworthy that neither did Mar Dionysius execute a bond nor asked the parishes to execute one. For all these passive

attitude, the Patriarch served Mar Dionysius the least important diocese of Quilon. Nevertheless, Mar Dionysius enjoyed the rank of Chief Malankara Metropolitan and President of the newly constituted Association. However, that which Mar Dionysius anticipated by inviting the Patriarch were fulfilled. De-recognition and dislodging of Mathews Mar Athanasius from the office of Malankara Metropolitan and raising himself to the same, were realised. Mar Dionysius got the sanction—Patriarchal as well as of the Church as a whole—to fight the reformists. Notwithstanding these advantages, Mar Dionysius could not reconcile with the measures of interferences in Malankara Church affairs on the part of the Patriarch. The Metropolitan calmly awaited the departure of the Patriarch without indulging in a direct confrontation with him.

### **Departure**

After sowing the seeds of dissension, the Patriarch left Malankara in June 1877. (Idavam.) Mar Dionysius accompanied the Patriarch up to Bombay from where the latter sailed for Syria. In 1895, the Patriarch breathed his last.

### **Third Division**

Consequent on the Reform Movement the Malankara St. Thomas Church was subjected to a division for the third time and a fourth denomination of Christian Church, the Mar Thoma Syrian Church, came into being in 1889 following the successive secessions of the Roman Catholic Church and the Anglican Church.

Pulikottil Mar Dionysius, however, had no misgivings about the future of the Church. The Metropolitan parried the Patriarchal inroads. The Court Judgement 1889 recognised him as the Malankara Metropolitan. Mar Dionysius thus gained a clear mandate over the reformists and may be reckoned as one who steadily worked for the integrity and progress of the Church. Further evidence may be seen in a number of institutions which the Metropolitan set up during his reign.

### **M. D. Seminary Campus 1888**

Mar Dionysius was instrumental in establishing a valuable complex of institutions in the heart of Kottayam. The campus which had an area of 20 acres and which today houses Mar Base-

lios College, M.D. Seminary High School, The Malayala Manorama, Mar Elia Cathedral and the M.D. Commercial Arcade was acquired by the Metropolitan in 1888. Known as the Woodland Estate, the campus with a Bungalow was owned by an Englishman Hugh Crawford, a commercial Agent at Alleppy. He had given James Darrah, an American trader, the power of attorney to sell the property. He sold the Woodland Estate and an adjacent Chempakassery plot to a joint Association of Syrian Christians and the Romo-Syrians, called the JATHYAIKYA SANGAM, organised by Mar Dionysius and Fr. Immanuel Abraham Nidhiri of the Roman Catholic Church at a cost of Rs. 3541 Paise 4. The deal was executed on Thulam 24, 1064<sup>17</sup> (November, 1888). Subsequently, Mar Dionysius paid off the share of Fr. Nidhiri and thus the campus became Malankara Church property. This property came to be called Mar Dionysius Seminary as it used to provide theological training and residential facilities to clergy trainees.

#### **Elia Chapel — Cathedral**

A room of the Woodland Bungalow was temporarily improvised to serve as chapel by Ramban Paulose (Mar Kurilose) initially on Vrischikom 23, 1072 (December 6, 1896). Soon the Bungalow was modified as a Chapel and was consecrated by Mar Dionysius and Parumala Mar Gregorios. In 1898 this chapel was dedicated to Mar Elia, a venerable prophet of the Old Testament times by Mar Gregorios of Parumala on return from a pilgrimage to the Holy lands.

The dedication of the chapel to Mar Elia had a special significance. Mar Gregorios on his return voyage by ship from a pilgrimage to the holy lands was caught up in a storm at sea. He sought the intercession of Mar Elia and vowed to raise a church in his name in Kerala. The ship came out of danger and the Metropolitan reached the Indian shores safely. On arrival at Kottayam, Mar Gregorios fulfilled his vow by dedicating the Seminary chapel to Mar Elia.

Mar Elia Chapel was raised as the Cathedral Church of the Catholicos on March 27, 1966. The beautifully rebuilt Cathedral was consecrated on November 17-18, 1984. The main celebrant was Catholicos Mar Thoma Mathews I.<sup>18</sup>

17. Paret Z.M. : Malankara Nazranikal Vol. III

18. Cherian P.C. : Mar Elia Cathedral Consecration Souvenir 1984 - P. 69

### **M.D. School**

A School for matriculate education was opened on January 30, 1893 in the Seminary premises by the Kottayam Dewan Peshkar Raja Rama Rayar. It came to be called Mar Dionysius Seminary School.

### **Malayala Manorama 1889**

Incidentally, the leading Malayalam newspaper in Kerala today Malayala Manorama was started publishing from one of the rooms of the Woodland Bungalow by Kandathil Varghese Mapilla. He started the weekly on March 22, 1890 and the daily on January 16, 1928.

Pulikottil Joseph-Mar Dionysius and Konat Mathan Malpan were the first two signatories to the Memorandum of Association of the Joint Stock Company of Malayala Manorama registered on February 28, 1889 and had also taken shares of the company.<sup>19</sup>

In 1893, with the starting of the M.D. School, Manorama was shifted to its present location.

### **M.D. Seminary 1933**

Vattasseril Geevarghese Mar Dionysius began a Seminary for theological trainees in the bungalow in 1108 (1933)<sup>20</sup>. Cheriamadhothil Scaria Malpan, Fr. K. David and few others were the instructors in the Seminary initially.

### **Other Institutions in M.D. Seminary Campus**

Over the years, the Church has profitably used the Seminary campus to serve the interests of the Church and the community. Today, institutions which have come up in its premises include M.D. High School, Mar Basselius College (1964), Mar Ougen Boarding Home (1977), M.D. Commercial Centre (1968) and Mar Dionysius Centre (1983).

MD Seminary Campus has played an important role, being located at Kottayam, in the later crucial epoch-making historical events of the Church, in the times of Vattasseril, Mar Dionysius and later Catholicoses. It has also been the assembling grounds of many historical events and the Malankara Association.

19. Malayala Manorama Shashtyabda poorthy Smaraka Grandhom - Manoramayude Koottu Yadasthu.- Page. 499

20. Paret Z.M. : Vattasseril Mar Dinoysius. P. 773

### **Metropolitan Alwares Mar Julios and Brahmawar Diocese 1888**

Another note worthy event which took place during the time of Mar Dionysius was the formation of a diocese for the Orthodox believers of Mangalapuram, South Karnataka, who had come to the fold of Orthodox faith from Roman Catholicism under the initiative of Fr. Xavier Alwares, a Jesuit priest, in 1888. He had led a large number of Roman Catholics of his parish with a few clergy into the Orthodox faith. Mar Dionysius accepted them and considering their strength, the Latin oriented form of worship and Kongan dialect, created a diocese for the Brahmawar region and Fr. Alwares was made Metropolitan incharge of the the diocese. Mar Dionysius along with Kadavil Mar Athanasius and Parumala Mar Gregorios had consecrated Fr. Alwares with the title of Mar Julios in 1888 at Cheriapally, Kottayam.

The Roman Catholic hierarchy at Goa, however, had harassed Mar Julios and his supporting clergy. False charges were levelled against them and they were imprisoned. While in prison at Goa, Mar Julios died on September 23, 1923. His mortal remains were interned in the local Municipal Cemetery at Panchim by his friends since the local Roman Catholic Church parish St. Innes Church did not allow the body to be burried in that Church Cemetery. A slab engraved Fr. Xavier Alwares was placed on the tomb.

In 1957, the tomb was identified by the Brahmawar parish vicar Fr. Koshy and other priests. Fr. Varghese and Dr. Philip Pallichira. Soon a befitting structure was built over the grave.

The Catholicos Mar Thoma Mathews I had visited this tomb while he was Metropolitan of the Outside Kerala Diocese, in 1967. At his instance, the relics of Metropolitan Mar Alwares were later removed from the Cemetery and interned in the Orthodox Church at Panchim on September 24, 1981.<sup>21</sup> October 7 is observed as the Metropolitan's memorial day.

The Brahmawar Orthodox were permitted to celebrate the Holy Qurbana in Latin and Latin form they continue to this day.

### **Consecration of Mar Timotheos (Rene Villaitti) for America 1890**

Mar Julios had gained supporters through his missionary activities in Ceylon and America. The followers in America

21. Mammen K.V. : Dr. Philipos Mar Theophilos (1985) p 77.

belonged to the Old Catholic Church. Among them was a French priest by name Rene Villaitti. Mar Julios was desirous of elevating him as a Metropolitan for these Orthodox Americans. The Malankara Metropolitan Mar Dionysius agreed and consequently the consecration of Rene Villaitti was arranged at Colombo, Ceylon. Accordingly, Metropolitans Kadavil Mar Athanasius and Parumala Mar Gregorios proceeded to Colombo where Fr. Rene was consecrated as Metropolitan with the title Mar Timotheos on 1065 Edavam 17, (May 29, 1890).

There is no credible details of history relating to the further growth of the American Orthodox group. It is, however, learned that there is a group of Orthodox community in Oklahoma in USA claiming a beginning with Malankara Orthodox Church since the times of Metropolitan Mar Timotheos (Rene Villaitti.<sup>21</sup>)

#### **Parumala Seminary 1877-95**

Mar Dionysius observed two conflicting situations facing him which weakened the Church as well as affected its future. One was that Mathews Mar Athanasius had strong support in the parishes south of Kottayam and that he encouraged the reform movement there. Secondly, the Old Seminary was under the control of Mar Athanasius and there was no other establishment available to serve as Seminary for the training of clergy in the existing tradition of the Church. These distressing factors weighed in Mar Dionysius's mind and prompted him to seek a base in South Travancore which will serve both as a Seminary and a centre for dispensation of Orthodox faith.

At this juncture, Mar Dionysius discussed the situation with the lay leaders of Parumala at Paliakara Church, Tiruvalla, namely Arikupurath Mathan, Athimoottil Peedikayil Mathan and Malathra Oommen. Arikupurath Mathan, in fact, had broken off from the nearby Niranam parish, came to Parumala where he possessed 64 acres of land and had set up a church in his plot. In the Mulanthuruthy Synod of 1876, he had participated as representative of Parumala.

Parumala is an island placed between two rivers Achankovil and Pampa. It is about two kilometres long and one and a half kilometre wide with a population of 2000 approximately. The

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Fr. Cherian Kunnel, Malankara Sabha (January 1985) pp. 17.

island lies equidistant from the towns of Chengannur, Tiruvalla and Mavelikara.

Following the discussions, with Mar Dionysius, Mathan gifted to the Metropolitan a plot of land in Parumala, where a Lower Primary School is located at present, on Chingam 16, 1048 (August 1872). A house which came to be called Azhippura for the clergy trainees and another for the Metropolitan were set up in the plot. From here, they used to go to the Parumala Church, raised by Mathan. Later, Athimoottil Mathan Occanda also handed over the land adjoining Azhipura. Finally the Parumala church and its compound (25 Cents) were also made over to Mar Dionysius as gift by the four sons of Mathan in 1060, following his death.

In 1053 (1877) Metropolitan Chathuruthy Mar Gregorios came over to Parumala and started training the clergy trainees. Besides developing the Seminary, the Metropolitan was anxious to have a church attached to the Seminary for the benefit of the trainees. Eighteen years after his coming to Parumala, the Metropolitan raised a beautiful church dedicated to St. Peter and St. Paul with additional alters in the names of St. Thomas and St. Mary. The consecration of the church was performed by Malankara Metropolitan Pulikottil Joseph Mar Dionysius on Sunday, January 27, 1895. According to the late Rao Sahib O.M. Cherian, the Metropolitan had incurred an expenditure of Rs. 20,000/- for the construction of both the Seminary and the church.<sup>22</sup>

### **Chathuruthy Geevarghese Mar Gregorios — Parumala Saint**

Mar Dionysius and the whole Church were put to great grief on November 2, 1902 when the holy father, Metropolitan Geevarghese Mar Gregorios of Parumala fame succumbed to death.

In his life-time, Mar Gregorios was known for strict observance of ascetic rigours in the footsteps of St. Antony and had gained divine powers. Stories of healing the sick, casting off devils, reconciling bitter feuds, etc. are known to many even to-day. Countless people get solace and rewards on his intercession. Mar

22. Rao Sahib O.M. Cherian : Parumala Kochuthirumeni (I115/1939) (Malayalam) pp 33.

Gregorios had endeared himself to the members of the Church so that Metropolitans even senior to him in age and standing and also young and old members of the Church, called him 'Parumala Kochu Thirumeni'. In time of trials and tribulations, the ruling heads of Church, use to visit the tomb of this holy man seeking his guidance and comfort.

Born in the priestly family of Chathuruthy, Mar Gregorios had his early education in Syriac and theology under his uncle, Malpan Chathuruthy Geevarghese. Later, Mathews Mar Athanasius (Palakunnath) initiated the young boy to priestly order by ordaining him as deacon Geevarghese. Deacon Geevarghese continued his theological training under his uncle Malpan at Mulanthuruthy and thereafter under Konat Malpan at Pampakuda. Some times later, the deacon joined Yoyakim Mar Ivanios, the Metropolitan from Syria who was sojourning in Malankara, as private secretary as well as for learning Syriac from him. Not long after, Mar Ivanios ordained the deacon as a priest. Fr. Geevarghese ministered in the Mulanthuruthy church for a time residing at Vettikal Dayara. Vettikal Dayara was a little known institution; but Fr. Geevarghese during his short stay there, developed it. It was here that the future Metropolitan trained his body and mind by ascetic virtues in gaining communion with God. To-day it serves as head quarters of Kandanad Diocese.

Meanwhile, Pulikottil Mar Dionysius had other plans. The Metropolitan had established the frame of a future Seminary at Parumala in the South. Chathuruthy Fr. Geevarghese had attracted his attention in respect of his learning in theology, Syriac and ascetic life. Mar Dionysius soon put Fr. Geevarghese in charge of training deacons in theology, as well as teaching them Syriac. Mar Dionysius later raised Fr. Geevarghese into the monastic order of Ramban. While a Ramban, Patriarch Peter III consecrated him as Metropolitan Mar Gregorios for the diocese of Thumpamon, on December 10, 1876 at Paravur.

For years, the Metropolitan served the diocese and was a strong defence against the reform movement. At last the holy prelate went to his heavenly abode in 1902.

In 1947, the Holy Synod canonised Mar Gregorios as a Saint. Mar Gregorios shines as the lone Saint of the Church. The Saint's tomb at Parumala today is a pilgrimage centre.

**Obituaries**

Four prelates passed away during the tenure of Mar Dionysius. They were :

	<i>Expired on</i>
Yuachim Mar Kurilose	September 1875
Mathews Mar Athanasius	July 15, 1877
Ambat Mar Geevarghese	March 7, 1890
Kadavil Mar Athanasius	November 5, 1907

**LITIGATION WITH REFORMERS 1879-89****Sanction of Episcopal Synod Parumala 1878**

The prime concern which engaged Mar Dionysius was the reality of Thomas Mar Athanasius. Canon Fourteen of the Mulanthuruthy Synod had empowered him to conduct legal suits to free the Church from Protestant orientation. The Metropolitan, therefore, made preparations for filing a suit against Thomas Mar Athanasius. The first major step in this direction was the convening of a Synod of the Metropolitans and other members of the Managing Committee set up by the Mulanthuruthy Synod. The synod met at Parumala in February 1878 (Kumbham 6, 1053) under the presidentship of Mar Dionysius. All other six metropolitans were present in the Synod. The Synod elected a new Managing Committee of 17 A Class and 23 B Class members and also decided to file a suit against Thomas Mar Athanasius and to raise necessary funds for the expenditure thereof.

**Legal Grounds for Suit**

Mar Dionysius thus stood on firm grounds in his claim to the office of Malankara Metropolitan and the legal action he took to dispossess Thomas Mar Athanasius of that office as well as the Old Seminary Complex. The comments of Royal Court Judges in this regard are note-worthy which runs as follows. "The cause of action against the Appellant was not the supposed dismissal of the late Mar Athanasius or his heresy but the Appellant's own wrongful possession of the Trust property when he was not a properly ordained and accepted Metropolitan. The accrual of the Respondent's right to sue was not consequent on his consecration alone as Bishop but the consecration by the Patriarch as Bishop as well as the acceptance of the people or of the majority

thereof, as Metropolitan or as trustee. The two facts together gave the Respondent the right to institute this suit."<sup>23</sup>

### **Seminary Case 1879-89**

On March 4, 1879, Joseph Mar Dionysius (Plaintiff) filed a suit No 439 of 1054 (1879) in the Zilla Court, Alleppy challenging the claims of Thomas Mar Athanasius (Defendant) as Malankara Metropolitan and praying vacation by him of the Old Seminary and other Church properties. Punnathra Chandapilla Kathanar and Thazhathillath Chacko Ittiavirah who were the clergy and lay trustees were the two other Defendants. Old Seminary housed the official headquarters as well as the Theological School of the Church. The suit, hence, earned the name "Seminary Case". Mar Athanasius and his supporters stood the legal proceedings for ten years.

In the Zilla Court, the issues were decided in favour of Mar Dionysius. Thereupon, Mar Athanasios preferred an appeal in the High Court and on failure there, appealed to the Maharaja of Travancore. A Royal Court of Judges was appointed to hear the claims. The case ended with its judgement in 1889. Brief accounts of the proceedings in various courts are given below.

### **Zilla Court Alleppy 1879-84**

The plaint OS No. 439 of 1064 which Pulikottil Joseph Mar Dionysius submitted to the Zilla Court at Alleppy on 4.3.1879 ran as follows :

"The plaint which is remarkably (and somewhat obscurely) short, ran as follows :

"The movable and immovable properties described in Schedules A and B herewith presented, are the properties of the Seminary at Kottayam, belonging to the Jacobite Syrian Christian Community of Malayalam, and those in Schedule C are those worn and used by the successive Metropolitans of that Community, in virtue of their office".

"The aforesaid movable and immovable properties were under the control and in the possession of the successive Metropolitans who held their place under the Holy Patriarch of Antioch, the Supreme Head of the Syrian Christians; and following this

3. Judgement of the Royal Court of Final Appeal. Para 325, Page 112

practice, the aforesaid properties were lastly under the control and in the possession of the person known as Mar Athanasius, Metropolitan, deceased, by right derived in virtue of his consecration as Metropolitan, by the said Patriarch of Antioch”.

“The aforesaid Mar Athanasius departed this life on the 2nd day of Karkadagom 1052, since which date, the first Deft. and the 2nd and 3rd Defendants who have joined him as persons favouring him, are unlawfully retaining possession of the properties described in the said Schedules A to C”.

“Being the Metropolitan who was vested with the Sthanom by the Patriarch of Antioch and has been appointed President of the Syrian Association Committee and who has also been accepted by the Syrian Community, we, in pursuance of the past practice, have thus become fully entitled to the control and possession of the entire properties described in the aforesaid Schedules”.

“We, therefore, pray that the Defts. be directed to deliver up possession of the properties named in Schedule A and valued at 72,700 fanams, with further profits upon the lands Nos. 1 to 6 and Nos. 14 to 16 included therein, as well as the movable property mentioned in Schedules B and C, worth 352, 325 fanams with further interest on items 1 to 3 of Schedule B and together with Court costs.

	Fanams
Estimated value of the real property as per Schedule A ...	72,700
Do. of the personal property as per Schedule B ... ..	3,43,432 $\frac{1}{4}$
Value of the property as per Schedule C ... ..	9,300
Total	----- 4,25,432 $\frac{1}{4}$

“The title of Metropolitan held by the late Mar Athanasius was cancelled even during his lifetime by the Patriarch of Antioch. And the obstruction which existed against bringing a suit in the local Civil Courts having jurisdiction, to therefore oust him off his possession and control has been removed by the Royal Proclamation of the 23rd Kumbhom 1051.<sup>24</sup> Hence, the cause of action to bring this suit arose as against the 1st Deft., who owing to the

deposition of the late Mar Athanasius and his death, had simply to hand over the property to Us without any question and had no right whatever to retain possession of the same, as well as against the 2nd and 3rd Defts, who are favouring the said 1st Deft. The cause of action accrued from the 3rd day of Karkadagom 1051, the date of the death of the aforesaid "Mar Athanasius".<sup>25</sup>

The Court after hearing the submission of both the parties found that the Plaintiff's (Mar Dionysius) title was well established. declared the title, pleaded by the Defendant, defective and unsustainable and made a decree in favour of the Plaintiff as follows:

The decree of this Court on the whole case is, "That all the plaint properties be made over to the Plaintiff as the lawful Jacobite Syrian Metropolitan of Malabar; —that as regards the Trust money, they be considered as existing in the State at the date of the suit and the Defendants be made to account for them to the State and to pay to the Plaintiff with increments or accretions etc. less the expenses incurred for the purposes of the Trust....." (Para 13) This decree was delivered on Midhunam 16, 1059 (1884)

#### Appeal to High Court 1884-86

"14. From this decree, the 1st, 2nd and 7th Defendants appealed to the High Court on the 8th August 1884 (Suit No. 137. of 1059 (1884) on almost all the grounds on which they had resisted the suit in the Court of First instance. The appeal was heard and determined by a Division Bench of that Court consisting of the late T.R. Narayana Pillai and G.S. Arianayagam Pillai J J on the 29th Thulam 1061 (1886). They, in the result substantially affirmed the decree of the Zilla Court. Both the learned judges upheld the Supremacy of the Patriarch of Antioch over the Syrian Church in this country; and Plaintiff's (Respondent's) right to become Metropolitan of that Church in preference to the 1st Defendant (Appellant) by virtue of the former's consecration as Bishop and appointment as Metropolitan by the Patriarch; and decreed to him possession of all the properties and moneys admitted to appertain thereto."<sup>26</sup>

In regard to matters of faith of Thomas Mar Athanasius (appellant) "Justice Aryanayagam Pillai, a Christian judge, went

24. Appendix—VI.

25. Judgement of the Royal Court of Final Appeal Para 2. pp. 2-3.

26. Ibid. Paras 13-14 p 6.

rather elaborately into the issues relating to the articles of faith and doctrinal matters of the Syrian Christians and held that the *Appellant had departed* from the received and accepted beliefs and tenets of the Jacobite Syrian Sect and had consequently further become disqualified to hold the dignity and position of the Metropolitan of the Church following that persuasion.

The appeal was, accordingly dismissed with costs throughout being made payable by the Appellants.<sup>27</sup>

### **Judgement of the Royal Court of Final Appeal 1889**

Thomas Mar Athanasius appealed to His Highness the Maha Rajah against the decree of the High Court on 1.3.1886. The Maha Rajah appointed a Royal Court (of Final Appeal) consisting of Chief Justice K. Krishnaswamy Row, Justice A. Sita Rama Iyer and Justice W.E.Ormsby to hear the Appeal Suit No:3 of 1061 (1886). On July 12,1889 (30 Mithunam 1064) the Court announced its judgement—a Majority Judgement by Chief Justice Row and Justice Iyer and a Minority Judgement by Justice Ormsby.

The Memorandum of Appeal had raised 143 objections; but the main points taken up for argument included (Ref. Para 17 of the Majority Judgement)<sup>28</sup>.

- i. The Patriarch of Antioch had no power to vest the Trust in Mar Dionysius.
- ii. The consecration by him of a Metran did not give the latter any right or title to the property of the Syrian Church in Travancore.
- iii. The power that the Patriarch had exercised was purely spiritual rather than temporal.
- iv. The appointment of Mar Dionysius was void because there was no vacancy then, Kurilos and Mar Athanasius having been in the country. Patriarch had no power to depose Metrans without the consent of the people.
- v. Mar Dionysius was not properly elected by the community or constituted the President of the Syrian Association.

27. Ibid. para 14 pp 6-7.

28. ibid P:7-8

- vi. No disqualification, misfeasance, malfeasance or incapacity was shown as against Mar Athanasius to disentitle him to hold the position and dignity of Metropolitan; nor any departure from received doctrines and beliefs of the Syrian Church shown against him to justify him as a heretic;
- vii. There was no case alleged and proved to remove Punnathra Chandapilla Kathanar from the office of the Trustee.

The Majority Judgement of Chief Justice K. Krishnaswamy Row and Justice A.Sita Rama Iyer is quoted below:

“347<sup>29</sup> The conclusions we have arrived at on the whole are:

- that the Respondents (Mar Dionysius) claim is not barred by limitation;
- that the Ecclesiastical supremacy of the See of Antioch over the Syrian Church in Travancore has been all along, recognised and acknowledged by the Jacobite Syrian Community and their Metropolitans;
- that the exercise of that supreme power consisted in ordaining, either directly or by duly authorised Delegates, Metropolitans from time to time to manage the spiritual matters of the local church, in sending Moorone (Holy Oil) to be used in the churches in this country for Baptismal and other purposes and in general supervision over the Spiritual government of the Church;
- that the authority of the Patriarch has never extended to the government of the temporalities of the Church which in this respect, has been an independent Church;*
- that the Metropolitan of the Syrian Jacobite Church in Travancore should be a native of Malabar consecrated by the Patriarch of Antioch or by his duly authorised delegates and accepted by the people as their Metropolitan to entitle him to the spiritual and temporal government of the local Church;
- that the Respondent had been so consecrated and accepted by the majority of the people and consequently had a

- perfect right to succeed to the Metropolitanship on the death of Mar Athanasius;
- that the Appellant (Mar Thomas Athanasius) had neither been properly consecrated nor accepted by the majority thereof and therefore, had no title to the Dignity and office of Metropolitan;
  - that the Appellants' possession of the properties of the Church and its appurtenances and the assumption of the office of the Metropolitan have been wrongful since the death of Mar Athanasius, the admitted last Metropolitan and Trustee;
  - that the Appellant should, therefore, surrender the insignia and office of Metropolitan of the Malankara Syrian Jacobite Church and give up possession of all the properties and moneys appertaining thereto which he now holds to the Respondent (Mar Dionysius) who would assume and take possession of the properties etc to be administered with two other Trustees as required by the Endowment Deed;.....”

In contrast, Justice Ormsby in his Minority Judgement said, (to quote), “My conclusion, on the whole, is that it is not made out that imposition of hands by Antioch is essential to the consecration of a Metran of Malankara which is itself an independent and co-eval Church.”<sup>30</sup>

“There is no proof that the majority of the churches in Malankara have accepted the Plaintiff (Mar Dionysius) as their Metropolitan.

On both the above issues ..... (a) the necessity of consecration by Antioch (b) his acceptance by the people which must at least mean a majority of people...He has failed to prove either...”<sup>31</sup>

In fact, the Royal Court judged that Pulikottil Joseph Mar Dionysius V was the duly recognised Metropolitan of the Syrian Church with right of possession and power over church properties. The Judgement was followed by a series of suits regarding nearly every one of the individual churches in the possession of the Re-

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30. *ibid* P. 88

31. *ibid* P. 89

form Party. These suits also were mostly decided in favour of Mar Dionysius<sup>32</sup>.

### **Old Seminary Regained**

Following the Royal Court Judgement, Mar Dionysius moved the civil authorities for handing over the possession of Old Seminary. Mar Dionysius regained the possession of Old Seminary from Thomas Mar Athanasius.

### **Formation of the Mar Thoma Syrian Church**

The formation of the Mar Thoma Syrian Church in the last quarter of 19th Century was the culmination of the process of reformation within the Orthodox Church started by Abraham Malpan. The formation itself was hastened by the cumulative effect of the sweeping verdict of the Royal Court of Final Appeal of 1889 and the loss of property and individual churches. To quote The Most Rev. Dr. Juhanon Mar Thoma, Metropolitan of Mar Thoma Syrian Church, "At a period when the time and energy of the church were spent in defending themselves in the court, a band of twelve priests moved by a higher spiritual vision started the Association for Gospel preaching in the church and outside...."

"Now that the case was lost and their property taken away, it was necessary for this small group to think in terms of a separate church. They were called in contempt 'the Reformers' but they called themselves the Mar Thoma Syrian Church."<sup>33</sup>

Mean while, the reformers organised.....the Malabar Mar Thoma Syrian Christian Evangelistic Association with its Registered Office at Thiruvalla which was established on Wednesday, September 5, 1888 and the Mar Thoma Syrian Church formally came into being subsequently. Thomas Mar Athanasius (1868-1893) was the first bishop of the Mar Thoma Syrian Church. He was the son of Abraham Malpan and consecrated by Mathews Mar Athanasius in 1868.

### **Malankara Syrian Christian Association Meetings of 1886, 1892, 1895, 1901 and 1908**

The reign of Pulikottil Mar Dionysius is known for stream-

32. Cherian P. : P. 298

33. The Most Rev. Dr. Juhanon Mar Thoma : Christianity in India and a Brief History of the Mar Thoma Syrian Church (1968) -- P. 27

lining the administration of the Church. The Mulanthuruthy Synod of 1876 and the Parumala Synod of 1878 have already been detailed. Records show that the Metropolitan convened the Malankara Syrian Christian Association five times during his lifetime in 1886, 1892, 1895, 1901 and 1908. These are briefly touched below.

#### 1. *Association Meeting of 1886*

The meeting was convened by the Metropolitan to elect new trustees for the Church. In 1870, Punnathra Chacko Chandapilla Kathanar were elected as the Clergy Trustee and Kulangara Ittychan Pailey as the Lay Trustee as per Cochin Award of 1840. However Chandapilla Kathanar sided with Thomas Mar Athanasius of the Reform Movement started by Palakunnath Abraham Malapan. Ittychan Pailey also had expired meanwhile. It was, therefore, necessary to elect two trustees in their places. With this object in view, Mar Dionysius convened the Association at Old Seminary Kottayam in 1886 (Chingam 31, 1062). In the meeting, the Association elected Konat Kora Yohannan Kathanar and Kunnumpurath Kora Ulahannan as Clergy Trustee and Lay Trustee respectively.

#### 2. *Association Meeting of 1892 (March 30)*

The Clergy Trustee Konat Kora Yohannan Malapan who was elected in 1886, died. Mar Dionysius called, therefore, a meeting of the Association on Meenam 19, 1067 (1892) to elect a successor. The Association elected Konat Kora Mathan Malpan as the new Clergy Trustee.

#### 3. *Association Meeting of 1895 (November 21)*

Following the election of Konat Kora Mathan Malpan, Mar Dionysius claimed the interest on Trust Fund from the British. The British Resident, however, rejected the claim on July 6, 1895 for want of evidence indicating the displacement of the former Clergy-Trustee Punnathra Chandapilla Kathanar. To meet this contingency, Mar Dionysius called a meeting of the Malankara Association in 1895 which elected Konat Kora Mathan Malpan again in place of Chandapilla Kathanar.

#### 4. *Association Meeting of 1901 (April 24)*

The Lay-Trustee Kunnumpurath Kora Ulahannan elected in 1886 passed away in 1901. In this circumstances, it was necessary

that the Malankara Association should meet and elect a successor. Accordingly, Mar Dionysius convened the Malankara Association in 1901 at Old Seminary which elected Kunnumpurath Ulahannan Kora alias C.J. Kurien as Lay-Trustee. Kurien was the nephew of his predecessor.

#### 5. *Malankara Association Meeting Old Seminary 1908*

Towards the end of his life, Pulikottil Mar Dionysius foresaw the wisdom of designating his successor. With this in view the Metropolitan issued a circular on January 15, 1908 (Makaram 2, 1083) to all parish churches to send their representatives to a meeting of the Malankara Association to be held at Old Seminary, Kottayam on February 26, 1908 (Kumbhom 14, 1088).

Meanwhile, Mar Dionysius had taken the concurrence of Patriarch to elect Metropolitan candidates and send them to Jerusalem for consecration. The Patriarch had agreed, provided the consecration could not be delayed till his coming.

As afore stated, the Malankara Association met on February 26, 1908 and took the following decisions<sup>34</sup>:

- i. The appointment of Metropolitans to the widowed dioceses could await the arrival of the Patriarch in Malankara. In the meanwhile two candidates may be elected and sent to Jerusalem for consecration.
- ii. Kochuparampil Paulose Ramban who was serving as Manager of the Old Seminary and Vattasseril Geevarghese Ramban were elected as Metropolitan candidates.
- iii. These candidates may be consecrated as Metropolitans of the Church without assigning any diocese.
- iv. However, Patriarch may be requested to authorise and empower, under his obedienee, Geevaraghese Ramban to be Assistant and successor to Pulikottil Joseph Mar Dionysius, immediately on his consecration as Metropolitan in view of the advancing old age and ill health.

#### **Consecration 1908**

Accordingly, Vattasseril Geevarghese Ramban and Kochuparampil Paulose Ramban accompanied by Kallacheril Punnoose

<sup>34</sup> Rev. Fr. P.M. Philipose. Vattasseril Mar Dionysius 50th Death Anniversary Souvenir—February 23, 1984-p.3.

Ramban proceeded to Syria in 1908. Patriarch Moran Mar Abdulla, who was occupying the throne at that time welcomed the Rambans and was glad to know of their intention in coming. The Patriarch soon made preparations for their consecration. Geevarghese Ramban was consecrated as Geevarghese Mar Dionysius (VI), Malankara Metropolitan and Paulose Ramban as Paulose Mar Kurilos on May 31, 1908. In due course, the new Metropolitans returned to Malankara.

### **Last Days of Mar Dionysius V**

The new Metropolitans were received by Mar Dionysius. His wish was fulfilled. He had fought a vicarious battle for each step of progress in the Church. Hoping a bright future for the Church, the good shepherd passed away on July 11, 1909. The Metropolitan was buried at Old Seminary Chapel. The grief-stricken Syrian Christians were consoled by their new Malankara Metropolitan Vattasseril Mar Geevarghese Dionysius (VI).

### **Protestant Influence—and Mar Thoma Syrian Church**

The period of Pulikottil Mar Dionysius saw the effect of Protestant influence on Malankara Church. If it had caused separation of a group of its members to form the Anglican Church during his predecessor Cheppad Mar Dionysius's period, it engendered reform movement and a schism in the Church which resulted in the emergence of a reformed Eastern Church—the Mar Thoma Syrian Church.

The schism into which the Mar Thoma Syrian Church has fallen relate mainly to the independent revision of the liturgy without the sanction of any episcopal authority, the repudiation of the mystical significance of the sacraments, the reduction in the number of sacraments, the removal of the sacrificial aspect of the Holy Qurbana, and abolition of the prayers for the departed souls, intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the Saints and the observance of Fasts and Festivals.

That Church, however, uphold the "historical continuity with the traditions of faith, liturgy and ecclesiastical polity of the original Church of St. Thomas", and claim continuity with the independent Church formed in 1654 after the Coonen Cross and

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35. Mathew C.P. and Thomas M.M : The Indian Churches of St. Thomas : Page 87.

also with the Church founded by St. Thomas<sup>36</sup>. This statement is subject to the schism and variations of original form, content and practice indicated above.

The Mar Thoma Syrian Church, obviously is one which combines an Eastern image with Western Protestant outlook and approach.

### **The Faith of Mar Thoma Syrian Church**

A brief account of the ARTICLES of faith of Mar Thoma Syrian Church is available in 'The Indian Churches of St. Thomas', by Mathew and Thomas. The Preamble to the Constitution of the Church provides :

1. The Malankara Mar Thoma Syrian Church believed to be founded by St. Thomas, one of the Apostles of Christ and called by that name, is part of the One Apostolic and Catholic Church.
2. "According to the faith of the Christian Church all through the ages, this Church believes in Jesus Christ who is God Incarnated for the redemption of mankind and in the Triune God revealed by Him Who is one of the Trinity.
3. "The Bible consisting of the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments which is the authority for all theological questions and the Nicene Creed which is scripturally established are acknowledged by the Mar Thoma Church and must not be altered by any one in any manner; and the ministerial offices of Deacon, Priest and Metran (Bishop) and the rites of consecration of churches, Holy Baptism, Holy Qurbana, Holy Marriage, Extreme Unction and Burial as well as the observance of Sunday Lent and Maranaya Festivals (i.e. festivals relating to events in the life of our Lord) should never be removed.
4. "This Church accepts that the mission and work of the Church is to keep and safeguard the faith as revealed through Jesus Christ and taught by his holy Apostles, to promote the spiritual life of the faithful through the

<sup>36</sup>. The Most Rev. Juhanon Mar Thoma: Christianity in India and a Brief History of the Mar Thoma Syrian Church (1958) Page: 27

administration of the Sacraments and the Ministry of the Word and to proclaim the Gospel in all the world and make disciples of all nations baptizing them in the name of the Triune God.”<sup>37</sup>

Further, according to the Memorandum and Articles of Association of the Malabar Mar Thoma Syrian Christian Evangelistic Association, “the chief object of the Association shall be the propagation of the Gospel among the non-Christians and which the Association tries to promote :

- (a) “That mankind is a race which has fallen into sin and has thereby become ruined.
- (b) “That God longs for the repentance and salvation of all men in all places;
- (c) “That full and free salvation as enunciated below is for all who believe in Jesus Christ.
  1. Forgiveness of sins,
  2. A new life, a new nature, and a new power which enable one to overcome the world, the flesh and the devil, and which make it possible to fulfil the will of God.
  3. Forgiveness on repentance for failures that one is liable to in the fight with the world, the flesh and the devil.
  4. The perfect glorification of the body, soul and spirit at Christ’s coming
- (d) “For the realisation of this full salvation, faith is the sole means open to the sinner, the working of the Holy Spirit being God’s share in the transaction.
- (e) All teachings and doctrines concerning this salvation rest solely on the authority of the Holy scriptures consisting of the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments.”<sup>38</sup>

### Liturgical Revision

As regards the liturgical revision, the learned writers say :“... the liturgical revision effected by Abraham Malpan has been officially accepted by the Mar Thoma Church by formal resolutions of the Assembly. The Malpan himself had not formulated a state-

37. Mathew C.P. & Thomas M.M. : The Indian Churches of St. Thomas. pp 103-4.

38. *ibid*: page 104.

ment of the beliefs on which these revisions were made and the Church itself has not committed itself officially to one set of inferences or another. In fact varied doctrinal inferences have been drawn. It is doubtful whether any Church seeking to comprehend different theological traditions which have not been brought into a coherent theological system, can ever do more than this."<sup>39</sup>

Apart from the changes made in the Thaksa (Liturgy of the Holy Communion) all prayers for the dead and to the blessed Virgin Mary were omitted.

With regard to practice also, certain changes were made :

The Communion is to be administered in both kinds. It is not to be celebrated when there is no one to partake.

The service is to be conducted in vernacular and not henceforth in Syriac.

#### **St. Thomas Evangelical Church of India 1961**

After nearly sixty years of the formation of the Mar Thoma Church, voices of unrest were heard in that Church. An agitation was started on the grounds of adherence to the principles of Reformation. The dissidents contended that the formation of a new Church was indispensable for the preservation of the Evangelical purity of doctrines and practices because the present day Mar Thoma Church was fast losing hold of these. Consequently, "a very small section walked out of the Church and formed a new Church early in 1961 with the name "The St. Thomas Evangelical Church of India".<sup>40</sup>

#### **MAR THOMA - CSI - ANGLICAN ACCORD**

The Mar Thoma Church had gained full sympathy, support and strength as a Reformed Church from other Protestant Churches, especially the Church of South India. They explored the feasibility of a formal mutual recognition of the validity of the episcopal orders, ministry and sacraments. Consequently, "in May, 1958, the Mar Thoma Church and the Church of South India approved the following formula establishing intercommunion :

<sup>39.</sup> *ibid*: page 110.

<sup>40.</sup> *ibid*: page 110.

- (a) Each communion believes the other to hold the essentials of the Christian faith and recognises the other as part of the Universal Church.
- (b) (1) Each communion agrees to admit members of the other communion to participate in the Holy Communion.  
 (2) The Mar Thoma Church believes that Episcopal integration of the ministry of the CSI is essential to full intercommunion.  
 (3) The Mar Thoma Church recognises that among its members there are those who object in receiving Holy Communion celebrated by the non-episcopally ordained ministers of the CSI and those who do not have such objection. The Mar Thoma Church respects these differences even as the CSI by its pledge guarantees to respect the consciences of those who wish to receive Holy Communion only from those episcopally ordained ministers.
- (c) Inter-communion does not require from either communion the acceptance of all doctrinal formulations, sacramental devotion or liturgical practice of the other.”<sup>41</sup>

Later, after a ‘fresh Study’, the Church of India, Pakistan, Burma and Ceylon (the Anglican Church) and the Mar Thoma Church entered into an agreement in 1961, known as the Anglican Mar Thoma Accord, according to which, ‘‘each Church recognises the catholicity and independence of the other and maintains its own; intercommunion does not require from either Church the acceptance of all doctrinal opinions, sacramental devotion or liturgical practice characteristic of the other; but implies that each believes the other to hold all the essentials of the Christian faith.”<sup>42</sup>

### **CSI – CNI – Mar Thoma Inter Relation<sup>43</sup>**

It was reported in the CSI–CNI Commission for negotiations held at Kottayam in May 1974 that the Church of North India, which was also in full communion with both the CSI and the MTC has proposed the formation of a Joint Commission to explore

41. *ibid*: page 112-3.

42. *ibid*: page 113.

43. The Joint Council of The Church of North India, The Church of South India and The Malankara Mar Thoma Syrian Church (1984) Pp: 38-42 .

ways and means of closer cooperation among the three Churches and united witness in India.

All the three Churches accepted the proposal for a Joint Commission and appointed their representatives to serve on it.

### **Joint Theological Commission Declaration – 1975**

The Joint Theological Commission at its second meeting held at the United Theological College, Bangalore in June 1975 noted “that the three churches were already in full communion with one another, were united in a common faith and accepted one another’s ministry”. A Declaration was also adopted to this effect. Finally the Joint Theological Commission recommended to the three churches :

- (a) that the name of the church to which the three churches will belong together be THE BHARAT CHRISTIAN CHURCH.
- (b) that when all the three churches have accepted this recommended scheme, each of them should take steps according to their own constitutional procedures to declare themselves part of the BHARAT CHRISTIAN CHURCH.
- (c) that on a date to be agreed upon by the highest governing bodies of the three churches, a solemn declaration be made that they belong together in the BHARAT CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

While we make these recommendations we reaffirm our hope that the goal of the Union of our churches is the coming together in visible fellow-ship of all those who believe in Jesus Christ in our country.”

On the recommendation of the Commission, a Joint Council for the three churches with 90 members has been constituted to look after matters affecting the internal life of the three churches. In other matters this body can act on its own initiative subject to the approval of the different churches.

### **Joint Council announces Unity**

The first meeting of the Joint Council was held at Nagpur on 4th to 5th July 1978. The message addressed by this meeting to the members of the three churches said :

“We thank and praise God that our three churches have been

led to the formation of a Joint Council as a visible expression of the unity we have as one Church in the Lord Jesus Christ. The three churches have already been in full communion with one another. There has been theological agreement about the Scriptures, the historic Creeds as witnessing to the Apostolic faith, the two Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, and the Episcopate which is both historical and constitutional. On the basis of their common faith and ecclesiastic fellowship they have mutually accepted one another's members and ministers."<sup>44</sup>

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44. The Joint Council of the CNI the CSI and the MMTSC—A brief History and Interpretation, 'Ed J. Russel Chandran. Page 7.

## CHAPTER ELEVEN

### **THE RISING CHURCH**

The first sixty years of the twentieth century were years of agony for the Church. This period witnessed the Church struggling to maintain its autonomy. Personal conflicts and factional feuds followed by legal suits in civil courts marred the otherwise serene atmosphere of the Church. The years of turbulence should not, however, be understood as a spell of decline and deterioration; on the contrary, the long stretch of litigation which plagued the Church during this period may be looked upon as an occasion which served to bring a sort of cohesion among the rival factions in the Church. When the gap closed and the factions fused, certain myths were exploded, a new sense of homogeneity emerged and an urge to rise relevant to the times was moulded.

In this drama, personalities stand prominent. Individual capabilities catch lime light. What is important is not what has been won or lost but how one played the game. What loomed large was the question, "If Winter comes can spring be far behind?" Of those who weathered the wild winds, the whimper and the thunder, all were not destined to see the advent of the smiling spring to witness the Church rising, poised.

#### **Vattasseril Mar Dionysius 1908-1934**

The curtain rises with the powerful luminary of the age, Vattasseril Mar Dionysius donning the robe of Malankara Metropolitan. Calm and benign yet strong and striking, Mar Dionysius rose to every occasion of onslaught, stood foursquare and unscathed, and emerged stronger from each apparently catastrophic event. The Church found a veteran soldier and an undaunted leader. This trait in Mar Dionysius was conspicuous from the day he was received into the Holy Ministry.

#### **Early Life**

Born in the Vattasseril family at Mallappally on 31.10.1858 the young Mar Dionysius received ordination as a deacon on

16.10.1879 and as a priest on 18.1.1880 from Metropolitan Mar Gregorios of Parumala. Mar Gregorios was his fortress and refuge throughout his life. In times of distress and sorrow, he used to take shelter in the sanctorium of the saint for strength comfort and guidance. The young priest, known as Fr. V.J. Geevarghese, soon rose in stature as an astute preacher, theologian and as a scholar.

MALPAN — 1880-1903. The potentialities and capabilities of Fr. Geevarghese attracted Pulikottil Mar Dionysius and in course of time more and more assignments and responsibilities were put on the young shoulders, especially the responsibility of Malpan (Professor of Syriac) in charge of the students of theology at Parumala and later at Old Seminary following possession thereof from Thomas Mar Athanasius in 1886 consequent to the High Court Judgement of 1885.

### Literateur

During this stint in the Old Seminary, the Malpan was instrumental in the translations of the Liturgy of Holy Qurbana into Malayalam, in association with Konat Mathan Malpan, and also the Hymns in various litanies in the rendering of which Konat Mathan Malpan and Varghese Mappilla also had given valuable contribution. Another outstanding contribution of the Malpan was his work "Mathopadesha Sarangal", a book of great theological significance on the faith. Mysteries and other practices of Orthodox Church.

Apart from the responsibility of the theological Seminary, Pulikottil Mar Dionysius hoisted on the Malpan, the charge of Principal, M.D. Seminary School also. Fr. Geevarghese remained as Principal for nearly ten years which he relinquished when he became a Ramban.

The Malpan was a great preacher and a defender of Orthodox faith. Along with Parumala Mar Gregorios and otherwise, the Malpan exhorted the people to preserve the Orthodox faith through his extremely persuasive speeches, at a time when the revival movement was pervading Malankara.

'Mahajana Sabha' was a Public Forum, which the Malpan revived and organised in the M.D. Seminary to hold informal discussions with the laity of the Church. This Forum had helped the Malpan in later years of his life as Malankara Metropolitan.

In 1895, the Malpan had visited the holy historical places of Jerusalem etc., along with Mar Gregorios of Parumala.

### **Ramban 1903-08**

On November 1, 1903, the Malpan was raised as Ramban (Monk) by Joseph Mar Dionysius. As Ramban, he used to assist the Malankara Metropolitan in the administrative matters of the Church also, besides his other responsibilities.

Meanwhile, the Malankara Association which met on 27.2.1908 at Old Seminary, elected Ramban Geevarghese and Ramban Kochuparampil Poulouse as Metropolitan-designates and also decided that Ramban Geevarghese, subsequent to his consecration shall be Assistant to the Malankara Metropolitan and later, his successor.

### **Malankara Metropolitan 1908-34**

Consecration<sup>1</sup>. In pursuance of the above decisions, the two Rambans proceeded to Syria for receiving consecration from the Patriarch. They embarked from Bombay on Meenam 29, 1083, (April 10, 1908) and reached Jerusalem on Medam 12 (April 24, 1908). In their journey, they were accompanied by Kallacheril Punnose Ramban, Fr. Yuachim and Deacon Paret Mathews. At Jerusalem they called on the patriarch Mar Gregorios Abdullah. On May 31, 1908, the Patriarch consecrated both the Rambans as Metropolitans, Ramban Geevarghese with the little Mar Dionysius and Ramban Poulouse as Mar Kurilos. In the consecration ceremony the Armenian Patriarch at Jerusalem, Coptic Patriarch at Constantinople and Metropolitan Mar Ivanios and Mar Osthathios of the Church of Syria also had participated. Mar Osthathios was earlier in Malankara as Deacon Sleeba and was consecrated as Metropolitan by the Patriarch a few months prior to that of Mar Dionysius. Present on the occasion was also Ramban Ougen from Malankara who later became Catholicos in 1964.

The new Metropolitans gave Shalmooso (Pledge of Loyalty) to the Patriarch who in response issued Sthathicon (letter of Authority as Metropolitan) to them. It may be recalled that the Malankara Association had decided that Mar Dionysius would be successor to Malankara Metropolitan Joseph Mar Dionysius.

<sup>1</sup> Paret Z.M. : Vattasseril Mar Dionysius. Pp.59-69

However, the Patriarch had ignored<sup>2</sup> this request of the Malankara Church for inclusion in the Sthathicon to Mar Dionysius, although the latter had specifically appealed to him for such inclusion. On the other hand, it was later understood that the Patriarch in the Sthathicon issued to Mar Osthathios had provided him the authority as Malankara Metropolitan over the seven dioceses of Malankara<sup>3</sup>. This Sthathicon of Osthathios, however, had no significance in the context of the later decisions of the Malankara Association following the demise of Joseph Mar Dionysius. With a distressed mind, Geevarghese Mar Dionysius and others left Syria for Malankara.

On July 17, 1908 Geevarghese Mar Dionysius, Mar Kurilos and Mar Osthathios reached Old Seminary, Kottayam. They were given a public reception organised by the Malankara Suriyani Mahajana Sabha the same day at M.D. Seminary. A year later on July 11, 1909, Geevarghese Mar Dionysius who was earlier elected by the Malankara Association as successor to Joseph Mar Dionysius took over the rein of administration of the Church following his death.

### **Sunthroniso**

At this juncture, Patriarch Mar Abdullah was at London en route to Malankara. The death of Joseph Mar Dionysius was communicated by cable message to him and further requested to confirm Geevarghese Mar Dionysius as successor Malankara Metropolitan. The Patriarch replied that Mar Osthathios may be approached who was prevailed upon to send a cable favouring Mar Dionysius, to the Patriarch. Mar Abdullah confirmed the request telegraphically from London. Consequently, in a representative meeting of the Church which was held on August 10, 1909 (Karkadakam 26.1084) at Old Seminary and presided over by Mar Osthathios, the succession of Geevarghese Mar Dionysius as Malankara Metropolitan was publicly announced and confirmed; Malpan Konat Mathan and E.J. John spoke felicitating Mar Dionysius. This meeting was followed by a ceremonial religious function (Sunthroniso) in the Old Seminary Chapel where after prayers Mar Dionysius attired in all formal

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2. *ibid.* P: 127

3. *ibid* P: 126.

robes was formally installed as Malankara Metropolitan and raised in a ceremonial chair thrice to the accompaniment of cheers of Oxios, Oxios, Oxios, Abun Mar Dionysius, by the entire assembly.

By this time, it was known that Patriarch Mar Gregorios Abdullah would be arriving in Malankara very soon. So immediately after assuming office Mar Dionysius convened the Managing Committee of the Malankara Association to consider matters relating to the Patriarch's reception, his stay and other administrative matters of the Church.

The meeting was held on August 30, 1909. (Chingam 15,1085) It decided *inter alia* that Mar Kurilos, the new Metropolitan, would have the dioceses of Kottayam and Cochin and Mar Ivanios, those of Kandanad and Ankamali and that the keys of treasurer's room, entitled to the co-trustees, may be kept with the Malankara Metropolitan as in the past. There was some dissention on this account on the part of co-trustees Mathan Malpan and C.J. Kurien with Mar Dionysius. The Committee ignored the claim of Mar Osthathios for a diocese since he was not an elected Metropolitan of the Malankara Church. Further the Committee also decided to take necessary measures to accord a reception to the Patriarch. The Malankara Metropolitan was also authorised to take whatever steps he deemed best by himself independent of the co-trustees if and when there arose any dissention between the Metropolitan and co-trustees.

The Church awaited the arrival of the Patriarch anxiously.

It is said that the two Co-trustees—the Clergy Trustee, Malpan Fr. Konat and Lay Trustee C.J. Kurien—were inimical to Vattasseril Mar Dionysius for flimsy reasons. Two instances were generally known. One was that the three Co-trustees had their key to the Strong Room or Treasury Room of Old Seminary. In this room, the Copper Plates and others of such importance were kept and the Managing Committee also used to meet. It so happened that from the time of Puiikottil Joseph Mar Dionysius the two keys of the co-trustees were with the Metropolitan Trustee. The two co-trustees Malpan Fr. Konat and C.J. Kurien demanded the keys entitled to them. The Managing Committee which was seized of the issue decided that the status-quo position may be maintained. This hurt the co-trustees. Secondly, they felt ignored

by Mar Dionysius when the latter disposed of a Church property in Alleppy without their knowledge and consent which act they charged as dictatorial and authoritarian on the part of Mar Dionysius.

The co-trustees who were thus unhappy with Mar Dionysius sided with the Patriarch Mar Abdullah to discomfort him and also tried to dislodge him to the extent of splitting the Church as evident from later events.

### **PATRIARCHS SINCE MAR PETER III**

#### **Mar Abdul Messiah (1895-1915), Mar Abdullah (1906-1915)**

The last Patriarch who visited Malankara Church was Mar Peter III. He sojourned for two years from June 1875 to June 1877. In 1895, he passed away and Mar Abdul Messiah succeeded, who was in position till 1906. That year, Metropolitan Mar Gregorios Abdullah contrived to depose Mar Abdul Messiah with political support of the ruling Sultan of Turkey by withdrawing royal recognition (firman) and installing himself as Patriarch. Both the Patriarchs, however, continued to hold the title till they expired in 1915—Mar Abdul Messiah on August 30 and Mar Abdullah on November 25.

The Syrian Church obviously suffered from internecine quarrels and also that the Patriarchate was susceptible to political interference and manoeuvres. The Turkish Sultans had required the Patriarchs to obtain their recognition to function as head of the Church. Secondly, there were occasions when more than one Patriarchs were in position at the same time—one with administrative authority and the other without. In the case of Mar Abdul Messiah, although deprived of administrative authority and political recognition, he remained and functioned as a canonically and spiritually valid and accepted Patriarch of the Church of Syria.

During the period Geevarghese Mar Dionysius was Malankara Metropolitan, both the Patriarchs visited Malankara Church—Mar Abdulla in 1909-11 and Mar Abdul Messiah in 1912-13. Their arrival and the developments which took place during their stay deserve careful observation, in view of their significant contribution to the course of history of the Malankara Church.

#### **Patriarch Mar Ignatius Abdullah II in Malankara 1909-11**

On September 24, 1909, Patriarch Moran Mar Ignatius

Abdullah arrived in Bombay by the ship 'Egypt' en route to Malankara. Malankara was not new to the Patriarch. As Metropolitan Mar Gregorios, the Patriarch had accompanied the late Patriarch Peter III during his visit to Malankara in 1875-77. Mar Abdulla was, therefore, fully aware of the circumstances which led to Peter III's visit, the Mulanthuruthy Synod, his attempts to secure temporal power over Malankara See and how the late Pulikottil Joseph Mar Dionysius had, in a statesmanly fashion parried the overtures in that direction, etc. It appears from later events that Mar Abdullah was determined to pursue his predecessor's intentions.

A review of Mar Abdullah's personal life reveals him to be an opportunist, avaricious and irreligious person. As Metropolitan, he had visited England and Malankara. On both these occasions Mar Abdulla had evinced his extreme greediness for money. Patriarch Peter had branded him as avaricious. Further, on coming into conflict with the Church hierarchy in Syria, Mar Abdullah had embraced Roman Catholic Church in 1896. For nearly ten years he served that Church, including a stint as the Metropolitan of Homs<sup>4</sup>.

However, Mar Abdullah conspired with two Metropolitans of the Church of Syria—Mar Ivanios of Jerusalem and Mar Thimotheos at Constantinople—to return to its fold provided he was made the Patriarch.<sup>5</sup> With their support, he influenced Sultan Hamid of Turkey by paying off a tidy sum to withdraw the Firman issued in favour of the reigning Patriarch Mar Abdul Messiah. Consequently, Mar Abdul Messiah was deposed and Mar Abdullah became the Patriarch on August 15, 1906.

On arrival at Bombay, Mar Abdullah was received by Mar Dionysius, Malpan Konat Mathan Kathanar, Thamara-pallil Abraham Kathanar, Fr.P.T. Geevarghese, K.C. Mammen Mappilla, and E.M. Philip. At Bombay and at Ootty on the way to Kerala the Patriarch called on the Governors of Bombay and Madras respectively as a matter of courtesy. In Kerala, large scale pompous receptions were arranged for the Patriarch at Kunnamkulam, Trichur, Ernakulam, Kottayam, Parumala

4. *ibid* pp:114, 118

5. *ibid*.P: 95

and Trivandrum. At Trivandrum, the Patriarch stayed as a State Guest and had an audience with His Highness Sri Mulam Thirunal Rama Varma.

### **Mar Abdullan's Demands**

Once the receptions were over, the Patriarch proceeded with convening a meeting of the representatives of the parishes of the Church on November 27, 1909 (Vrischikam 12, 1085) at Old Seminary, Kottayam.

In the notice issued on November 1, 1909 convening the meeting, the Patriarch had stated that in order that his coming may be fruitful he desired to meet them and know their petitions and requests. The meeting was actually held on (Friday and Saturday) November, 28 and 29, 1909. Initially, the Patriarch, in his introductory speech, desired that a memorandum of petitions may be submitted to him in his room. Subsequently, he called three prominent lay leaders of the Church, namely E.J. John, M.A. Chacko and C.J. Kurien to his room and told them that he desired powers over the temporalities (i.e. properties) and the Malankara Church and to that effect they may prevail over the representatives meeting to execute a bond providing temporal powers to Patriarchs of Church of Syria over the properties of the Malankara Church. Mr. John answered that the Church representatives assembled needed to be consulted. The trio themselves considered it. It is recorded that C.J. Kurien tried to persuade John and Chacko to execute such a bond which they completely rejected. Any way, the proposal of Mar Abdullah was presented before the meeting. There was strong opposition to the proposal especially in the speech of (Mookencheril) M.P. Varkey. Being late in the night the meeting adjourned for the next day, November 29, 1909. The assembly met the next day morning.

Meanwhile, the Patriarch had expressed his ire at the rejection of his proposal for temporal powers and further wanted to know how many more Metropolitans were required to be consecrated. There were attempts to pacify him with valuable presents. An alternate proposal assuring wider powers but less temporal authority was submitted in consultation with E.M. Philip. This was rejected by the Patriarch. In the afternoon, the question of the requirement of Metropolitans was discussed. The concensus

was two against four or five. This was also not acceptable to the Patriarch.

In conclusion, it may be stated that the Patriarch had desired the Church to execute a bond conferring the Patriarch temporal powers over the Malankara Church properties and had also proposed consecration of a number of Metropolitans. The representatives rejected both the proposals and dispersed most disheartened at the approach of the Patriarch. The Patriarch continued to stay at Old Seminary and visit parish churches.

### **Temporal claim**

Mar Abdullah had explained in a circular dated 8.9.1910 (23.1.1086) how and why he claimed temporal powers. It was stated in that circular<sup>6</sup> "Who can/(How one can) separate temporal powers from spiritual powers? The Patriarchs, Maphrians, and Metropolitans who had come from Antiochene Patriarchate had not only suffered tribulations and spent large sums of money for the very existence of this (Malankara) Church but had shed blood also. We have no authority either to forgo or hand over to another our powers. For, these are not personal, but belonging to the Patriarch. How can the head (of a Church) rule without temporal powers."

### **Udampady (Bond)**

In retrospect, it may be observed that Mar Abdullah tried to secure an udampadi (a bond) from Mar Dionysius executing temporal powers to the Patriarch of Church of Syria, on more than one occasions — at the time of his consecration at Jerusalem and later during his sojourn in Malankara. To Vattasseril Mar Dionysius, the integrity and independence of Malankara Church were the cardinal principles which he upheld and subject to which, he was prepared to maintain a most favoured relationship with Patriarch and Church of Syria. Mar Dionysius, who was, therefore, convinced of the unreasonableness of the Patriarch's demand of the Udampadi in sacrifice of the freedom of the Church, had stoutly refused to execute the Udampadi. His predecessor, Malankara Metropolitan Pulikottil Joseph Mar Dionysius, had also not obliged Patriarch Peter III in pledging temporal authority. The representa-

6. Exhibit A.G. in Trust Fund Suit. Quoted by Z.M. Paret in Vattasseril Mar Geevarghese (1969) P: 227 (Translation is by author)

tives of the Church who met on 28-29.11.1909 too had rejected the demand.

Failing in his open approach, the Patriarch began persuading individual parishes to give Udampadis (Bonds of Submission) acceding spiritual and temporal powers of the Patriarch over the properties of the parishes.

Abdullah was successful in getting such Udampadis from three parishes namely, Puthuppally on 11.7.1085 (22 February 1910), Kandanad St. Mary's Church on 8.8.1085 (21 March 1910) and Karingachira on 4.9.1085 (16 April 1910). Besides the parishes, the Patriarch also wangled Udampadis from Metropolitans. Mar Kurilos, who was consecrated along with Mar Dionysius at Jerusalem, gave it on 29 Chingam 1086 (14.9.1910). Two other Rambans who were consecrated as Metropolitans, were pressurised to give the Udampadis prior to their consecration. They were Pinadeth Poulouse Ramban who gave it on 25 Edavam 1085 (7.6.1910) and Edavazhikkal Geevarghese Ramban on 11 Chingam 1086 (27.8.1910) The latter was consecrated on 15.1.1086 (31.8.1910) with the title of Mar Serverios and was given charge of a newly created diocese for Cnanayas with independent status in the Malankara See.

### **Co-trustees Defect**

In all these unhealthy proceedings, the Kathanar Trustee Kora Mathan Malpan and the Lay Trustee C.J. Kurien gave unstinted support to the Patriarch to the aversion of Mar Dionysius and his supporters for, the parishes and the Metropolitans allowed the Patriarch powers which they had never before enjoyed over Malankara Church.

In the circumstances, an apprehension was current among the people that the Patriarch in his ire would ex-communicate Mar Dionysius, which they felt would cause irreparable damage to the Malankara Church. Those who were of the view that the Patriarch was seeking excessive and ineligible powers, aired their feelings and made efforts to refrain him from continuing his demands and avert a split in the Church. Mention may be made about the leaf-let published by Jaathyabhimani, the speeches and decisions in the meeting of the Maha Jana Sabha held on Medom 22, 1085 (May 4, 1910) at M.D. Seminary, Kottayam, the meeting of the

delegation<sup>7</sup> deputed by the Maha Jana Sabha with the Patriarch on Medom 27 (9.5.1910) at Karingachira, the Memorandum submitted by the delegation which sought an assurance from the Patriarch that he would abide by the decisions of the Mulanthuruthy synod, Patriarch's reply circular 19 issued on Edavom 1, 1085 (May 14 1910) from Karingachira Church giving that assurance, the open letter dated Edavom 1085 (May/June 1910) from E.J. John to the Patriarch and lastly the pamphlet issued by E.J. John in Karkadakom 1085 (July-August 1910) from Trivandrum recapitulating the entire series of developments in the Church since the arrival of Patriarch Abdullah. In his open letter<sup>8</sup> of Edavom 1085, John had pointed out that (i) the Patriarch desired temporal powers over the properties of the Church; (ii) there was strong opposition among the members of the Church to such a demand (iii) the Royal Court Judgement had denied Patriarchs temporal powers over the Malankara Church (iv) the forces that encouraged the Patriarch to pursue the demand were Mar Osthathios who desired to rule over Malankara and Konat Mathan Malpan who desired to discredit Mar Dionysius. (v) both Mar Osthathios and Malpan endeavoured either to dislodge Mar Dionysius from being Malankara Metropolitan or derob Mar Dionysius as Metropolitan; and (vi) finally, desired the Patriarch to inform him the reasons for Patriarch's disapproval of Mar Dionysius who was elected by the Malankara Church as their Metropolitan.

#### **M.D. Seminary Meeting 1910 — Independence of the Church Upheld**

This was followed by another representative meeting of the Church convened by more than 60 clergy and 200 prominent laity at M.D. Seminary at Kottayam on Kanni 4, 1086 (September 20, 1910).<sup>9</sup> Representatives of 151 parishes attended the meeting, which was presided over by Cheriamadhothil Yakob Kathanar. Poothakuzhiyil Abraham Kathanar, Vicar, Trivandrum parish, Fr.P.T. Geevarghese, P.P. John, E.J. John were the prominent speakers who upheld the freedom of the Malankara Church, denied that the Patriarchs of Antioch ever had the authority in the administration

7. delegates : E.J. John, C.J. Kurien, Vazhayil Thoma, A. Philipose, Puthenveetil Ittyachen, C. Cherian and Chalil Kochukorah. Ref : Paret : Vattasseril Mar Dionysius P : 291.

8. *ibid.* Pp 301-313

9. *ibid.* pp : 317-328

of the Malankara Church, decried the Patriarch's illegal demands and the apprehended excommunication in contravention of the Mulanthuruthy Synod decisions, the decrees of Royal Court and the provisions of Malankara Syrian Christian Association, objected to the sending or placing of Mar Osthathios as Patriarch's representative with administrative powers in Malankara and finally gave full support to Mar Dionysius. Resolutions were also passed accordingly.

### **Ex-communication 1911**

With the involvement of the people at all levels, the atmosphere in the Church was emotionally surcharged—one group favouring and supporting Patriarch and the other Mar Dionysius. It reached its zenith when the Patriarch issued his order dated June 8, 1911 (Edavom 26, 1986) excommunicating Mar Dionysius. It was sent through regular postal services while Mar Dionysius was residing in the room adjacent to the Patriarch in the Old Seminary.

The main charge in the ex-communication order was that Mar Dionysius exercised powers in an independent manner in full freedom and authority over the Malankara Church as if there was no higher authority above him which indirectly implied that the Patriarch was the virtual head of Malankara Church. The charges for which Mar Dionysius was ex-communicated may be summarised as follows:

1. The properties belonging to the Church were not managed and utilised in the best interests of the Church.
2. Mar Dionysius, keeping in view his personal interests, functioned in complete freedom and authority which was not in the best interests of the Holy Church.
3. In order to secure such freedom and authority, Mar Dionysius kindled dissensions and feud in the Church.
4. Mar Dionysius endeavoured to exercise absolute power in an independent manner, as if there was no higher authority.
5. Mar Dionysius did not obey the legal and rightful higher authority.
6. Mar Dionysius behaved and acted in a false and prejudicial manner, which belittled the honour and rever-

ences due to the Patriarch and the holy throne of St. Peter and abetted such actions by others.

7. All the above acts violated the provisions of the Shalmoosa contracted by Mar Dionysius at the consecration in the presence of Holy Trinity, saints and angels the Holy Sanctuary and the dreadful Holy Qurbana.
8. Besides, because his hands shiver, the Metropolitan was incapable to hold the holy Chalice and Paten himself and celebrate Holy Qurbana without another's help. None has the right or permission to celebrate Holy Qurbana in such conditions. The Holy Church demands a perfect man without any shortcoming. Hence Mar Dionysius was not worthy to hold the office of Metropolitan in God's Holy Church, nay, not even that of a priest.

On the above charges, Mar Dionysius was "ex-communicated, deposed and de-robed from the position of Metropolitan".

After the ex-communication, there was no further contact between Mar Abdullah and Mar Dionysius. The Patriarch and others intended to read out the ex-communication order in public on Sunday, 29.10.1086 (11.6.1911) after the Holy Qurbana at Old Seminary Chapel.

But observing the hostile mood of the congregation which had gathered in large numbers from the nearby parishes sensing the public announcement, the Patriarch left the Chapel immediately after the Holy Qurbana without reading the Order.

### **Ex-Communication Invalid**

The ex-communication was not unexpected. Prominent Church members had collectively and individually strived their best to make the Patriarch understand the futility of such a step and the damaging consequences for the Church. The Patriarch and his supporters did not care.

The reaction to the ex-communication was peaceful. Their feelings were, however aroused and hardened. Their strong protest was most vehemently conveyed and expressed in the editorials of the newspaper Malayala Manorama. The deposed Patriarch Abdul Messiah in Syria, who heard of the order telegraphed on August 17, 1911 from Diarbeker that it was of no consequence.

The ex-communication, however, was an important issue in the Trust Fund Suit of 1913-15 in the District Court at Kottayam. In his judgement (1918), the judge held that (i) the ex-communication order was issued on false and insufficient grounds, (ii) the Patriarch was displeased with Mar Dionysius because he had endeavoured to uphold the independence of the Church and denied the Patriarch temporal powers over the Malankara Church and, therefore, the ex-communication order was in violation of natural justice as well as Church canons.

### **Civil Suit for Possession of of Old Seminary 1911-12**

The cold war between Patriarch Abdullah and Mar Dionysius had also witnessed the cold blooded murder of Peringara Aattupurath Varki Varghese of Tiruvalla alias Aana Pappi on Meenam 18, 1087 (March 30, 1912) on the shores of Meenachil River on the premises of Old Seminary, Kottayam. It all started with an attempt on the part of C.J. Kurien and Malpan Konat Mathen Kathanar co-trustees with Mar Dionysius.

A Civil Suit was filed in Edavam 1086 (May 1911) in the District Court, Kottayam on the basis of a report by the local Inspector of Police. According to the report, Malpan Kora Mathen Kathanar and C.J. Kurien, co-trustees, had issued a notice to Alexandros Kathanar, Manager of the Old Seminary, terminating his service and asking him to leave the premises since he had lost their confidence and also that valuable properties were likely to be taken out from Old Seminary. Whereas Mar Dionysius stated that (1) as Malankara Metropolitan, he had the right to appoint and remove the Manager of the Old Seminary; none else had the right; (2) he had appointed Mattackal Alexandros Kathanar three years ago as Manager who looked after the affairs of the Seminary as he ordered and he had not removed him (3) The co-trustees Mathen Malpan and C.J. Kurien had desired him to execute the bond required by the Patriarch which he had not and that (4) that they had no trust in the Manager and, therefore, would remove him.

In the circumstances, Mar Dionysius and his supporters anticipated a move on the part of co-trustees to take possession of Old Seminary from his custody. Both sides moved cautiously gathering strength. Apprehending breach of peace, the District

Magistrate ordered to lock-up all rooms of the Old Seminary seal them and keep them under police supervision, except the rooms of the Patriarch and Mar Dionysius.

The District Magistrate decreed on Chingam 19, 1087 (Sept. 4, 1911) that Malankara Metropolitan was the rightful custodian of the Old Seminary and its properties, although the co-trustees were there. Further, since the Seminary provided theological education to clergy trainees, the custody and overlordship of the Seminary could be with the Metropolitan alone. Consequently the police freed the Old Seminary to the possession of Mar Dionysius.

The co-trustees filed an appeal with the High Court which on Dhanu 4, 1087 (Dec. 19, 1911) repealed the lower court's judgement and allowed co-trustees equal right with the Metropolitan trustee over the property of Old Seminary.

Following the High Court decree three incidents marred the atmosphere of Old Seminary. One was a skirmish involving the Metropolitan and Fr. Alexander on one side and Malpan Kora Mathan, C.J. Kurien and others on the other who tried to pluck coconuts forcibly from the Old Seminary premises. The other was a threat and intimidation to resident theological trainees and others at the Old Seminary. In view of the prevailing explosive situation, Govt. ordered the closure of all churches in Kottayam city. The Old Seminary Chapel was closed on Meenam 8, 1087 (March 20, 1912). There were stray instances of attempts on the person of Mar Dionysius. In such circumstances, to ensure protection to Mar Dionysius, a group of body-guards including Varki Varghese were employed. The third was the tragic incident of the brutal murder of Varki Varghese alias Aana Pappi by a group of people on Meenam 18, 1087 (30 March 1912). All these were with the knowledge and connivance of the co-trustees. With the death of Aana Pappi, ended further attempts for possession of the Old Seminary. By this time other significant developments had overtaken the Church-the Alwaye and Kottayam meetings.

### **Alwaye Meeting and Formation of Patriarchal Party 1911**

On August 30, 1911 (Chingam 14, 1087), the Patriarch held a meeting of the representatives of the parishes supporting him at Alwaye. Mar Osthathios, Mar Kurilos, Mar Athanasius and Mar Severios attended the meeting, who had executed Udampadis with

the Patriarch. The major decisions of the meeting were election of Mar Kurilos as the President of the Malankara Syrian Christian Association, in place of Mar Dionysius and his confirmation as the Metropolitan Trustee. Kora Mathan Malpan and C.J. Kurian, who were elected as the other co-trustees by the Malankara Association in 1895 and 1901 respectively, had left Mar Dionysius and sided with the Patriarch and, therefore, claimed continuity in holding the offices of Clergy Trustee and Lay Trustee respectively.

By resorting to the extreme step of ex-communication of Mar Dionysius and the elevation of Mar Kurilose as the Metropolitan trustee with the active support of the two co-trustees, the Patriarch and his supporters anticipated an eventual deposition of Mar Dionysius from the office of the head of the Church as well as the Malankara Association and also occupation of the official headquarters at Old Seminary. Occupation of the Church properties was a real threat to Mar Dionysius.

The Alwaye meeting was a land-mark in Malankara Church history. Its proceedings contributed to polarisation in the Church. Hereafter, one finds two centres of authority in the Church — one centred round Mar Dionysius and his successors at Kottayam and the other round Mar Kurilose and his successors at Alwaye. In fact, the Alwaye meeting ensured the formation of the splinter group in the Malankara Church called the Patriarchal Party.

Eventually, the Church split into two. This split in the Church was the lasting contribution which Patriarch Moran Mar Abdulla II of the Church of Syria bestowed on Malankara Church.

### **Departure**

With the Church asundered into two, Mar Abdullah left Malankara on October 14, 1911. Mar Osthathios, Mar Athanasius and Malpan Konat Mathan Kathanar accompanied the Patriarch to Bombay, from where the Patriarch sailed on October 21, 1911.<sup>10</sup>

### **Last Days**

When Mar Abdullah reached Jerusalem, Syria was in political turmoil. Kamal Pasha had dislodged Sultan Hamid who had helped the Patriarch. In such circumstances, Mar Abdulla was

10. Chacko P. N. : *Sleebe Mar Osthathios*. P. 52

constrained to remain at Jerusalem, where he passed away on November 25, 1915.<sup>11</sup>

### **Malankara Association Meeting 1911**

The ex-communication and its implications weighed heavily on Mar Dionysius. The Metropolitan bore all humiliations with fortitude. For faithful as he was to the Church, Mar Dionysius never desired a severance of the relation with Church of Syria. The Metropolitan valued immensely a continuous bond of friendship between the Church of Syria and the Church of Malankara as between two independent Churches. Independence of the Church was his main anchor sheet. This faith was irrevocable to him. Therefore, standing firm as a rock, Mar Dionysius parried the unjustified tirade of the Patriarch and others and rallied his faithful flock around him. At the sametime, he was careful that he followed established procedures on whatever steps he took.

Initially Mar Dionysius convened the Managing Committee of the Malankara Association on 13.11.1086 (26.6.1911) to deliberate over the ex-communication order and the consequential actions to be pursued. The committee made certain decisions and recommended them for the consideration of the Malankara Association, which it decided to hold on 22.1.1087 (7.9.1911) at M.D. Seminary, Kottayan.

The Malankara Association met on 7.9.1911 in which representatives of 214 parishes participated. Most of the parishes of Kottayam, Quilon. Thumpamon, Niranam dioceses and nearly 40% from the Ankamali-and Kandanad dioceses, were present. Mar Dionysius made a long and exhaustive introductory speech recapitulating the circumstances leading to the meeting and his personal conduct with the Patriarch. Thereafter, the Association deliberated over the recommendations of the Managing Committee and took relevant decisions. The major decisions are briefly given below :

1. The allegations purported to be responsible for the ex-communication of Mar Dionysius were false and baseless and did not make him unworthy of being Malankara Metropolitan. The main reason for the action was due

1. Paret Z. M. : Vattaseril Mar Geevarghese. (1969) p. 409

- to the refusal of Mar Dionysius to accede to the Patriarch's design to have free access to the wealth of the Church and to execute the Udampadi.
2. The ex-communication order from Patriarch Abdullah removing the Malankara Metropolitan which violated the administrative structure (provisions) of the Association, was not at all acceptable.
  3. Pampakkuda Palappallil Paulose Kathanar and Kottayam Chirakkadavil Korula Abraham were elected as Clergy and Lay Trustees respectively in place of Malpan Konat Mathan Kathanar and C.J. Kurien who were removed from their offices as they were found unworthy to be members of the Managing Committee in view of their deplorable actions in supporting the Patriarch and his demands over the temporalities of the Church contrary to the decisions of the Royal Court (1889)
  4. Mar Dionysius was empowered to meet all expenses required to preserve and maintain the interests of the community.
  5. K.V. Chacko was elected as Secretary and Managing Committee member in place of Edavazhikkal E.M. Philipose whose resignation was accepted.
  6. The meeting at Alwaye and its proceedings were totally rejected, since it was convened by Patriarch Abdullah contravening the constitutional provisions of the Church and denying the opportunity for majority of the parishes of the Church to attend the meeting and other objectionable actions.
  7. A delegation consisting of three Rambans Punnoose of Parumala, Geevarghese of Vakathanam and Kuriakose of Pampadi was constituted to proceed to Syria and enquire into the real situation of Mar Abdullah and Mar Abdul Messiah and report to Malankara Association and till then neither the Association nor the Managing Committee nor the representatives of the parishes nor the Trustees nor any office-bearers of the Trust of the Church should enter into any contact whatsoever with the Patriarch Abdullah. The delegation

may, if found advisable after appropriate investigation, invite Mar Abdul Messiah II to Malankara.

8. The payment of Resisa to the Patriarch should be withheld till the report of the Committee was received.
9. The three Rambans were also elected as Metropolitan designates.

### **Patriarch Abdul Messiah in Malankara 1912-13**

News of the activities of Patriarch Mar Abdullah in Malankara had reached the deposed Patriarch Mar Abdul Messiah in Syria. Fr.P.T. Geevarghese, a close associate of Mar Dionysius, had communicated with the Patriarch in all the developments and also had requested the Patriarch to come to Malankara. The cable mentioned earlier was in response to this communication. The Patriarch had accepted the request and agreed to come. In pursuance, the Patriarch was sent a sum required for the travel expenses to Malankara. It was in these circumstances, that the Patriarch undertook a journey to Malankara.

It may be recalled that Mar Abdul Messiah had succeeded Mar Peter III in 1895 but was deposed in 1906 consequent on the withdrawal of the royal Firman by the ruling Sultan Abdul Hamid of Turkey. Nevertheless, he was recognised by the Church as Patriarch and was never deprived of the spiritual prerogatives.

On Edavom 23, 1087 (June 5, 1912) Patriarch Moran Mar Abdul Messiah II arrived at Bombay, accompanied by three Rambans, Fr. P.T. Geevarghese and N.I. Pothan received them. All of them proceeded to Malankara. The Patriarch halted at Kunnamkulam, Fort Cochin, Manthuruthel, South Paravur, Kanjiramattom and later at Parumala in July where he camped for deliberations.

### **Claim for Catholicate Acceded**

The Patriarch was fully aware of the need and claim of the freedom-loving Malankara Church claim for a Catholicos. It dated back to the time of Pulikottil Joseph Mar Dionysius. The earliest refernce may be found in a letter dated January 2, 1891 (Dhanu 19, 1067) from Patriarch Mar Peter III to Malpan Konat Mathan Kathanar. It says, 'You have required us to send an able Catholicos or Maphrian who is a Malpan also. We shall consider

the request. God willing, we shall send a suitable person.’<sup>12</sup> The request was repeated in 1906. Mar Dionysius, Vattasseril Geevarghese Ramban and Malpan Konat Mathan Kathanar had specifically bid Deacon Sreeba (Mar Osthathios) and Deacon Mathai (late Catholicos Ougen) to raise the issue with Patriarch Mar Abdul Messiah, when they were proceeding to Syria. The Patriarch had heard and assented to their proposal. Later in his detailed and lengthy letter dated Dhanu 30, 1083 (14 January 1908), Konat Mathan Malpan had invited Mar Abdul Messiah to revive and re-establish the Catholicate of Tigris in Malankara and instal “one amongst us” as Catholicos. Relevant excerpts from the letter<sup>13</sup> is reproduced below...” Again I beseech that your Holiness should come down to us and set right all our matters...In case His Holiness is either unwilling or unable due to old age to come to us, one amongst us whom we shall name later, should be raised as Maphrian for us. Without a Maphrian, how shall we consecrate Metropolitans and Episcopa? People of Malayalam are scared to go to distant places. If none is willing to come forward to become Metropolitan, our Church will be widowed. As Your Holiness is aware, the Maphrian of the East at Tigris who was subject to Patriarch of Antioch was ruling Malankara in the East. Although, there is no Maphrian at Tigris now, we commemorate “our father Beselios” in the first Diptychus. If there is no Maphrian, why should we commemorate his name? If we commemorate his name, it is necessary that Maphrian should be there really. How come, the shifting of the Maphrianate from Tigris to India be wrong if the Patriarchate could be shifted from Antioch to Mardin? We, therefore, request that the Maphrianate of Tigris should be shifted to and reestablished in Malankara and one amongst us should be consecrated as Maphrian who should be titled as “Mar Basselios Maphrian of the East.”<sup>14</sup>

Mar Abdul Messiah, however, could not do anything in the matter at that time since he had been de-recognised by the ruling Sultan and was deprived of administrative authority. After having come to know of the tragic predicaments of the Church at the hands of Mar Abdullah, Mar Abdul Messiah was convinced of the appropriateness and inevitability of an independent Catholicate

12. Paulose, Rev. Fr. K.B. : Abdul Messihayum Catholica Sthapanavum. p. 12

13. Paret Z.M. : Vattasseril Mar Dionysius (1969) pp. 109-110

14. Paulose, Fr. K.P. : *ibid* p. 10

and a Catholicos for Malankara Church. So, even before he landed in Malankara, the Patriarch had decided to take steps in that direction.

### **Catholicate Re-established 1912**

Soon after the Patriarch reached Parumala, Mar Dionysius convened the Managing Committee on Chingam 14, 1088 (August 9, 1912). The Committee decided to request formally the Patriarch to raise Murimattathil Paulose Mar Ivanios, Metropolitan of Kandanad diocese, as Catholicos. The Patriarch conceded.

The Patriarch also announced his plan of action in a circular issued on Chingam 17, 1088 (September 1, 1912) which envisaged consecration of a Catholicos (Maphrian) and four or five Metropolitans. Accordingly, the Patriarch, in the first instance, consecrated Kurichi Kallacheril Punnoose Ramban as Metropolitan with the title Mar Gregorios at Parumala on September 10, 1912 with the assistance of Mar Dionysius and Mar Ivanios. Seven days thereafter, on Kanni 2, 1088 (September 17, 1912), Patriarch Mar Abdul Messiah, in all solemnity revived and re-established the centuries old majesty of an autonomous Catholicate of the East, which once adorned the enchanting shores of Tigris of Persia, in Malankara at St. Mary's Church, Niranam, which was made sacred by the foot steps of the Apostle St. Thomas nineteen centuries ago and installed Murimattathil Paulose Mar Ivanios with the title of Moran Mar Geevarghese Baselios, Catholicos of the East, that is of India of the throne of St. Thomas, the Apostle, with the installed and assistance of Malankara Metropolitan Geevarghese Mar Dionysius and Metropolitans Mar Gregorios and Mar Ivanios. The large enthusiastic crowd of devotees greeted their first ever Catholicos with shouts of joy, "Oxios, Oxios, Oxios, Moran Mar Baselios Catholicos is worthy".

The re-establishment of the Catholicate was an epoch-making event in the nineteen centuries old history of Malankara Church. It was the fulfilment of a desire, cherished for long. It meant the realisation of and the end of an unabated struggle for independence and autonomy which the Malankara Church enjoyed in the early centuries. Obviously, the stature of the Catholicate provided a much needed self-assurance and hope for the future.

Immediately after the investiture ceremony on September

17,1912 and prior to his departure, on February 8, 1913 the Patriarch issued two Bulls relating to the status and powers associated with the Catholicate.\* In the second Bull dated 8.2.1913, the Patriarch stated : (to quote) “..... according to your request, by the grace of God we have consecrated the Maphrian, that is Catholicos, in the name of Basselios Paulose and three new prelates, Geevarghese Gregorios, Yoyakim Ivanios and Geevarghese Philoxinos.

Since we understood that if we do not consecrate the Catholicos, our Church of Malabar will not continue in purity and holiness for many reasons. Now then we know that by the power of the Lord, she will be sustained for ever in purity and holiness and that more than before she shall be established in the communion of the bond of love towards the Throne of Antioch and this is the joy of my heart.

I have hope that your shepherds that is the Catholicos and the Metropolitans shall fulfil your every need. The Catholicos along with the Metropolitans shall consecrate for you chief priests and hallow for you the Holy Mooron in accordance with the canons of the Holy Fathers. And when a Catholicos shall die, there is permission and authority to your prelates to consecrate in his place one as Catholicos and there is no power to any body to restrain you from it. Everything shall be done in order according to custom in consultation with the members of the Committee of which the President is the Metropolitan Dionysius of Malabar”.<sup>15</sup>

The establishment of the Catholicate was the beginning of an evolution in the Church's heirarchy and coming to uphold an independent stature under a Catholicos with dignity and honour. The Church is greatly indebted to Patriarch Mar Abdul Messiah for this significant contribution.

With a view to strengthen the Church heirarchy, the Patriarch consecrated two more Metropolitans on February 10, 1913 (Makaram 29, 1088) viz. Kandanad Karot Yoyachim Ramban and Vaakathanam Kaaruchira Geevarghese Ramban with the titles Mar Ivanios and Mar Philoxenos. Mar Dionysius and Mar Gregorios had associated with the Patriarch in this consecration.

15. Appendix VII B.

\* Appendices VII A and VII B.

### Departure 1913

The revered holy father was indeed happy over his flock's happiness and having fulfilled his mission returned on March 3, 1913 to Jerusalem. There, the faithful escorted him to Mardin, the headquarters of Patriarchate, and installed him once again as the rightful Patriarch. Two years later, on August 30, 1915, the Patriarch departed from this world to his heavenly abode.

### The Cnanayites

The Cnanayites in the Malankara Church constitute an ethnic group of people. They trace their origin to Thoma of Cana, the merchant from Syria who landed in the port of Kodungallur in the year 345 A.D. Along with him there were four hundred people consisting of men, women and children and clergy hailing from parts of Persia and Syria. They had left their hearth consequent on the persecution of Christians by King Sapor II of Persia.

These immigrants were allowed by the ruling Cheraman Perumal to settle down in areas south of the local river. Because of the location of their habitation, the Cnanayites came to be called Southists also. This also enabled them to maintain their identity and remain as a closed knit clan. Although in course of time, they spread to other parts of Kerala, this ethnic affinity is preserved. Today, they are found settled in sufficient strength and wealth in places like, Neelamperur, Kottayam, Vakathanam, Chingavanam, Ranni, Kallissery, Tiruvalla, Muthur.

For purpose of spiritual nourishment, the Cnanayites had organised themselves into parishes and constituted 'Cnanayite Committees' for their administration. Nevertheless, they were part of the Malankara Church and under the ecclesiastical obedience of the Archdeacons and later Malankara Metropolitans. They were part of the respective dioceses in which they habited. Mar Gregorios of Niranam diocese, Mar Athanasius of Kottayam diocese and Mar Ivanios of Kandanad diocese were assigned responsibilities to dispense their spiritual needs required from a Metropolitan without interfering in their internal administration. This situation continued till 1910.

Patriarch Mar Abdullah had visited Malankara in 1909-11, and created dissention in the Church. In order to muster support for establishing his hegemony, Mar Abdullah created a new

diocese for the Cnanayites with an independent status within the Malankara hierarchy and consecrated a Cnanayite priest, Edavazhikkal Geevarghese Kathanar, who executed a bond of loyalty to the Patriarch, as Metropolitan Mar Severios on August 31, 1911.

The Cnanayites have their headquarters at Chingavanam, four miles south of Kottayam. The Metropolitan headquarters was the venue of the peace talks held in the auspices of Peace League in 1950 and also the reconciliation talks of the Patriarchal Party on the eve of December 12, 1958.

Two individuals of Cnanayite Community deserve special mention. One is Aanjilimoottil Itty Thomman Kathanar of Kallisery who played a significant role in the Koonen Kurishu Sathyam episode. The second is E.M. Philip Edavazhikkal Vakkathanam who served as Secretary of the Malankara Syrian Christian Association and Malankara Metropolitan Pulikottil Joseph Mar Dionysius II.

The Cnanayites always endeared themselves to the Syrian Patriarchs and were with the Patriarchal Party since its formation in 1911. They remained so till the Reconciliation of 1958.

Mar Severios expired on June 11, 1927. Following him two Metropolitans were raised for the Cnanayites. They were :

	<i>Title :</i>	<i>Consecrated on :</i>
Ottathaykal		
Thoma Kathanar	Mar Dioscoros	October 20, 1926
Fr. V.O. Joseph	Mar Severios	May 5, 1932
Valakuzhiyil		
Mallappally		

Both Metropolitans defected to the Syro-Malankara Church in 1939 and 1937 respectively.

Abraham Mar Climis who was consecrated by the Patriarch Aprem at Homs in Syria on April 15, 1954 succeeded them.

The Patriarchal Malankara Association elected him as the Malankara Metropolitan at its meeting held on June 21, 1957 at Manarcad. Consequent of the Peace Concordat of 1958, the

Cnanayite Diocese was represented in the Malankara Syrian Christian Association meeting held in December 1958 at Puthencav and merged in the unified Malankara Church under the Catholicate. Metropolitan Abraham Mar Climis accepted membership of the Holy Synod with the Catholicos as its head. The Catholicos consequently issued an order on 25.2.1959 appointing Mar Climis in charge of the Cnanayite Diocese.

### **Trust Fund Suit 1913-28**

With the departure of Patriarch Mar Abdullah, in 1911 the Church was the scene of factional feuds between the Patriarchal Party and the Metropolitan Party. In 1913 both parties claimed interest on the Trust Fund deposited with the British Govt. Mr. Graham, British Resident filed a suit against both the claimants in the District Court at Trivandrum in 1088 Karkadakam (1913 August). The main contention was, who was the rightful claimant. The Patriarchal Party contented that Mar Dionysius consequent on his ex-communication by the Patriarch was deposed and hence incompetent to function as Metropolitan trustee and draw the interest on Trust Fund. The Metropolitan Party deposed before the Court that the grounds for ex-communication were false, that it violated the procedures and accepted canons of the Church and the earlier decrees of the Royal Court and that it was issued because Mar Dionysius did not execute an Udampadi (Bond) acceding temporal powers to Patriarch Mar Abdullah over Malankara Church. The District Court Judge decreed on 15.9.1919 that the ex-communication of Mar Dionysius was invalid and that Mar Dionysius and his co-trustees were lawful trustees of the Church properties. In regard to the role of Patriarch of the Church of Syria vis-a-vis Malankara Church the decree was very clear. It said, 'the Patriarch had only a power of general supervision over the spiritual government of the Church but had no right to interfere with the internal administration of the Church in spiritual matters which rested only in the Metropolitan and that the Patriarch has no authority, jurisdiction, control, supervision or concern over or with the temporalities of the Arch-diocese of Malankara'. Further, the Patriarch did make attempts to secure authority over the temporalities of the Church which were illegal and against the interest and well being of the Malankara Church and the Community.

On the above judgement, the Patriarchal Party preferred an appeal to the High Court in 1920. The High Court in its judgement delivered on Meenam 10, 1098, (March 23, 1923) reversed the District Court Judgement and allowed the Patriarchal Party claim to withdraw the Trust Fund interest.

Mar Dionysius applied for a review of the suit in 1926, before the High Court. On July 4, 1928 the High Court gave its judgement upholding the decisions of the District Court and confirming its decree. Thus, after a struggle for fifteen years in the law courts, it was finally decided that the ex-communication of Mar Dionysius had no legal validity and that he was the competent Metropolitan Trustee to draw the interest on Trust Fund.

The proceedings of the Trust Fund Suit are treated in detail in Chapter Twelve.

### **Peace Talks with the Patriarch Mar Elias at Mardin, 1923**

The events of ex-communication of 1911, the demise of the Catholicos in 1913 and the High Court judgement of 1923 setting aside the District Court judgement in favour of the Patriarchal Party had weighed heavily on the mind of Mar Dionysius, although they never unnerved him. Personally, he was prepared to step down if that would ensure peace in the Church. He would, however, accept no compromise on the autonomy of the Church. But, for once he set his self-pride aside and set out to Syria on June 23, 1923 to plead with Patriarch Mar Elias III not to destroy the Church but maintain its autonomy. Mar Elias had succeeded Mar Abdul Messiah on February 2, 1917.

Sixty seven days the Metropolitan stayed with the Patriarch at his headquarters at Mardin and held long discussions. At long last the Patriarch agreed to annule the ex-communication on Mar Dionysius. Accordingly, the Patriarch handed over an order annulling the ex-communication of Mar Dionysius to Mar Julios, Metropolitan of the Church of Syria deputed to Malankara Church with instructions to announce it in Malankara on their return. Mar Dionysius and Mar Julios returned to Malankara in October. Mar Julios, unfortunately, in his wisdom did not formally announce the Patriarch's order of repealing the ex-communication on the advice of his party colleagues. The order was,

however, earlier shown to Mar Dionysius and others at Arconom Railway Station, en route to Malankara and later at the reception at Ernakulam also.

Mar Dionysius was greatly perturbed and disappointed at this treachery. He was ever more convinced that he had reached a stage of no return in his relation with the Church of Syria and that the much desired unity in the Church was a mirage.

### **Second and Third Catholicoses**

Mar Dionysius had with great vision and administrative perspective sense, succeeded in (re)-establishing the Catholicate in Malankara in 1912. By a natural course of events during his life-time, he was also called upon twice to exercise the prerogatives of the Metropolitans of the Catholicate to chose successor Catholicoses from amongst themselves and install one, in 1925 and 1929, and thus establish and confirm a procedure in the Church, and above all, to maintain and preserve the Catholicate.

The first Catholicos, Mar Basselios Paulose, was 84th in the line of succession to the throne of Catholicate of the East, which originated in Persia. Installed on 17.9.1912, Mar Paulose remained in position for one year and seven and a half months only, for on May 2, 1914 he expired. The Catholicate which thus fell vacant, was not filled for the next eleven years till 1925.

The reasons for not raising the second Catholicos may be attributed mainly to the law suits on Trust Fund (1913-28) pending in the Court and a desire to settle the issues with Patriarch which ensued the ex-communication. With the subsequent debacle of his peace journey to Mardin to settle the conflicting issues with him Mar Dionysius realised that he had to follow a course dictated by his own conviction.

### **Malankara Association Meeting at Niranam 1925-Second Catholicos**

In these circumstances, the Church proceeded with the installation of the second Catholicos. Vakathanam Kaaruchira Geevarghese Mar Philoxenos, Metropolitan of Kottayam Diocese, was the choice. It is said that the choice was made by lot. The names of Mar Philoxenos and Kallacheril Mar Gregorios, Metropolitan of Thumpamon Diocese, the other eligible Metropolitan, were put to lot which fell to Mar Philoxenos. The choice

of Mar Philoxenos was confirmed by his election as Catholicos in the Malankara Syrian Christian Association which Mar Dionysius convened on May 1, 1925 at Niranam. On May 2, 1925, Mar Dionysius and Mar Gregorios together raised Mar Philoxenos as Catholicos with the title of Basselius Geevarghese (I) at St. Mary's Church, Niranam. After a short period of three years, the Catholicos passed away on December 17, 1928.

### **Third Catholicos**

The mantle of the Catholicos next fell on Geevarghese Mar Gregorios, Metropolitan of Niranam and Thumpamon. On February 15, 1929, Mar Gregorios was installed by Mar Dionysius assisted by Mar Ivanios of Bethany, as the third Catholicos with the title of Basselios Mar Geevarghese (II) at Mar Elia Chapel, Kottayam.

### **Malankara Association, Old Seminary, 1930**

Two moves loomed large before Mar Dionysius by mid-1930. Both were developing in the background for some time. Sensing the approaching events, Mar Dionysius convened the Malankara Association to pre-empt the forces trying to weaken the Church. Mar Ivanios Metropolitan of Bethany was by that time rumoured to embrace Roman Catholicism. The other was the impending visit of Patriarch Moran Mar Elias III.

In this background, Mar Dionysius held the Malankara Association meeting on Chingam 19, 1106 (September 4, 1930) at Old Seminary; Kottayam. The following were the main decisions of the Association meeting :

1. The strength of the Managing Committee was fixed as 36; and the members were elected.
2. Six persons were elected as Metropolitan designates viz. (i) Ramban K.T. Geevarghese from Puthencav, Chengannur, (ii) Fr. Mathews Paret, Puthupally, (iii) Malpan Cheriamadhathil Scaria, (iv) Fr. Valakkuzhiyil Joseph Kathanar, Mallappally, (v) Fr. Alexios of Bethany and (vi) K.C. Chacko Union Christian College, Alwaye to be consecrated as and when required.
3. Elected some more members to the Constitution Committee.

4. The Constitution Committee was directed to submit a draft Constitution for the Church within a year.

### **Betrayal of Mar Ivanios 1930**

In 1930, a curious situation developed in the Church. It started with the betrayal of the mother-Church by Mar Ivanios of Bethany fame. While ministering as Rev. P.T. Geevarghese, (Panicker Veetil Thomas Geevarghese, Mavelikara) Mar Ivanios had earned the confidence of Mar Dionysius and was appointed as the Principal of the M.D. Seminary High School. In 1919, Mar Ivanios had started a unique religious Order of Imitation of Christ at Bethany, Vadasserikkara. Well educated and competent, Mar Ivanios was a promising Metropolitan of the Church. All the same, he transacted correspondence with the Roman Catholic Church with the idea of uniting with them.

### **Kundara Seminary Synod**

Vattasseril Mar Dionysius discussed Bethany Metropolitan's flirting with the Roman Catholic Church in a meeting of the Episcopal Synod held at the Seminary at Kundara in either late 1929 or early 1930. The invitees were Catholicos Baselius Mar Geevarghese II, Metropolitans Mar Gregorios of Pampady, Mar Ivanios and Mar Theophilos, Fr. Abraham Poothakuzhiyil, E.J. John and E.J. Philipose. Mar Ivanios did not attend the Synod meeting since he had objections to the presence of non-Synod members, although they were special invitees at the instance of Malankara Metropolitan. Mar Theophilos followed his master's voice.

The major decisions of the Synod were :<sup>16</sup>

- i. The permission given to Bethany to start parish Churches<sup>17</sup> under its control was withdrawn.
- ii. Mar Ivanios was forbidden to start new parish churches under the control of Bethany.
- iii. In case Mar Ivanios acted in contravention of these

16. Fr. Jacob Manalil : Sabha Bhasurante Oojjalamaya Vyakthi Prabhavam (The Dynamic Personality of Sabhabhasuran Vattasseril Mar Dionysius) 50th Death Anniversary Souvenir. February 23, 1984—P : 36.

17. The Bethany Church at Puthiacav Mavelikara is one among the Bethany Churches established by Mar Ivanios.

decisions, the assistance being given by individuals and parishes will be ordered to be with held.

Mar Dionysius communicated these decisions to Mar Ivanios.

### Management of M.D. Schools — M.D. Schools Case

Mar Ivanios was earlier entrusted with the management of 60 odd Mar Dionysius schools run under the auspices of the Church, immediately before Mar Dionysius had proceeded to Mardin in 1923. Following the decisions of the Synod afore mentioned, Mar Dionysius asked the Bethany Metropolitan to hand over the management, which he refused. In this situation, Mar Dionysius filed a suit in the Munsiff's court at Tiruvalla against Mar Ivanios for release of the Management of the schools to his care. Mar Ivanios, shrewd as he was, had formed Trusts in the names of his brother and relatives and transferred the Bethany institutions to the charge of these Trusts. The Church had to proceed with the legal suit.

In 1926, Mar Ivanios had sent a Memorandum to Rome which proposed a union of the Malankara Church with the Catholic Church.

1. preserving the ancient rites and rituals
2. retaining for the Holy Synod and for the individual Bishops their jurisdiction over all the Jacobite Syrians that come into reunion and
3. accepting the supremacy of the Holy See, the Pope being the successor of St. Peter, the chief of the Apostles of Our Lord.<sup>18</sup>

The Holy see answered the Memorandum on 5th August 1929 which inter alia clarified :

“(i) As regards rites : In conformity with the declaration already made in January, 1929, the principle on which the Holy See deals with the adherents of a historic rite sanctions the retention of that rite on their return to Catholic unity. This principle will be applied to returning Jacobites in so far, of course, as their rites and ritual books contain nothing that is contrary to Catholic faith

18. Cyril Malancharuvil : Syro-Malankara Church. P : 123.

and morals or inconsonant with ecclesiastical decorum. This principle is naturally subject to exception where particular circumstance of person or place render the retention of a certain rite practically impossible.

- (ii) In reference to the desired assurance that Bishops returning to the unity of the Church together with a notable part of their priests and people shall be confirmed in their government of their flock, this again is the ordinary rule on which the Holy See proceeds, given, of course, the required guarantees regarding orthodoxy of Faith, validity of Orders and personal repute in those concerned, and this is the rule which the Holy See proposes to follow in regard to the reunion of Jacobites in Malabar.
- (iii) On the question of heirarchical organisation, it is to be considered as settled that Jacobites of Malabar returning to the unity of the Church either individually or in groups, are to be in no way dependent on the Syrian Catholic Patriarch of Antioch".<sup>19</sup>

### Final Decision

The Catholic Church took a final decision in the Plenary Session of the Sacred Congregation for the Oriental Churches on 4th July 1930. The proceedings of the Sacred Congregation is reported as under. "In the Plenary session on the 4th July last, Their Eminences the Cardinals of the Congregation for the Oriental Church have duly examined the question of "The Desiderata" exposed by the Jacobite Bishops of Malabar, belonging to the Metran Party, and especially of the Most Rev. Mar Ivanios, Metropolitan of Bethany and Mar Theophilos, his suffragan, about their reunion with the Catholic Church . . . .".

It is, therefore, convenient to meet the desiderata of the aforesaid two Bishops, as it has already been done in greater part.

1. Assuring that the pure Syrian Rite of Antioch will be maintained and that, therefore, they will not be confounded with the Syro-Malabars whose Rite is of Syro-Chaldean origin.

2. Moreover, assuring them that, having verified the validity of the Baptism and of the S. Ordination and consecration of the

19. *ibid.* pp : 124-5.

above said two Bishops, they will be kept in their respective office and jurisdiction i. e. Mar Ivanios will remain Bishop of Bethany with the personal title (ad Personam) of Archbishop Metropolitan and Mar Theophilos Bishop of Thiruvalla.

3. As for the title of the Catholicate or Catholicos it is not advisable to touch this question, in view also that, as the present Catholicos is not going to be converted, it is premature to decide now what should be done in case of his conversion. The Archbishop of Bethany and the Bishop of Thiruvalla (in presentibus rerum adjunctis) will at present depend directly on the Holy See, without any dependence on the Syrian Patriarch of Antioch.

4. Regarding the liturgical books (Missal, Ritual, Pontifical) which are those coming from Propaganda, the same will be kept, correcting, however, the expressions not proper and erroneous, which eventually have been introduced.

5. Regarding the name, these new Catholics may be called "Syro-Malabar Catholics of the Antiochene Rite" or "Malabar Catholics of the Syro Antiochene Rite" or "Malabar Antiochene Church" or "Syro Malabar Church". In this way they will be distinguished from the Malabar Catholics of the Chaldean Rite...."<sup>20</sup>

The above decision was communicated to Mar Ivanios. It was also made clear to him that Mar Ivanios and Mar Theophilos would depend directly on the Pope and that the uniting people will be received into the Catholic Church as a particular Church. In this manner, "Mar Ivanios, Metropolitan of Bethany and his suffragan Mar Theophilos, bishop of Thiruvalla, accepted the decision of the Holy See and thus on 20 Sept. 1930, together with the representatives of their followers, were received into the Catholic Church after having made their profession of Faith before Msgr. Benziger O.C.D., bishop of Quilon."<sup>21</sup>

Mar Ivanios was made the Arch-bishop Metropolitan of the new community with residence at Trivandrum and Mar Theophilus, bishop of Thiruvalla. Later, "Through the Apostolic Constitution" Christo Pastorum Principi" Pope Pius XI constituted a special hierarchy on 11 June 1932, with an ecclesiastical province for the reunited Syro-Malankara group".<sup>22</sup>

20. *ibid* : Pp. 126-7

22. *ibid* : P. 132

21. *ibid* : P. 131

Two more Metropolitans of the Church had defected to the new community, namely Mar Severios and Mar Dioscoros of the Cnanayites in November 1937 and 1939 respectively.

### **Consecration of Metropolitan Mar Philoxenos 1930**

The exit of Mar Ivanios was soon made good when Ramban K.T. Geevarghese, elected by the Malankara Association earlier, was consecrated by the Catholicos on 9.11.1930, with the title of Mar Philoxenos.

### **Visit of Patriarch Elias III 1931**

The Church continued to witness scenes of significant episodes adding to its turmoil in the year 1931 with the arrival of Patriarch Ignatius Elias III. The Patriarch came on a visitation consequent of two contradictory moves which emanated from two different sources. One was the peace move initiated by Lord Irwin, Viceroy of India. The other was an invitation from Mar Julios and his Metropolitan accomplices.

About two years earlier in 1929, Lord Irwin had visited the erstwhile Travancore, Cochin State and held a meeting with the Metropolitans of both the Metropolitan and Patriarchal factions at Kottayam. The Viceroy, coming to know of the dissensions between them desired a peaceful settlement of the issues. Mar Julios intimated him that it depended upon the Patriarch. Subsequently the Viceroy sounded Patriarch Elias through the British Commissioner at Iraq. The Patriarch responded and came down to hold discussions with a view to making a settlement.

### **At New Delhi & Madras**

En route to Malankara, the Patriarch called on Lord Irwin, the Viceroy, at New Delhi on 8.3.1931 and subsequently held talks with Metropolitan Westcott and Bishop Gore at Madras on March 14-19, 1931. The talks failed. The Patriarch left for Malankara with the assurance to them that he will continue his efforts with Mar Dionysius in finding a solution.

### **In Kerala**

On March 20, 1931, Patriarch arrived at Alwaye and stayed in the Seminary at Thrikunnath. Mar Dionysius held discussions with the Patriarch on 23rd March. The talks did not yield any

result since the Patriarch did neither concede a Catholicate for Malankara nor recognise the installation of the Catholicose by the Patriarch Mar Abdul Messiah. Due to this intransigence, peace could not be realised in the Church.

The Patriarch was hosted by Mar Julios and other parishes which supported him. While at Manjinikkara (Mar Stephano's Church), the Patriarch breathed his last due to heart-failure on February 13, 1932 and was buried there. A larger Church dedicated to Mar Ignatius was later built there, which is now a pilgrimage centre.

### **Malankara Association 1931**

Meanwhile, the lay trustee Chirakadavil Kochu Korula, who was elected on September 7, 1911, expired in 1931. It was necessary to appoint the next incumbent in order to carry on the financial transactions of the Church. Hence, Mar Dionysius convened the Malankara Association on Midhunam 26, 1106 (July 10, 1931) which elected Erikat E.J. Joseph from Kottayam as the Lay Trustee. In the meeting, the Association also had decided to establish a Theological College to provide appropriate training and course of study for trainee-priests for which the managing committee was authorised to take necessary action. This was the last Malankara Association convened by Mar Dionysius during his tenure as Malankara Metropolitan.

The Association meetings held during his time were :

<i>S. No.</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Venue</i>	<i>Major decisions</i>
1.	1908 Feb. 27	Old Seminary, Kottayam	Elected Ramban Geevarghese and Ramban Paulose as Metropolitan-designates. Ramban Geevarghese, subsequent to his consecration, shall be Assistant to the Malankara Metropolitan and later-his successor.
2.	1911 Sept. 7	M.D. Seminary Kottayam	i. Rejected the ex-communication order of Patriarch Mar Abdullah on Mar

- |    |              |                            |   |
|----|--------------|----------------------------|---|
|    |              |                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. Dionysius was false, baseless and not acceptable.</li> <li>ii. Elected Palappallil Paulose Kathanar and Kora Kochukorula as Co-trustees in place of Konat Mathen Malpan and C.J. Kurien respectively.</li> <li>iii. Elected K.V. Chacko as Secretary.</li> <li>iv. Mar Abul Messiah may be invited.</li> </ul> |
| 3. | 1925 May 1   | St. Mary's Church, Niranam | Elected Geevarghese Mar Philoxenos as Catholicos designate.   |
| 4. | 1930 Sept. 4 | Old Seminary, Kottayam     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Fixed the strength of Managing Committee at 36 and elected the members.</li> <li>ii. Elected six Metropolitan designates.</li> <li>iii. Elected more members to the Church constitution Committee which was directed to submit its draft Constitution within a year.</li> </ul>                               |
| 5. | 1931 July 10 | M.D. Seminary, Kottayam    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Elected Erikat E.J. Joseph as Lay Trustee in place of Kora Kochu Korula who expired.</li> <li>ii. A Theological College may be established.</li> </ul>  |

### Interest on Trust Fund

Following the election of E.J. Joseph as Lay Trustee and the final judgement of the High Court (1928), Mar Dionysius drew the interest on Trust Fund for the last 19 years from 1912 to 1931 from the Imperial Bank, Trivandrum. The amount was Rs. 16000/- approximately.<sup>23</sup>

23. Paret Z.M. : Vattasseril Mar Dionysius (1969) P. 761.

This was objected to by Patriarch Mar Elias to the British political agent who, however, overruled it in the light of Court decisions.

### **Constitution for the Church**

Autonomy of the Malankara Church being his anchor-sheet, Mar Dionysius had effectively instituted the Catholicate in Malankara. But he was not satisfied. His vision of the Church went beyond the horizon of the Catholicate. In his perspective view, the Church needed a basically strong administrative structure, a regulatory system inter-linking the roles of Malankara Metropolitan, Catholicos, Synod, the Malankara Syrian Christian Association, the Managing Committee, the Diocesan Councils, the primary Parish General body and its Managing Committee and above all, a statute to uphold the historical stature of the Church and its Orthodox faith. In short, Mar Dionysius called for the framing of a Constitution for the Church ensuring its purity, holiness autonomy and autocephaly.

The Metropolitan put the project before the Managing Committee which was convened on Karkadakom 31, 1103 (15.8.1928). The Committee authorised a sub-committee with O.M. Cherian as Convener to draft a Constitution for the Church. The Committee took up the task in right earnest. This move was ratified by the Malankara Association at its meeting in 1930. The Metropolitan on Midhunam 9, 1107 (June 22, 1932) published his own draft under the title 'Views on Constitution of Malankara Church' in Kerala Kesari, a daily published from Kottayam. The Committee members had discussed the fundamental issues with him in several rounds. The Constitution could not, however, be finalised during his life time.

### **Metropolitans consecrated during 1908-34**

During the period of Mar Dionysius's stewardship of the Malankra Church, 13 Metropolitans were raised, including those of the Patriarchal faction. They were:

<i>Sl. No.</i>	<i>Candidate</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Metropolitan Title</i>	<i>Consecrated by</i>
1.	Ramban Pinadeth Paulose (Ankamali)	27.5.1910	Athanasius	Patriarch Mar Abdullah II <i>Note: Crossed</i>

			over to Patriar- chal Party
2. Ramban Kallacheril Punnoose (Kurichi)	10.9.1912	Gregorios	Patriarch Mar Abdul Messiah, Mar Dionysius, Mar Ivanios.
3. Ramban Karuchira Geevarghese (Vaka- thanam)	7.2.1913	Philoxenos	Patriarch Mar Abdul Messiah.
4. Ramban Karot Veettil Yuachim (Kandanad)	7.2.1913	Ivanios	-do-
5. Rev. Fr. P.T. Geevar- ghese, Panicker- veettil, Mavelikara.	3.5.1925	Ivanios	Catholicos Geevarghese I <i>Note: Deserted the Church in 1930 to form the Syro-Malankara Church.</i>
6. Rev. Fr. Pezhamattom Kuriakose (Pampadi)	16.2.1929.	Gregorios	Catholicos Geevarghese II
7. Ramban Jacob Bethany. (Jacob Abraham Kalap- purakkal)	16.2.1929	Theophilos	Catholicos Gee- varghese II. <i>Note: Deserted the Church in 1930 along with Mar Ivanios.</i>
8. Rev. Fr. K.T. Geevar- ghese, Puthencav	9.11.1930	Philoxenos	Catholicos Gee- varghese II.
9. Rev. Fr. N.G. Joseph Valakuzhyil, Mallappally	5.5.1932	Severios	Metropolitan of Cnanaya Diocese <i>Note: Crossed over to Syro- Malankara Church.</i>

#### **Patriarchal Party Metropolitans**

10. Edavazhikkal Geevar- ghese Kathanar	31.8,1911	Severios	Patriarch Mar Abdullah
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11. Michael Kathanar Kayamkulam	20.10.1926	Dionysius	Patriarch Mar Elias III
12. Thoma Kathanar	20.10.1926	Dioscoros	Metropolitan of Cnanaya Dio- cese. Note : Crossed over to Syro- Malankara Church in 1939.
13. Ramban Oagen (Perumbavur)	15.5.1927	Thimotheos	Patriarch Mar Elias at St. Markos Dayara Jerusalem

A list of the Malankara Metropolitans from Mar Thoma I to Geevarghese Mar Dionysius VI is given in Appendix V.

### Obituaries

A few prelates belonging to both factions of the Church demised during the time of Mar Dionysius.

#### To mention:

<i>Metropolitan</i>	<i>Expired on</i>
Catholicos Mar Paulose	2.5.1914
Metropolitan Alwares Mar Julios	23.9.1923
Metropolitan Karot Yuachim Mar Ivanios	6.6.1925
Catholicos Mar Geevarghese I	17.12.1928

### Patriarchal Party

<i>Metropolitan</i>	
Kochuparampil Paulos Mar Kuriakose	1917
Edavazhikkal Mar Severios	11.6.1927

### Trustees

Clergy Trustee	
Fr. Konat Kora Mathan Malpan	1927
Lay Trustee	
Chirakkadavil Kora Kochu Korula	1931

### Will

The Metropolitan was aware that his health was failing him. Before it reached a critical stage, he, as Malankara Metropolitan

and Trustee of the Church properties, prepared a comprehensive Will in 1933 entrusting the properties of the Church to the care of the Synod of the Church.

### Last Days

A year later on February 23, 1934, after an eventful 76 years, the life of the dynamic personality ebbed out. The venerable Metropolitan was suffering from Blood Pressure for some time. As reported by Rev. Fr. Jacob Manalil, his personal secretary, "On Friday, the 16th February, at 9.30 A.M. Mar Dionysius had a stroke and was laid up. Power of speech was lost but not the faculty of memory. After being in this condition for a week, Mar Dionysius expired on Friday the 23rd February at 12.30 p.m."<sup>24</sup> With all honour, the Metropolitan was buried beside the Old Seminary Chapel at Kottayam.

### Appreciation

For 25 long years (1908-34) Vattasseril Geevarghese Mar Dionysius VI guided the Church most honourably. On looking back we find that he lived at a time when the Church was passing through a most turbulent period, the like of which none had passed through neither before nor since. Here was a man, *vairagi* (zealot) and a freedom-fighter who fought his way to the last ebb of his life to preserve the faith freedom and autonomy of the Church. In the course of his innings of twenty five years, Mar Dionysius had to incessantly fight on several fronts, at the very same time — the deliberate continued attempts of the Antiochene Patriarchs (Mar Abdullah, Mar Elias, Mar Ephraim) to wrest temporal powers over Malankara Church, the intransigence of the Patriarchs to recognise a Catholicate for Malankara, the unjustified and demoralising wand of ex-communication wielded by Mar Abdullah (1911), the humiliating treachery of Mar Julios at the end of the painstaking journey he undertook to Syria (Mardin) to make peace with the Patriarch, (1923), the personal animosity of Patriarchal Party members especially Konat Mathan Malpan and C.J. Kurien who were Co-trustees with him and who delighted in mortifying him, the frustrating and protracted Trust Fund Suits (1913-28), the threat of eviction from Old Seminary, the danger to his person, the betrayal of trusted Mar Ivanios (1930) — all these and more taxed his

24. Fr. Jacob Manalil. Vattasseril Mar Dionysius 50th Death Anniversary Souvenir February 23, 1984 — P : 38

mental and physical energy. Standing as a giant, he parried all the overtures, foul and fair, in a most distinct and honourable manner with remarkable courage and fortitude despite his agony and grief. He bore the cross with patience, fortitude and above all with infinite faith in divine justice. In juxtaposition, one is struck with the spectacular array of positive achievements in the path of progress made by Mar Dionysius in more than one field, against heavy odds. To wit, the re-establishment of the Catholicate at the hands of Patriarch Mar Abdul Messiah in 1912, the installation of two successive Catholicoses by the Malankara Church Synod in 1925 and 1929 consecration of a number of Metropolitans by the Catholicoses, holding of Malankara Syrian Christian Associations, the successful conclusion of the Trust Fund Suit (1928), the establishment of M.D. Seminary High School at Kottayam, The Balika Madhom Girls High School at Thirumulapuram, Thiruvalla, formation of the Student's Conference, the publication of a book on the faith of the Church, the composition of the liturgy of Holy Qurbana in Malayalam and especially the drafting of a Constitution for the Church. Thus did Mar Dionysius superbly steer the Church with boldness, heroism and intellectual astuteness through turbulent and rough seas to a safe harbour with honour and dignity. He showed the Church the green pasture beyond the horizon, the path and the life too.

In guiding the Church Mar Dionysius evinced a rare and high order of vision, courage and foresight. His ardour and devotion to the Church and the courage he had, were unequalled. He had also upheld democratic processes. In all the measures he took, whether ecclesiastical or administrative, Mar Dionysius was particular to ensure that they had the formal approval of either the Synod or Managing Committee or Malankara Association. His administrative capabilities and foresight proved valuable in the course of law suits and in setting precedents for posterity.

The Church had unequivocally supported and lined up behind the Metropolitan. Among the laity stand in forefront, stalwarts of moral courage and dignity like E.J. John, (Elanjikkal, Niranam) O.M. Cherian (Ottaplackal, Puthuppally) M.A. Chacko (Superintendent of Police, Cochin) K.C. Mamman Mappilla, (Malayala Manorama) M.P. Varkey and others. In honour of the unique and distinguished leadership, the departed Vattasseril Geevarghese Mar

Dionysius was conferred the title of Malankara Sabha 'Bhasuran' meaning the SUN OF THE MALANKARA CHURCH.

To conclude, Mar Dionysius was the architect of the modern Malankara Orthodox Church. Mar Dionysius fortified the edifice of the autocephalous Malankara Church the foundation of which was laid by St. Thomas, with the re-establishment of the Catholicate; and with the Constitution on the threshold the Metropolitan visualised the Malankara Church rising from its hoary past with a new vigour and glory, ushering in an era of stability and progress.

### **Lay leaders<sup>25</sup>**

The Church had produced illustrious lay leaders of eminence devotion and absolute integrity who gave unstinted support to Vattasseril Mar Dionysius and Catholicos Geevarghese Mar Basselius in the battle royal with the Patriarchal forces at the popular and legal fronts in maintaining the autonomy of the Church during the turbulent periods of history right from 1908 to 1958. Lest posterity be oblivious of the importance of laity and the distinct contributions the lay leaders made in the process of development of the Church, a brief mention is made about the prominent lay personalities who played distinct roles and rendered signal services to the Church during this period. They wielded considerable influence in the society, enjoyed unimpeachable integrity and manifested moral courage of a high order.

### **K.C. Mammen Mappilla**

Chief Editor of the Malayalam daily newspaper Malayala Manorama published from Kottayam, K.C. Mammen Mappilla was a staunch nationalist and a great freedom-fighter for the country as well as for the Church. Before entering the field of journalism Mammen Mappilla was the head master of M.D. Seminary School, Kottayam. The Kandathil family to which he belonged traces its origin to Thayyil family at Niranam which was one of the four Namboodiri families converted by St. Thomas. Endowed with vision and extra-ordinary courage, he stood with Vattasseril Geevarghese Mar Dionysius and Catholicos Mar Geevarghese II, in the cold war with Patriarch Mar Abdullah and the long years of litigation with the Patriarchal party like a rock of

25. References— Paret Z.M. : Vattasseril Mar Geevarghese; Catholicate Saphathi Souvenir 1982.

unflinchable faith in the just and reasonable fight for the Catholicate and autonomy of the Church.

The editorials in Manorama following the adverse judgement in 1923 and 1951 deserve special mention. In the editorials of March 1923, Mammen Mappilla openly criticised Chief Justice R. Veera Raghava Iyyengar for his explicit partiality shown in the judgement in favour of the Patriarchal Party, his justification of the ex-communication of Mar Dionysius and challenged any vindictive action. When the Travancore High Court decree of 1951 ditched the Catholicos, he declared "with the decree of the High Court we have got all the possibilities (opportunities) to elevate our Catholicos as the Patriarch of the Orthodox Church of the East". (Ref: December 22 and 25, 1951 and January 1, 1952).

Mammen Mappilla was in the fore-front of loyalists who spear headed the move to purchase a new residence-cum-head-quarters for the Catholicos on his return from the all-India tour following the adverse judgement of 1951, collected Rs. 1.50 lakhs overnight along with Maliakel M.C. Mathew and bought the present site at Devalokam.

The Church lost a giant among the laity when he passed away on January 1, 1954.

### **E.J. John**

Hailing from Elanjikkal family of Niranam, E.J. John was an advocate by profession and a distinguished member of the Bar Association of Trivandrum. His devotion to the Church and Vattasseril Mar Dionysius was second to none. Two specific instances bear out the convictions of John.

At the time when it was generally known that Patriarch Mar Abdullah would soon ex-communicate Mar Dionysius, E.J. John pleaded with the Patriarch not to resort to the extreme step and also explained the incompetence and invalidity of such a step. Ultimately he also challenged the Patriarch saying, "the excommunication is neither spiritual nor secular but satanic, If need be, excommunicate me, I will see it quashed".

The Patriarch went ahead and issued the ex-communication order. Following the excommunication, the Malankara Association held a public meeting presided over by Mar Dionysius on

Thursday, September 7, 1911 at M.D. Seminary to consider the situation arising from the unjust act of the Patriarch. In the meeting, John said, "Your Lordship is with us, and we are with you. The ex-communication will not work. There should be reasonable obedience. We should fight for our freedom. That is our responsibility. If we do not, the next generation will blame us".

Earlier, on November 28, 1909, when the Malankara Association meeting was being held at the instance of Patriarch Mar Abdullah, the Patriarch had expressed to John, M.A. Chacko and C.J. Kurien his personal desire for powers over the Church properties and demanded Udampadi (Bond) to that effect; John did not personally agree and replied that he would consult the assembly of representatives of the Church. All these show the vision he held for the Church, how much he valued the sentiments and participation of the people in the decision making process.

#### **Rao Sahib O.M. Cherian**

Rao Sahib O.M. Cherian of Ottaplackal Puthuppally, on retirement from a distinguished Government service, spent the rest of his life in safeguarding the interests of the Church. He stood firm against the unjust demands of Patriarch Mar Abdullah. He is known for two remarkable services for the Church, as convener of the committee to draft the Constitution of the Church and as the creator of the Catholicate Fund for raising funds for the development programmes of the Church.

#### **M.A. Chacko**

Police Commissioner M.A. Chacko of the State of Cochin was a fortress of defence of Malankara Metropolitan against Patriarch Mar Abdullah. He was a popular figure and carried considerable influence in the society. Chacko was able to build up formidable support for Mar Dionysius in the parishes in the northern part of Malankara. He was one among those who was a witness in the Trust Fund suits. He passed away on August 25, 1941.

#### **E.J. Philipose**

E.J. Philipose appeared on the scene of Church affairs as a young lawyer of great confidence in defence of the Malankara Metropolitan in the Trust Fund Suit before the special Judge Malankara Pilla at District Court, Trivandrum in 1913. He stoutly

kept up the tradition of Advocate E.J. John of Niranam who was the right hand of Vattasseril Mar Dionysius. Since then he was legal adviser to the Church and was deeply involved in all the legal suits that the Church faced till the last in the Supreme Court. He fought with great conviction for and upheld the freedom of the Church and the validity of the establishment of the Catholicate. The Catholicos had reposed great trust in the devotion and loyalty of Philipose. He expired on May 5, 1961.

### **M.P. Varkey**

Mookencheril Patros Varkey was another stalwart among the laity who stoutly stood for the autonomy of the Church, fought against the claims of supremacy of the Church of Syria over Malankara Church and gave valiant support to Malankara Metropolitan Geevarghese Mar Dionysius. His speech in the meeting convened by the Patriarch Mar Abdulla on Vrischikam 18, 1085 was a remarkable one for it blantly repudiated any claim for temporal powers for Patriarchs of the Church of Syria.

M.P. Varkey retired as Superintendent of the Anchal (Postal) Department.

### **Jacob Kurien**

Jacob Kurien (Pandinjarethalakkal, Mavelikara) was editor of newspaper Keralabhimani and member of Praja Sabha (Assembly of Travancore State) and a good orator. Through his newspaper and speeches he rendered valuable services and rallied support for the Church and Vattasseril Mar Dionysius.

Among others who rendered significant services for preserving the autonomy of the Church stand out K.C. Chacko, A.M. Varkey, Kannukuzhiyil Kuruvila Engineer, Judge Maret A. Philipose, K.M. Mamman Mappilla.

## CHAPTER TWELVE

### TRUST FUND SUITS 1913-58

#### Rival Claimants to Trust Fund

Patriarch Mar Abdullah II left Malankara for Syria on 14th October 1911. By then the Church witnessed the coming into being of two strong rival groups—the Metropolitan Party (Metran Kakshi) headed by Malankara Metropolitan Mar Geevarghese Dionysius VI and his co-trustees Mani Poulouse Kathanar and Kora Kochu Korula and the Patriarchal Party (Bawa Kakshi) headed by rival Malankara Metropolitan Mar Kurilose and his co-trustees Kora Mathan Malpan and C.J. Kurien.

Soon both the parties staked their claim for the interest on Trust Fund with the British Resident. In response, the Secretary of State impleaded both the claimants in the District Court at Trivandrum in an inter-pleader suit in 1913 with the prayer for determination of the question as to who was entitled to draw the interest on the Trust Fund.

Here started the long protracted civil suits over the valid claimant to Trust Fund and hence it came to be called Trust Fund Suit (Vattippana Case). The Trust Fund Suits plagued the Church for forty-five years from 1913 to 1958, in two phases, the first phase during the period 1913-1928 and the second phase from 1938 to 1958.

In the inter-pleader suit filed by the Secretary of State in the District Court at Trivandrum in 1913, the Metropolitan Party pleaded that the ex-communication order of the Patriarch Mar Abdulla on Malankara Metropolitan Vattasseril Mar Geevarghese Dionysius was invalid because :

- i. it violated the accepted canons and Constitution of the Church.

- ii. it violated the decrees of the Royal Court of Final Appeal (1889) and the Cochin Award of 1840 in earlier suits; and
- iii. it was issued because Mar Dionysius did not concede temporal powers to the Patriarch over Malankara Church.
- iv. the basic grounds of excommunication were false and vague.

TABLE 1  
FIRST PHASE 1913-28  
LEGEND

Date of filing suit		Filed by	Court	Date of Judgment and delivered by	In favour of
Initial Suit	Appeal Review				
1913 Inter-Pleader Suit (94/1088)	—	Secretary of State	Dist. Court Trivandrum	15.9.1919 Dist. Judge G. Sankara Pilla	Metropolitan Party
—	1920 Appeal	Patriarchal Party Kora Mathan Malpan Paulos Mar Athanasius C.J. Kurien	Full bench of High Court Trivandrum	23.3.1923 Chief Justice R. Veer- raghava Iyengar	Patriarchal Party
—	16.3.1926 Review 45/TLR 116	Metropolitan Party	-do-	4.7.1928 Chief Justice Chatfield	Metropolitan Party

The Patriarchal Party defended the ex-communication and contended that :

- i. The Patriarch who was the spiritual head of the Church excommunicated Mar Dionysius for valid reasons.
- ii. Mar Dionysius ceased to be Malankara Metropolitan following the ex-communication.
- iii. The removal of the co-trustees Kora Mathan Malpan and C.J.Kurien was illegal.

- iv. The Plaintiffs had in view of their actions become heretics and aliens to the Church and hence were incompetent to be the trustees of the Church.

The District Judge, G. Sankara Pilla on completion of hearings pronounced his judgement on 15.9.1919 that the excommunication of Mar Dionysius was invalid and that Mar Dionysius and other co-trustees were lawful trustees of the Church properties and the rightful claimants for the interest on Trust Fund. The findings of the Judge may be thus summarised<sup>1</sup>

- i. that Mar Geevarghese Dionysius was the lawful Malankara Metropolitan and was recognised and accepted as such by the Malankara Syrian Church and as such became a trustee of the Church properties.
- ii. that the Patriarch had only a power of general supervision over the spiritual government of the Church but had no right to interfere with the internal administration of the Church in spiritual matters which rested only in the Metropolitan and that the Patriarch has no authority; jurisdiction, control, supervision or concern over or with the temporalities of the Arch-diocese of Malankara.
- iii. that Patriarch Abdulla II did make an attempt to secure authority over the temporalities of the Syrian Church when he visited Travancore in 1085 but that his attempts and pretensions in regard to the government of the temporalities of the Church were illegal and against the interest and well-being of the Malankara Church and the community.
- iv. that Mar Geevarghese Dionysius was excommunicated by Patriarch Abdulla II but such excommunication was opposed to the constitution of the Malankara Church as laid down by the Synod of the Mulunthuruthy and was canonically invalid and he was still recognised and accepted as the Malankara Metropolitan by a large majority of Malankara christian community.
- v. that defendants 2 and 3 Mani Paulose Kathanar and Kora Kochu Korula had been elected by the community

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1. Supreme Court Judgement 1958-Para.29

as trustees to cooperate with Mar Geevarghese Dionysius.

- vi. that 4th defendant Mar Kurilose had not been elected and was not accepted and recognised as the Malankara Metropolitan by the community and was not competent to be a trustee.
- vii. that defendants 5&6 (Kora Mathan Malpan and C.J. Kurien) had been validly removed from the office of trustees and defendants 2 and 3 (Mani Paulose Kathanar and Kora Kochu Korula) had been validly appointed in their places.
- viii. that defendants 1, 2 and 3 (Mar Geevarghese Dionysius, Mani Paulose Kathanar and Kora Kochu Korula) did not accept Abdul Messia or deny the authority of Abdulla II over the spiritual supervision of the Church and they had not by such act become aliens to the faith or incompetent to be trustees.
- ix. that the 42nd defendant Mar Athanasius, the original first Plaintiff had not been canonically ordained or validly appointed as Malankara Metropolitan or as President of the Malankara Association.
- x. that defendants 1, 2 and 3 were entitled to receive payment of the interest on deposit.

It was on the above findings that the learned District Judge passed a decree declaring the defendants as the lawful trustees of the Church properties.

### **Appeal and Review in the High Court 1920-28**

#### **Appeal by Patriarchal Party 1920-23<sup>2</sup>**

The defendatns Kora Mathan, Malpan C.J. Kurien and Mar Paulose Athanasius (defendants 5, 6 and 42) appealed to the Travancore High Court, on the judgement of the District Court, in 1920. The appeal was admitted and the Full Bench of the High Court consisting of Chief Justice R. Veeraraghava Iyengar, Justice Chatfield and Justice Pappu Pillai heard the appeal. It pronounced its judgement on Meenam 10, 1098 (March 23, 1923) reversing the judgement and decree of the District Court and directed that the

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2. *ibid* Para 11

money lying deposited in the Court be withdrawn by the defendants and by the persons to be thereafter duly elected appointed and consecrated as the Malankara Metropolitan.

### **Review application by Metropolitan Party 1926-28<sup>3</sup>**

Mar Gevarghese Dionysius and his two co-trustees applied for the review of the judgement of the Full Bench of the High Court in 1101 Meenam 3 (March 16, 1926). That application was admitted subject to the condition that on the re-hearing, the findings recorded:

- (i) as to the authenticity of Ex.18, the version of the Canon Law produced by the defendants.
- (ii) as to the power of Patriarch to ex-communicate without the intervention of the Synod and
- (iii) as to the absence of an indirect motive on the part of the Patriarch which induced him to exercise his powers of excommunication, must be taken as binding.

The appeal was then re-heard by the Full Bench consisting of Chief Justice Chatfield, Justice J. Taliath and Justice Changanacherry Parameswaran Pillai which by its judgement pronounced on 4 July, 1928 (Midhunam 21, 1103) upheld the decisions of the learned District Judge and confirmed his decree.

The net result of that litigation, therefore, was that Mar Geevarghese Dionysius and his two co-trustees were entitled to withdraw the money deposited in the Court as the lawful trustees of the Church properties.

### **Mar Julios Suspends Mar Dionysius 1928**

In between the two phases of Trust Fund Suit, Mar Julios, Patriarchal delegate took disciplinary action on Mar Dionysius. A brief report as given in Supreme Court Judgement is reproduced below.

On August 16, 1928 the Managing Committee of the Malankara Association was authorised to draw up a constitution for the Church and the Association. On the very next day, Mar Julios Elias, the Patriarch's delegate, issued an order on Mar Geevarghese Dionysius calling upon him to execute an Udampadi within two days and at the same time removing (suspending) him from the

3. *ibid* Para 12

office of Metropolitan under powers vested in him by the Patriarch for having "Committed several grave offences against the Holy Throne of Antioch and the Faith and practices of the Holy Church and repudiated the authority of the ruling Patriarch. Further, he was, by the same order, forbidden to transact any action under his authority and rights as Metropolitan till a decision is taken on his actions or he offers an Udampadi as desired from him. He also sent letters to the Government of Travancore and Madras to withhold the payment of interest to defendant, Mar Geevarghese Dionysius on the grounds of his suspension.

### **Suspension Suit 1928-31**

On August 21, 1928 the Patriarchal Party (Thiruvhaarppu Cherikkal Manappurath Chummaru Varky and others) filed a suit in the District Court of Kottayam against Mar Dionysius and his co-trustees and others including the Catholicos and the Secretary of State for India. They alleged that : Mar Dionysius who was excommunicated and divested of all spiritual prerogatives, introduced thereby a schism in the Church and hence the defendants also became schismatics and aliens to the Church. Further, the Patriarchal delegate had suspended Mar Dionysius and the clergy trustees. In the circumstances, they submitted that the Court may decree that:

- (1) The defendants were not members of the Malankara Church
- (2) they were incompetent and had no rights to manage Church properties and receive the interest on Trust Fund.

The Court, however, dismissed the case on January 23, 1931 for non-compliance by the plaintiffs with the Court's order for payment of the dues to the Commissioner appointed by the Court in that suit.

### **Trust Fund Suit 1938-58**

Both the Metropolitan and the Patriarchal parties continued their efforts to establish and strengthen their rights they deemed proper for enforcing the decisions of the High Court Judgement of 1928. Within a period less than an year, that is from December 1934 to August 1935, they held two very significant meetings which vitally affected the future course of history of both the parties. One was the Malankara Syrian Christian Association meeting held by the Metropolitan Party at M.D. Seminary, Kottayam on

December 26, 1934 and the other, the Assembly at Karingachira St. Mary's Church on August 22, 1935 gathered by the Patriarchal Party. The proceedings of these two meetings served to concretise the basic positions on which both the parties relied during the next phase of Trust Fund Suit which took twenty years from 1938 to 1958 to settle. The suit was fought in three Courts namely, initially in the District Court (the trial Court) at Kottayam (1938-43), then subsequently in the High Court (1943-56) and finally in the Supreme Court (1958). The major points of judgements delivered are given briefly in the succeeding pages.

### **The Malankara Association Meeting at M.D. Seminary, 1934**

Vattasseril Geevarghese Mar Dionysius VI the Malankara Metropolitan, had expired on February 23, 1934. The offices of ex-officio President of the Malankara Association and the Metropolitan Trustee of the Church, thus fell vacant. It was, therefore, necessary to elect a successor Malankara Metropolitan immediately. A meeting of the Association was accordingly planned.

At this time, talks were being held among lay leaders of both the factions to bring about a rapprochement between the Patriarch and the Catholicos. Peace proposals were formulated and the Catholicos along with Mar Julios, the Patriarchal delegate went and met Patriarch at Homs in Syria on June 21, 1934. They failed to reach an agreement and the Catholicos returned on September 20, 1934. (The details of the visit to Homs are given in chapter thirteen).

In the circumstances, the Managing Committee of the Malankara Association met on November 12-13, 1934 (27-28 Thulam 1180) and decided to hold a meeting of the Malankara Association on December 26, 1934. The major steps taken in the meeting were:

- i. The Catholicos, Mar Geevarghese Baselios, was elected as the Malankara Metropolitan (By virtue of this decision, the offices of Malankara Metropolitan and Catholicos came to be vested in one and the same person)
- ii. The Constitution of the Church was adopted.
- iii. Fr. Alexios was elected as Metropolitan-designate.
- iv. K. M. Mathan Mappilla was elected as the Secretary of the Association.

### Karingachira Assembly 1935

The Patriarchal Party did not keep silent for long. On July 5, 1935, a circular was issued by four Metropolitans Mar Athanasius, Mar Michael, Mar Dioscoros and Mar Thimotheos from the Seminary at Alwaye calling for a meeting of the elected representatives of each parish at St. Mary's Church at Karingachira on August 22, 1935. One peculiar feature of the notice of invitation was that it exhorted the recipients to earnestly observe the guidelines contained in the Bull No. 790 of October 13, 1934 from the Patriarch.

The Patriarch, in the aforesaid Bull, had stated that the responsibility for failure of the peace talks rested with Mar Dionysius and Mar Geevarghese and that the earnest efforts made by the Patriarch for peace were thwarted by them and they and their followers, therefore, were heretics and aliens. And finally it exhorted; "They have cut off themselves from the Holy Church of Antioch. They are, therefore, aliens to us. They shall, in future also remain outside the fold of the Holy Church. None of you has the permission from God or us to participate in any of the services connected with the church or cooperate with them.....We trust that you will follow accordingly."<sup>4</sup>

In view of the above directions, the attendance of the meeting was restricted to those parishes which followed Patriarchal persuasion. The important decisions<sup>5</sup> taken by the representatives in the meeting held on August 22, were :

1. Mar Athanasius was elected as the President of the Malankara Syrian Christian Association and the Metropolitan Trustee.
2. Pookunnel Avira Joseph Kathanaar and Thukalan Paulo Avira were elected as Clergy Trustee and Laity Trustee, respectively.
3. The trustees shall manage the law suits for securing the interests of the Church as before. (The trustees were thus authorised to continue or file suits for the "recovery" of Trust properties).

4. Paret: Mar Geevarghese Baselius: pp:90-91

5. ibid : Mar Geevarghese Baselius: Page 89.

4. The President of the meeting was authorised to send the decisions of the meeting to the Patriarch.

The stage was now set for the second phase of Trust Fund Suit.

TABLE 2  
SECOND PHASE 1938-58  
LEGEND

Initial Suit Appeal Review	Filed by	Court	Date of Judgment and delivered by	In favour of
10.3.1938 (O.S. No. of 1113)	Patriarchal Party	Dist. Court Kottayam (1938-43)	18.1.1943 by Judge B. Krishna Iyer	Metropolitan Party
18.8.1943 Appeal A.S.I.	-do-	High Court Trivandrum (1943-46)	8.8.1946 by Justice Nokes	Patriarchal Party
Review	Metropolitan Party	-do-	21.12.1951 by Chief Justice Kunjuraman	-do-
1952 Appeal for leave to re-hear the Suit (CA 193)	-do-	Supreme Court (1952-54)	21.5.1954	Metropolitan Party
15.9.1956 Re-hearing	-do-	Full Bench of the High Court 1956	31.12.1956 by Chief Justice K. Sankaran	Patriarchal Party
1958 Appeal	-do-	Supreme Court 1958	12.9.1958 by Chief Justice S.R. Das	Metropolitan Party

### Patriarchal Party Files Suit

District Court, Kottayam — Proceedings 1938-43

The Patriarchal Party in pursuance of the Karingachira Assembly decisions filed a suit in the District Court at Kottayam on March 10, 1938 with Mar Athanasius and Co-trustees as Plaintiffs against Basselius Mar Geevarghese alias Oldster Punnoose and Co-trustees (Defendants).

The statement of the plaintiffs had 36 points while the counter-statement by the defendants carried 59 points. A special judge,

B. Krishna Iyer, was appointed to hear the suit. After considering both the statements, the judge entertained a 37 points-pleading for consideration. The court proceedings took five years whereafter, it delivered the judgement on January 18, 1943. The main points of the judgement are given below.<sup>6</sup>

**Point 1.** The 1st Plaintiff, Mar Athanasius, was neither lawful nor valid Malankara Metropolitan. The Karingachira Assembly was neither lawfully or validly convened nor was it a representative meeting of the Malankara Church. Of the parish churches eligible to be invited, only less than 30% were invited. The Assembly or the decisions of that meeting cannot be considered as representing the Malankara Church or binding it.

**Point 2.** The removal of defendants 2 and 3 Mani Poulouse Kathanar and Kora Kochu Korula and the election of plaintiffs 2 and 3, Pookunnel Avira Joseph Kathanar and Thukalan Paulo Avira, as co-trustees in their places were invalid.

**Point 5.** Geevarghese Mar Baselius was lawfully elected in 1087 (1912) and he received valid consecration in 1088 from the Canonical Patriarch (High Court Review Judgement)

**Point 6.** The Malankara Association meeting held on 26.12.1934 at M.D. Seminary at Kottayam elected Geevarghese Mar Baselius as the Malankara Metropolitan.

The Catholicos did not require a staticon once the Catholicate was established.

**Point 7.** That the Synod met in 1903 and deposed Mar Abdul Messiah was false and baseless. At the instigation of certain Metropolitans, the Turkey Sultan had withdrawn the Firman accorded to Abdul Messiah. Since the Firman was withdrawn and Abdullah had come to the position (of Patriarch), he could not function in the country under the Sultan. However, when the restric-

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6. The details are based on :

i. Judgement of the Supreme Court 1958.  
ii. Paret : Mar Geevarghese Baselius (1972) Pp. 145-204.

tions were lifted, Abdul Messiah regained his position and reigned. So, although restricted for some time, he ruled over Malankara also from his installation till his death.

**Point 9.** The second and third defendants had been validly elected and were validly functioning co-trustees. Since their election, they had been discharging their responsibilities lawfully and properly according to their position and they had their right to continue doing so.

**Point 10.** The Catholicate was established to maintain the independence and freedom of the Church confirmed by the Royal Court Judgement which was traditionally enjoyed, to continue the friendly relationship with Antioch, to prevent the interference from Patriarchs in future and also to heal the dissention in the Church caused by Abdullah.

Mar Abdul Messiah consecrated three Metropolitans, installed Mar Ivanios as Catholicos, confirmed the establishment of the Catholicate in Malankara, issued the order of authorisation (Exhibit 80) which empowered the Metropolitans to raise a successor Catholicos when the office falls vacant. The Catholicos of the East, who is the successor to the Great Metropolitan of the East had the authority to consecrate Metropolitans within his jurisdiction and to consecrate Mooron (Holy Chrism) according to Huddaye Canon. These were the powers given to the Catholicos vide Exhibit 80.

The consecration of the three Metropolitans who were elected by the Malankara Association or accepted by it, by Abdul Messiah with the cooperation and consent of the Malankara Metropolitan Mar Dionysius was essentially valid.

The authority of Patriarch, the head of Jacobite, Church is absolute. As such, Abdul Messiah had all the competence to establish the Catholicate, let alone the re-establishment thereof.

The Church canons empowers the Catholicos to consecrate Metropolitans without seeking the permission of Patriarch. It is the Great Metropolitans of the East whom the Church canons have accepted as Catholicos. As such, the offices of Catholicos and Malankara Metropolitan being combined in one and the same person does not prejudice the canons.

**Point 11.** The Patriarch had only a power of general supervision over the spiritual government of the Church but had no right to interfere with the internal administration of the Church in spiritual matters which rested only in the Metropolitan and that the Patriarch, has no authority, jurisdiction, control, supervision or concern over or with the temporalities of the Arch-Diocese of Malankara.

The Patriarch or the person directed by him has the authority to consecrate the Malankara Metropolitan and Metropolitans for Malankara.

If the Catholicate is lawfully validly established, the Catholicos will have the right to consecrate Metropolitans.

Patriarch was the sole authority to consecrate Metropolitans for Edavagas (Dioceses). However, there is no alternative to the provision that the Metropolitan-designate shall either be selected or accepted by the Malankara Syrian Christian Association which represent the Church. The right for final decision in the matter rests with the Malankara Church.

**Ponits 11 & 12.** The Patriarch had no temporal authority or jurisdiction over the temporalities of the Malankara Church or parish churches. Although the Royal Court Judgement acceded to the Patriarch, authority for supervision of spiritual administration, it did not provide powers to interfere in the general administration or over the temporalities of either the Malankara Church or the parish churches. He has also no right to punish the Malankara Metropolitan or any one else on the grounds of administrative lapses. But this does not prevent him from exercising any spiritual authority in imposing punishment on any one for spiritual offences according to the procedures laid down in canons and followed by custom.

**Point 13.** It was decided in the Trust Fund Suit that Huddaye Canon presented as Exhibit A was the true canon and that presented as Exhibit 18 was false.

**Point 14.** None of the claims of the defendants that (i) the 1st defendant is a Catholicos, (ii) he is the Malankara Metropolitan, (iii) he has authority to consecrate Mooron and the

fact that he is so consecrating and (iv) that he collects Ressissa, make them schismatics or aliens to the Church.

- Point 15.** The name 'Orthodox Church Syrian Church' was in force from earlier times. The reasons for its usage have been made explicit in the Constitution. This also did not make the defendants aliens to the Church.
- Point 16.** The defendants and their followers did not cease to be members of the ancient Jacobite Syrian Church. They neither became unworthy or ineligible to hold the post of trustee or any other post in the church nor forfeit their rights to be beneficiaries of the trust properties.
- Point 23.** Abdullah who was not a canonically valid Patriarch, exerted to secure temporal authority over Malankara Church, interfered in its internal administration and consecrated Malankara Metropolitan and other diocesan Metropolitans also. By these actions Abdullah created schism in the Church. He did not recognise the canonical Patriarch and his lawful acts and instigated his followers not to recognise them.
- Point 25.** The successor Patriarchs—Elias and Ephraim only supported Abdullah's actions. From 1086 onwards these three Patriarchs and their successors not only non-cooperated with Malankara Church but tried to reject the cooperation of Malankara Church and Malankara Metropolitan. As such, they have no right to claim that the Malankara Church should accept them or cooperate with them. Alternately, they should recognise the consecration made by Abdul Messiah, the Catholicate and the defendants and also cooperate with them.
- Points 26, 28,33&37.** The defendants are not obliged to render any account of the properties or finance to the plaintiffs.
- Point 27.** The Will (of Geevarghese Mar Dionysius) was not forged, but true and valid. Mar Geevarghese was competent to write the Will. There was no reason to invalidate it. The first defendant had the legal right to claim possession of properties and assets included in the Will.
- Point 34.** The suit was filed to secure the Church properties for the Malankara Metropolitan and the co-trustees. The

plaintiffs cannot, therefore, contend in their individual capacity.

**Point 35** The plaintiffs shall bear their own expenditure and pay the defendants their Court expenditure.

### **Period of Appeals and Reviews in High Court 1943-56**

The judgement of the District Court although it comprehensively evaluated all issues, was not the end of dispute of claims of the Patriarchal and Catholicos Parties in the Church. It could not neither satisfy nor prevail on them to settle their claims and bring rapprochement. Instead of ushering an understanding a situation of escalating emotions and tensions developed in the Church. In the circumstances, a series of appeals and counter reviews on judgements followed in the High Court for the next 13 years from 1943 to 1956. Inter-spersed were, however, several peace-talks initiated by well wishers within and without the Church, to work out a mutually acceptable agreement between the two, which was, unfortunately, not to be. Nevertheless, a settlement was struck. It came at the instance of the judgement of the Supreme Court in 1958 and subject to it.

The Suits in the intervening period 1943 to 1956 were;

- i. Appeal to the High Court, 1943-46
- ii. Review of Appeal Judgement, 1951
- iii. Rehearing of the suit, 1956

A brief record of these suits is given below:

#### *i. Appeal to the High Court, 1943-46*

The plaintiffs (Patriarchal Party) preferred an appeal on the District Court Judgement to the Travancore High Court on 2.1.1119 (August 18, 1943). On 8.8.1946, that appeal was allowed and the Suit was decreed by a majority of two judges-Justice Nokes and Satyanesan-against the minority judgement of Chief Justice T. M. Krishnaswamy.

#### *ii. Appeal for Review of Judgement, 1951*

The defendants (Catholicos Party) applied to the High Court for review of the above judgement. That review application was dismissed on December 21, 1951 by the full bench of the High Court consisting of Chief Justice Kunjiraman and Justices Joseph Vithayathil and P. K. Subramanya Iyer.

iii. *Rehearing of the Suit, 1952-56*

Failing in the High Court, the Catholicos Party moved the Supreme Court for special leave to appeal for re-hearing of the suit under Article 136 of the Constitution. It was admitted in 1952. By its judgement delivered on May 21, 1954, the Supreme Court allowed the appeal, set aside the judgement of the High Court, admitted the review application and directed the High Court to re-hear the entire appeal on all points.

The proceedings of re-hearing the suit commenced in the High Court on September 15, 1956. The full bench of the High Court consisting of Justices K. Sankaran, G. Kumara Pillai and M. S. Menon which re-heard the suit, delivered a unanimous judgement in favour of the Patriarchal Party and decreeing the suit on December 31, 1956.

The important decisions in the judgement allowing the appeal of the plaintiffs were:<sup>7</sup>

1. The Trust Fund under dispute was set up for the Malankara Church subject to the Patriarch of Antioch.
2. The Malankara Metropolitan shall be consecrated by the Patriarch.
3. The Patriarch shall be paid Ressisa.
4. The Mooron (Holy Chrism) provided by the Patriarch alone shall be used.
5. The Patriarch Abdul Messiah was deposed.
6. The Catholicate established by Abdul Messiah and his other acts following his deposition were invalid.
7. The Canon Exhibit B.P. (as presented by Patriarchal Party) was the correct or true canon.
8. The Malankara Association meeting held at M. D. Seminary was of the Catholicos partisans.
9. The plaintiffs were validly elected trustees.
10. By adopting the Constitution, the defendants have gone out of the mother church.
11. The 1st and 2nd plaintiffs being validly elected trustees, they were allowed to take possession of the trust proper-

7. Paret: Mar Geevarghese Basselius (1972) pp: 416-7

ties from the defendants and others. The income collected by 'Receivers' shall be paid to plaintiffs.

12. The 1st Defendant was restricted from performing and functioning in the capacity of Malankara Metropolitan and taking any action concerning the properties coming under the decree.

### **Final Appeal to and Judgement of Supreme Court 1958**

Immediately following the judgement of the High Court on 31.12.1956, the Catholicos Party applied to the Court for grant of Certificate for appeal to the Supreme Court. The High Court on March 21, 1957 granted the Certificate under Article 133 of the Constitution.

Accordingly, Moran Mar Basselios Catholicos (the original first defendant) preferred an appeal to Supreme Court impleading Thukalan Pauls Avira, (the original third plaintiff) and Kurien George Semmassen (the original seventh defendant) as respondents. The appeal was admitted as No.267 of 1958 in the Court consisting of Chief Justice S.R.Das, Justice Bhagavathi, Justice Sinha, Justice Subha Rao and Justice Wanchoo. The hearing began on 20.8.1958, and concluded on 2.9.1958. The Court delivered its judgement on September 12, 1958.

The chief advocate who appeared in the Court on behalf of the Catholicos was Barrister M.K.Nambiar. Sh.M.Abraham, a member of the Church, was the other advocate who had represented the Church in all the suits in different lower courts. Other advocates who were equally partisan in preparing the briefs were advocates Elanjikkal E.Philipose and K. Cherian.

The plaintiffs pleaded :

- (i) In the meeting of the Malankara Association held in Karingachira in August 1935, the first plaintiff was elected as the Malankara Metropolitan, the second and third plaintiffs were elected and the second and third defendants were removed from trusteeship (paras 13 & 14). The plaintiffs laid the claim for possession of the Church properties (Para 15).
- (iii) The claims of the first defendant allegedly founded on his election as the Malankara Metropolitan and trustee at a meeting of the Malankara Association said to have

been held in December 1934, which was not convened by any competent person nor was due notice of it given to all the churches, (paras 16 and 21) should be repudiated. (Paras 16 and 21).

- (iv) For the above reasons, the first defendant was disqualified and declared unfit to be Malankara Metropolitan (Para 22).
- (v) The second and third defendants who were supporting and cooperating with the first defendant had become *ipso facto* heretics and aliens to the Malankara Jacobite Syrian Church.
- (vi) The defendants had become heretics or aliens to the Church or had voluntarily gone out of the Church by reason of certain conduct, namely:
  - (i) The acceptance of Abdul Messiah as a validly continuing Patriarch.
  - (ii) the acceptance of the establishment of the Catholicate with the power to the Catholicos for the time being
    - (a) to ordain Metropolitans, (b) to consecrate Mooron, (c) to issue staticon, (d) to allot Edavagas and (e) to receive Ressissa (Paras 19 to 26).
- (vii) The defendants and their partisans have voluntarily separated themselves from the ancient Jacobite Syrian Church and have constituted for themselves a new Church called "Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church". (Para 26).
- (viii) According to the beliefs and doctrines of that Church such functions as, consecration of Mooron, ordination of Metropolitans, granting of staticons and allotting Edavagas to Metropolitans-privileges which are exclusively within the powers of His Holiness, the Patriarch could be done by the first defendant and others without any recourse to His Holiness, the Patriarch (Para 26).
- (ix) Further, it is provided that Ressissa which is due to His Holiness, the Patriarch, may be paid to the person holding the dignity of Catholicos. (Para 26).
- (x) This act (point. viii above) which provides for the permanent constitution of the said Church without any con-

nection with His Holiness the Patriarch and in repudiation and negation of him as well, constitutes heresy. The defendants have no right to claim membership of the ancient Jacobite Syrian Church. (Para 26).

- (xi) For these reasons also, the defendants have become disqualified and unfit to be the trustees of, or, to hold any other position in, or enjoy and benefit from the Jacobite Syrian Church. (Para 26).
- (xii) The plaintiffs were entitled to maintain the suit not only as trustees but also in their individual capacity as members of the community.
- (xiii) The plaintiffs be declared as lawful trustees (Para 35).
- (xiv) The defendants be declared to have no right to retain the possession of Church Properties.
- (xv) The defendants be compelled to surrender the suit properties and the plaintiffs be put in possession.
- (xvi) The defendants be directed to pay mean profits and render accounts of their administration and of the rents etc, realised by them.
- (xvii) The defendants be restrained from functioning as trustees.

#### **Issues barred by Res Judicata**

The Patriarchal Party (Plaintiffs), apart from their grounds set up in their inter pleader suit of 1088 (1913), framed new charges which were aimed to disqualify the defendants from acting as trustees of the Church properties. The new charges were<sup>8</sup> :-

- (i) By adopting the new Constitution (Ex. A.M.) which takes away the supremacy of the Patriarch, the defendants have set up a new Church;
- (ii) By inserting Cl. (5) in the constitution (Ex. A.M.) the defendants have repudiated the canons which have been found to be the true canons binding on the Church (Ex. BP=Ex. 18 in O.S. No. 94 of 1088) and have, thereby, gone out of the Church;
- (ii-a) The privilege of the Patriarch alone to ordain Metropolitans and to consecrate Mooron has been taken away

8. Supreme Court Judgement 1958—Para 33

as a consequence of the adoption of a wrong canon (Ex. 26=Ex. A in O.S. 94 of 1088) indicating that the dependants have set up a new Church;

- (ii-b) The privilege of the perquisites of the Ressissa has been denied to the Patriarch by the new Constitution in the breach of the true canons;
- (iii) That there has been a complete transfer of the trust properties from the beneficiaries, namely Malankara Jacobite Syrian Church to an entirely different institution, the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church;
- (iv) The re-establishment of the institution of Catholicate of the East in Malabar, having jurisdiction over India, Burma, Ceylon and other countries in the East, is different from the institution of Catholicate that was the subject matter of their interpleader suit (O.S. No. 94 of 1088). It is necessary now to discuss these contentions separately.

The above four issues were ruled *res judicate* by the Supreme Court as under:

“We are definitely of the opinion that the charges now sought to be relied upon as a fresh cause of action are not covered by the pleadings or the issues on which the parties went to trial, that some of them are pure afterthoughts and should not now be permitted to be raised and that at any rate most of them could and should have been put forward in the earlier suit (O.S. No. 94 of 1088) and that not having been done, the same are barred by *res judicata* or principles analogous thereto. We accordingly hold, in agreement with the trial court, that it is no longer open to the plaintiff-respondent to re-agitate the question that the defendant appellant had *ipso facto* become heretic or alien or had gone out of the Church and has in consequence lost his status as a member of the Church or his office as a trustee.”<sup>9</sup>

Finally, concluding the judgement, the learned judges decreed;

“44. The result, therefore, is that this appeal must be accepted, the judgement of the Kerala High Court set aside, the decree

9. *ibid* Para 39

of the trial court dismissing the suit may be restored and we order accordingly”

The decree of the trial court may be thus summarised.<sup>10</sup>

- (i) That Mar Geevarghese Dionysius was the lawful Malankara Metropolitan and was recognised and accepted as such by the Malankara Syrian Church and as such had become a trustee of the Church properties (issue I);
- (ii) that the Patriarch had only a power of general supervision over the spritual government of the Church but had no right to interfere with the internal administration of the Church in spiritual matters which rested only in the Metropolitan and that the Patriarch had no authority, jurisdiction, control, supervision or concern over or with the temporalities of the Arch Diocese of Malankara (Issue III);
- (iii) that Patriarch Abdulla II did make an attempt to secure authority over the temporalities of the Syrian Church when he visited Travancore in 1085 but that his attempts and pretensions in regard to the government of the temporalities of the Church were illegal and against the interest and well being of the Malankara Church and the community (Issues V & VI):
- (iv) that Mar Geevarghese Dinoysius was ex-communicated by Patriarch Abdulla II but such ex-communication was opposed to the Constitution of the Malankara Church as laid down by the Synod of Mulanthuruthi was canonically invalid and he was still recognised and accepted as the Malankara Metropolitan by a large majority of Malankara Christian community (Issues VII to XVII);
- (v) that defendants 2 and 3 Mani Paulose Kathanar and Kora Kochu Korula had been elected by the community as trustees to cooperate with Mar Geevarghese Dionysius (Issue XVIII);
- (vi) that 4th defendant (Mar Kurilos) had not been elected and was not accepted and recognised as the Malankara

10. *ibid* Para 29

Metropolitan by the community and was not competent to be a trustee (Issues XIX & XX);

- (vii) that defendants 5 & 6 (Kora Mathen Malpan and (C.J. Kurian) had been validly removed from the office of trustees and defendants 2 and 3 (Mani Poulouse Kathanar and Kora Kochu Korula) had been validly appointed in their places (Issues XXI & XXII);
- (viii) that defendants 1, 2 and 3 (Mar Geevarghese Dionysius, Mani Poulouse Kathanar and Kora Kochu Korula) did not accepted Abdul Messiah or deny the authority of Abdulla II over the spiritual supervision of the Church and they had not by such act become aliens to the faith or incompetent to be trustees (Issue XXVII);
- (ix) that the 42nd defendant (Mar Athanasius, the original first plaintiff) had not been canonically ordained or validly appointed as Malankara Metropolitan or as President of the Malankara Association (Issues XXX to XXXIII);
- (x) that defendants 1, 2 and 3 were entitled to receive payments of the interest in deposit.

It was on the above findings that the learned District Judge passed a decree in favour of defendants 1, 2 and 3 in that interpleader suit declaring them as the lawful trustees of the Church properties”.

It was also decreed that “the plaintiff-respondent (Patriarchal party) must pay to the defendant appellant the cost of this appeal, ..... the cost of all proceedings in all Courts including the costs of the proceedings already awarded to him by this court which will stand. The suit will, therefore, stand dismissed with costs throughout and all interim orders as to security for mesne (means) profits etc will be vacated.”<sup>11</sup>

### Review application

The Patriarchal Party submitted an application to review the suit. Mr. Daftari, the Solicitor General of India was engaged to represent them. After hearing Mr. Daftari’s pleadings, the Chief

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11. *ibid* Para 44

Justice remarked, "Mr. Solicitor General, I am sorry to say that there is no point to review the case."

The review application was thus dismissed.

### **An appraisal of law suits**

The law suits which plagued the Church for a period of 45 years from 1913 to 1958 had brought into focus different conflicting dimensions of thought pursued in the Church in Malankara as well as in Syria, with emphasis either on the historical context or on the national urge or ecclesiastical overlordship or opportunistic adventurism. These ideas came to the fore when persons clashed and lined on opposing points. The strife which ensued had thwarted the progress and development of the Church. Not only did the suits sap its strength and vigour but tragically undermined its cohesion and unity for all times.

When Mar Abdullah ex-communicated Mar Dionysius and his successor Patriarchs continued to maintain their claim of temporal powers over the Malankara Church, they were trying to exert the ecclesiastical overlordship of the Church of Syria over Malankara. Their partisans were aiding and abetting this fissiparous tendency and surrendering the integrity and independence of the Church which action exhibited lack of historical perspective and vision whereas, the re-establishment of the Catholicate in Malankara was motivated by the urge to be independent and free which the Malankara Church was and enjoyed before the arrival of the Church of Syria on the scene, nay, even before the Church of Rome before them set its foot on the Malankara shore. The re-establishment of the Catholicate by Mar Abdul Messiah may be seen in its historical context and ecclesiastical tradition and the Catholicos as the symbol of an independent, national and free Church truly consonant with the independent India and its ethos. Vattasseril Mar Dionysius VI was the shrewd architect of this free and independent Church. He and his partisans took extreme pains to preserve this character of the Church.

On review, the law suits and the courts of justice of this country vindicated Mar Dionysius and his views and categorically confirmed the legal validity of

- (i) the re-establishment of the Catholicate,

- (ii) the prerogatives of the Catholicos,
- (iii) the canonical law of the Church and
- (iv) the Constitution of the Church.

Here, the Malankara Orthodox Church successfully established itself as an independent, free and national Church of India.

## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

### **PRE-RECONCILIATION PEACE PARLEYS 1923-50**

Ignominious was the Trust Fund Suit. It was a question mark on the Christian character of the Church. It was a bane, source of depletion of strength and detrimental to the very existence of the Church. But it had a purpose and an object-The object of autonomy for the Church. The Church at the same time had an unblemished faith, a hoary historic past and men of courage, vision and great devotion whose aspiration was nothing but a strong autonomous and progressive Church. Although the judgements at various stages served to create emotional upheavels and caused hostile interactions between the two groups time and again, there arose powerful impulses of peace and harmony within the Church.

Efforts were consistently being made to settle the differences between the two parties amicably through conciliatory means in Christian spirit and tradition outside the pale of civil courts. On glancing through the period of 35 years from 1923 to 1958 one finds that a good number of leaders among the laity as well as the clergy on both sides were deeply desirous of a mutually agreeable negotiated settlement of the issues without recourse to legal proceedings and had in fact mooted mutually agreed terms for final acceptance by the Patriarch. Mar Dionysius, the Malankara Metropolitan in 1923 and the Catholicos Mar Geevarghese II in 1934 had, risking their status and life, gone to Syria and met the Patriarchs in pursuit of a rapprochement. Besides, there have been a series of earnest and sincere efforts initiated by a number of well-wishers of the Church including Lord Irwin (Viceroy of India) Bishops of the Church of England, Prince Peter of Greece to contract a settlement. Unfortunately, all the moves wrecked on the rock of intransigence of the Patriarch or his delegate which itself quiet surprisingly, like a pack of cards

collapsed in the face of the reality of the Supreme Court Judgement of 1958. An attempt is made here to focus attention on a few important peacemoves which took place during the period 1923-50 and analyse how they failed in their mission.

They are :

1. Vattaseril Mar Dionysius—Patriarch Elias III consultations at Mardin, June 1923.
2. Mediation efforts by Konat Mathan Malpan, 1927.
3. Mediation efforts by Lord Irwin, Viceroy of India, 1930-31.
4. Patriarch Elias III's parleys in Malankara, 1931-32.
5. Catholicos—Patriarch consultations at Homs, 1934.
6. Mediation efforts by Bishop Pakenhalm Walsh.
7. Round Table Conference at Alwaye, 1941.
8. Peace League moves, 1949-50.

A note on each is given below.

#### 1. **Vattasseril Mar Dionysius — Patriarch Elias III Consultations at Mardin 1923**

Patriarch Mar Abdullah had excommunicated Malankara Metropolitan Mar Dionysius VI on June 8, 1911. His claim as Malankara Metropolitan was decreed as valid by the District Court in 1919 but was denied on appeal by the High Court Judgement in 1923. This adverse judgement distressed Mar Dionysius. Soon after the judgement, he retired to Parumala, the sanctorum of St. Gregorios. After about a month's stay there, he announced his decision to proceed to Mardin in Syria and meet the Patriarch Mar Elias (III). His purpose of the proposed journey was to request him to take measures to ensure peace and unity in the Church, without surrendering the integrity and dignity of the Church.

Accordingly, Mar Dionysius started on June 23, 1923 and reached Mardin, the headquarters of Patriarch Mar Elias on August 1, 1923. On conclusion of the detailed intimation of developments in the Church since the arrival of Mar Abdulla to the latest court judgements and his own request for acceptance of the Metropolitans consecrated by Mar Abdul Messiah for peaceful settlement of the problems, the Patriarch finally informed Mar

Dionysius that there was nothing wrong in Mar Abdulla demanding Udampadi (Agreement) which ensured Patriarchs of Antioch power over the temporalities of the Malankara Church and that if such an Udampadi was registered by Mar Dionysius there would not be any difficulty in arriving at a peaceful settlement. In response, Mar Dionysius apprised the Patriarch of the court decisions denying the temporal powers to the Patriarch over Malankara and his own objection to such an Udampadi which would amount to his betrayal of the Church.

However, the Patriarch had relented and agreed to revoke and withdraw the excommunication order served by Mar Abdullah. An order to this effect was handed over to Metropolitan Julios, the delegate of Patriarch with instructions to show it to Mar Dionysius on his asking and to announce it in Malankara on return.

Mar Dionysius accompanied by Mar Julios, and Cheria Madhathil Scaria Malpan returned to India. From Bombay to Kerala they travelled by train. While at Arconam (Madras), Mar Dionysius desired Mar Julios to show him the order of Patriarch. The Malpan took it from Mar Julios and read it out. At Ernakulam Mar Julios announced that the order will be made Public within ten days. But it was never announced or exhibited, thereafter. Here ended the story of the order of the Patriarch Mar Elias revoking the excommunication of Mar Dionysius.

## 2. **Mediation efforts by Konat Mathan Malpan, 1927**

Fr. Konat Kora Mathan Malpan (d.1927) who was the Clergy Trustee of the Church elected in 1892, was a stalwart of the Patriarchal party and deeply involved in the intricate legal proceedings against Mar Dionysius. However, in the last years of his life, the Malpan, conferred with K.C. Chacko, a prominent leader of the Catholicate party at the Union Christian College at Alwaye to find ways of reconciliation between the two parties. Further, along with other aides, they decided to convene a meeting of the representatives of all the parishes with the aim of drawing an unanimous appeal to the Patriarch for establishing peace in the Church. The Metropolitans of both the sides were excluded from the purview of the meeting. In the meeting held in February 1927 which was presided over by the Malpan, a number of resolu-

tions were adopted which *inter alia* included the following :

- (i) Recognition of the Patriarch.
- (ii) An appeal to the Patriarch for accepting the Catholicate established by the Patriarch Abdul Messiah and the Metropolitans consecrated by him.
- (iii) Confirmation that the ex-communication was revoked.

A Committee was also formed to intimate the Patriarch of the resolutions passed. Fr. Konat Malpan, E.J. John, O.M. Cherian were the members of the Committee. The move aborted because of the unfortunate death of the Malpan in November that year.

### 3. Mediation Efforts by Lord Irwin, Viceroy of India, 1931

The unique character of the ancient Malankara Church had attracted the attention of Lord Irwin, the Viceroy of India also. Coming to know of the dissensions in the Church, he wished to exert his influence in effecting a reconciliation. With this intention he corresponded with the Patriarch Elias III. Consequently, the Patriarch arrived in India in March 1931. En route to Kerala, the Patriarch met the Viceroy in New Delhi and held talks. The Viceroy proposed that a Committee may be constituted which would formulate terms for reconciliation and which should be accepted by both the parties. The Viceroy also suggested to the Patriarch to confer with Arch-Bishop Gore of the Church of England who was in India at that time and bishop Westcott, the Metropolitan of Calcutta and prepare the necessary plan for reconciliation. Accordingly they met at Madras on 18th and 19th March 1931. The talks, however, failed and the Patriarch proceeded to Malankara to pursue consultations there.

#### In Malankara

The Patriarch arrived at Alwaye on 20.3.1931. About 11 months later, the prelate expired on 13.2.1932.

#### Ex-communication revoked

The Patriarch issued an Order No. 161 dated 26, 1931 in which he specifically mentioned that Mar Dionysius had called on him on Meenam 10 (March 22) and following discussion, he had revoked the ex-communication.<sup>1</sup>

1. Mathew O. M., Oruvattithra. Milestones on Peace Parleys (6) Church Weekly July 17, 1977 p : 3. (Malayalam)

### **Patriarch's Peace Formula**

During this short period, several rounds of discussion were held between Mar Dionysius and the Patriarch, especially at Alwaye, Kuruppumpady and Panampady (Kottayam) for formulating an acceptable agreement. The conditions proposed by the Patriarch were :

- (i) Installation of a Maphrian with authority and power less than those vested in Catholicos conceived in the Church Canons;
- (ii) The powers to consecrate bishops etc. shall be with the Patriarch;
- (iii) It shall be the privilege and prerogative of the Patriarch to consecrate Holy Mooron (Chrism).

Mar Dionysius, to whom the integrity and independent autonomous stature of the Malankara Church were the corner stones of any rapprochement, considered the proposals as suicidal and, therefore, further negotiations failed. Once again, peace in the Church remained a mirage.

### **4. Catholicos-Patriarch Consultations at Homs 1934**

Mar Dionysius who expired on February 23, 1934 was holding two concurrent offices of Malankara Metropolitan and President of the Malankara Syrian Christian Association. It was, therefore, decided to hold the meeting of the Association to elect a successor. However, before holding the meeting, certain prominent lay leaders of both the factions in the Church initiated talks towards bringing an understanding between the Patriarch Ephraim and Catholicos Geevarghese II.

### **Paalampadom Terms<sup>2</sup>**

Initially, the Patriarchal Party members met at Thrikkunnath Seminary, Alwaye on Kumbhom 22, 1109 (March 5, 1934) and decided to pursue peace talks with the Catholicos Party. A Committee was also formed for the purpose which included Advocate Paalampadam P.T. Thomas. Metropolitan Ougen Mar Timotheos was a leading figure in these consultations and had presided over the meetings held in March - April 1934. The terms of this committee came to be called Paalampadam Terms.

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2. Mathew O.M. Oruvattithra : Article Paalampadam Peace Terms Church Weekly. August 18, 1977 p : 3.

The terms were :

1. *Synod*

1.1 Malankara Church shall have a Synod of Metropolitans which will have authority to consecrate and ex-communicate Metropolitans.

The President of the Synod shall be one subject to the conditions of these terms.

1.2 *Catholicos*

The Catholicos will not have the status and authority of the Catholicos of Seleucia and as envisaged in Canons; but he will have the following powers :

(a) to administer the Church according to the provisions of the existing regulations and Church Canons and future enactments.

(b) to consecrate a candidate elected to the office of Metropolitan as episcopa with the cooperation of the Synod.

(c) to Judge on allegations against an episcopa according to the majority view of the Synod.

(d) to manage parishes and to appoint authorities for their administration subject to provisions under (a) above.

2. The office of Malankara Metropolitan shall be vested in the Catholicos. The candidate shall be one who has been elected by the Malankara Association, accepted by the Synod and the Patriarch and one who has been consecrated by the Patriarch.

3. In case of allegations against the Catholicos the Patriarch or his representative shall preside over the Synod which will consider the allegations.

4. All matters concerning Holy Mooron will be settled between the Patriarch and the Catholicos.

5. Resisa to the Patriarch shall be collected and sent to him by the Metropolitans.

6. In the Synod which elects a Patriarch, the Catholicos or his representative only will have the right to vote.

7. The Patriarchal churches at Kunnamkulam, Malekurish, Mulanthuruthy and the complex at Manjanikkara will be under the control of the Patriarch or his delegate.  
The Catholicos will have full control over the parishes in India, Burma and Ceylon.
8. A Metropolitan who is ex-communicated by the Synod can appeal to the Patriarch.
9. The mutual acceptance shall be decided by the Patriarch and the Catholicos when they meet.  
The Catholicos may go to the Patriarch soon for the purpose. The acceptance of other Metropolitans also shall be according to their decision.
10. The Catholicos will also give the Bond provided in the petition for acceptance.
11. The Malankara Church shall bear the expenses required by the Patriarch for the enthronement of the Catholicos.

These terms were finalised by Fr. P.T. Abraham Poothakuzhiyil, Fr. C.M. Thomas, Fr. C.J. Scaria, Fr. Mathews Paret, Dr. T.I. Joseph, M/s. E.J. Philipos, K.C. Mammen Mappillai, K.T. Cherian, O.M. Cherian, P.T. Thomas. In short, both the parties had agreed that : (i) it shall be the privilege of the Patriarch to install future Catholicos and also to consecrate Holy Mooron. (ii) but the Malankara Church will have the Catholicos and shall remain as a independent and autonomous Church and (iii) the twain shall meet to accept these conditions.

Accordingly, the Catholicos and Mar Julios accompanied by Cheria Madhathil C.J. Skaria Malpan, Fr. C.M. Thoma proceeded to Syria on 4.6.1934 and reached Homs the headquarters of the Patriarch on 21.6.1934. In the subsequent meeting with the Patriarch, the Catholicos presented the Malankara Church proposals to him. The Patriarch and his counsellors considered them and being not satisfied, submitted a fresh proposal on their part. According to Z.M. Paret,<sup>3</sup> the Patriarch's proposal suggested the following conditions :

1. The Malankara Metropolitan will be provided powers of the Reesh Episcopa (Maphrian) to administer the Malankara Church.

3. Z.M. Paret : Mar Geevarghese Baselios. p : 33.

2. The person elected by the Malankara Association to the office of Rees Episcopa shall be sent to the Patriarch to be consecrated.
3. On submission of an Agreement of Loyalty, the Patriarch will consecrate him.
4. The Reesh Episcopa shall head the Malankara Church Synod. The Patriarchal representative will be a member of the Synod.
5. The Patriarch will have disciplinary powers over the Reesh Episcopa.
6. The Dioceses shall not be either increased or decreased.
7. Reseesa at the rate of two Annas per house shall be collected.
8. The Patriarchal delegate shall administer the Patriarchal churches in existence and those that will declare allegiance to the Patriarch in future.
9. The Cnanaya diocese will be under the direct charge of the Patriarch and its Metropolitan will be a member of the Malankara Synod.
10. The installation of the Catholicos and other consecrations made by Mar Abdul Messiah are illegal, invalid, incompetent and unacceptable.

The Catholicos found these conditions most humiliating and detrimental to the integrity and autonomy of the Malankara Church and for which late Mar Dionysius and others staked their life and energy. They were, however, forwarded to the Peace Committee in Malankara for their views. During the interval till a reply was received from Malankara, the Catholicos proceeded to Jerusalem and stayed with Bishop George Francis Brown of the Church of England.

#### Peace Committee Proposals

The Peace Committee, obviously, did not approve the proposals. Instead, another set of proposals was formulated, which was by nature a declaration of autonomy for the Malankara Church by the Patriarch. The introductory clause of the proposals says: The Patriarch accords approval to the following procedures for the administration of the Malankara Church. The terms were:

1. There shall be a Maphrianate; the present incumbent is accepted and he shall be the first Maphrian.

2. Those who received consecration from Abdul Messiah should go to Mar Ephraim for proper acceptance.
3. The Synod and Malankara Syrian Christian Association shall be responsible for the administration of the Church.
4. The Malankara Metropolitan and the Maphrian could be one person.
5. The Patriarchal churches at Kunnamkulam, Kottayam and Mulanthuruthy, the Malayil Kurish Church, the Manjanikkara Dayara shall be under the administrative control of either the Patriarch or his delegate.
6. The Patriarch accords authority to the Maphrian.
  - (i) to convene the Malankara Syrian Christian Association and preside over it for the purpose of electing the Malankara Metropolitan and the cotrustees; and
  - (ii) to deliberate over the peace proposals.

The Catholicos placed these counter proposals of the Peace Committee before the Patriarch. They were outrightly rejected.

#### **Patriarch's Final Proposal**

The Patriarch and his counsellors had, however, better proposals to preserve their hegemony over Malankara Church. These were :

- A Maphrian (Reesh Episcopa) will be raised to administer the Malankara Church, under the authority of the Patriarch and subject to the following conditions :
- (i) The Catholicate and other statutes instituted by Abdul Messiah are invalid;
  - (ii) The Malankara Syrian Christian Association shall elect the Maphrian to-be who will be sent by the Metropolitan (the term Synod is not used) to the Patriarch with the request to consecrate him as Maphrian.
  - (iii) The Maphrian—elect shall receive special prayers, invoking Holy Spirit held by the Patriarch and be accepted.
  - (iv) The Maphrian shall execute a bond of loyalty and shalmusa to the Patriarch;
  - (v) The Patriarch will, after the consecration, give a letter of authority (Sthathicon) to the Maphrian to rule over the Malankara Church.

- (vi) The Maphrian will not have either the privileges of the Maphrian of Tigris or the East or the powers enshrined in the Huddaye Canon.
- (vii) The conclave of the Metropolitans including the Patriarchal delegate will administer the Church. All will have one vote each. When the conclave meets, the delegate will sit on the right hand side of the Maphrian.
- (viii) Metropolitans Athanasius and Michael Dionysius (of the Patriarchal Party) will continue in their respective dioceses.
- (ix) The Malankara Metropolitan to be elected shall be one hailing from northern part of the Malankara Church.
- (x) The Maphrian will obtain only that Mooron (Chrism) which has been consecrated by the Patriarch.
- (xi) The Patriarchal Churches shall be under the direct administration of the Patriarch.

A close examination of the Patriarch's proposals will reveal that they were definitely aimed at subordinating the Malankara Church to the supremacy and authority of the Church of Syria; they openly made an attempt to nullify and invalidate the gains of freedom and autonomy achieved by the Malankara Church with the institution of the Catholicate in 1912. The Catholicos very well realised the dangers inherent in the proposals and without any hesitation rejected them.

The Catholicos and his associates were greatly disappointed; but, stronger in conviction, they returned to Malankara on September 20, 1934 and reached Kottarakara on 10.10.1934. Thus ended the three months long consultations of the Catholicos with the Patriarch in Syria in quest of peace in the Church.

#### 6. Mediation Efforts of Bishop Pakenham Walsh 1935

Bishop Pakenham Walsh of the Church of England was a sincere well-wisher of the Malankara Church. In 1934, the bishop retired as Principal of the Bishop's College, Calcutta. The rest of his life, he spent at Thadakam Ashram, Coimbatore, a missionary centre which he had established.

Soon after his retirement, prompted by the desire to see peace and harmony in the Malankara Church, Bishop Walsh visited the Patriarch at Homs on April 4-5, 1935 and conferred with him.

Later, arriving in Malankara, he held prolonged discussions with leaders of both factions in the Church. Messers K.C. Chacko, and A.M. Varky had given earnest support to the Bishop. A committee consisting of Fr. Mathews Paret (Convener), Judge K.A. Paulose, K. Koruth, P.A. Oommen, C.J. Mathew Tharaken, C.M. John, K. Chierian represented the Catholicos's side. The Bishop was able to formulate a set of proposals acceptable to both parties and they were sent to the Patriarch. They were rejected as in past instances.

### **7. The Round Table Session at Alwaye 1941**

Another major effort to bring the factions into concord took place in 1941. The initiative came from the late K.C. Chacko. At this time, the lawsuit filed by the Patriarchal party against the Catholicos in 1938 in the Distt. Court at Kottayam was in process.

K.C. Chacko had successfully tried to bring the Metropolitans of both the Patriarchal and Catholicate parties at Alwaye. The former at Trikkunnath Seminary and the latter at Alwaye College. The peace sessions were held in the College. The talks centred round the crucial point of the recognition and acceptance of the Catholicos and other bishops in his fold. An agreement, however, was reached that they will be accepted following a simple ceremony of prayer invoking the Holy Spirit, at the Thrikkunnath Seminary Chapel. But later an amendment was mooted that initially the Catholicos will submit to this form of prayer and who subsequently will hold the same prayer of acceptance with the bishops under him. This too was further negotiated and accepted.

Accordingly, the Catholicos reached the Chapel. But by that time, Mar Julios, the Patriarchal representative, left Alwaye leaving the responsibility for holding the ceremony to Mar Athanasius of the Patriarchal party. Getting suspicious of Mar Julios's unexpected departure, Mar Athanasius receded his steps and the proposed acceptance of the Catholicos did not take place. Here ended yet another episode in the saga of peace parleys.

### **8. Peace League Parleys 1949-50**

The last major effort to unite the Patriarchal and Catholicate factions outside the Civil Courts was made by a group of youngsters belonging to both the factions under the

banner of Peace League in 1949-50. The organisers of this League were T.M. Chacko (President — later G. John), E.K., Alexander (Vice-President), P.M. Thomas (Secretary), M.P. Abraham (Treasurer) and other members.

The Peace League had chosen Holy Cross Church (Kurishpally) at Kottayam as its centre of activity. It started a programme of prayer, fasting and lectures in which a large number of the members of the Church participated. The emphasis was to bring about peace in the Church at whatever cost. The conscience of the community was aroused to a dizzy height. The movement received a shot in the arm when Prince Peter of Greece, a Greek Orthodox member, addressed a large gathering at Puthenangadi, Kottayam on October 16, 1949 (Kanni 30, 1125). In his speech, he pointed out, "The presence of Catholicate in Malankara is an expression of local nationalism. It is a profound truth, independent of legal aspects of the problem. In my opinion, the solution to the present day problem lies in accepting this fact. The earlier the concerned authorities accept this, the better for you. By giving freedom and independent status to our different Churches (the Eastern Orthodox Churches in Europe) the stature of the ancient Eastern Church did not diminish but was only enhanced. We were relieved of the problems which now face you. Why can't your ancient Church also learn this lesson from our experience? The tradition of the Eastern Orthodox Church at Constantinople was to give autonomy to those Churches in countries which were sovereign and independent. Now that India is independent and free, I think it would be appropriate that you also follow a similar course to solve your problems,..... The service that I can do for you will be to intimate the Patriarch, the matters concerning you." The meeting further resolved:

- (i) to request the Metropolitans of both the parties to hold a Round Table Conference within three months for bringing about reconciliation and
- (ii) to request Prince Peter of Greece to meet the Patriarch and hold discussions for settlement of the issues.

In pursuance of the first resolution, Metropolitans of both parties assembled at Mar Ephraim Seminary at Chingavanam on January 9, 1950. Those who participated were, from the Catholicos party—Catholicos Moran Mar Geevarghese Baselios,

Metropolitans Ougen Mar Timotheos, Mar Gregorios, Thoma Mar Dionysius, Mar Theodosius, Mar Philoxenos and from the Patriarch—Metropolitans Mar Gregorios, Michael Mar Dionysius, Mar Severios and Mar Julios, Mar Athanasius did not attend. On 11.1.1950, the Metropolitans arrived at a four point formula, viz.

- (i) The Patriarch is the head of the universal Syrian Orthodox Church.
- (ii) The Patriarch should proclaim the present divided Malankara Church to be a Catholicate (Maphrianate) in order to bring unity.
- (iii) The Patriarch and Catholicos shall confer on the basis of the above two principles and accord their approval of the decisions. The Metropolitans will accept their decisions.
- (iv) Mar Julios was authorised to inform the Patriarch of the above decisions.

To the Peace League Executive Committee, Point (iii) was not acceptable as it was possible that an impasse situation may arise between the two; instead, they demanded clearly-defined terms for acceptance by both the Patriarch and Catholicos. A committee of ten members were formed to draw out such terms. They deliberated over night and drafted a 10-point peace terms which later came to be called CHINGAVANAM TERMS. These were:

1. The Patriarch of Antioch is the head of the universal (Orthodox) Syrian Church.
2. In order to unify the divided Malankara Church, it is declared as a Catholicate (Maphrianate).
3. The Patriarch shall consecrate the person elected by the Malankara Episcopal Synod as the Maphrian (Catholicos) who shall tender 'shalmuso' to the Patriarch.
4. The Catholicos will have the freedom and authority to consecrate Episcopas as and when needed.
5. There shall be a synod under the Catholicos to administer the Malankara Church.
6. Complaints about the Catholicos shall be submitted to the Patriarch, who will make enquiries through the Synod and his decision shall be final.

7. Mooron consecrated by the Patriarch alone shall be used in the Malankara Church.
8. 'Resisa' shall be paid to the Patriarch annually.
9. In case of delay in installing a Catholicos, the episcopal synod could carry out all the functions of the Catholicos except that of consecrating Episcopas.
10. In case of delay in installing a Catholicos and also when a Metropolitan expires, the Malankara Synod can consecrate an Episcopa.

These terms were presented to the joint session of the Metropolitans on 12.1.1950. The Catholicos and the Metropolitans of this fold did not find them acceptable, mainly on two grounds that (i) they were in effect nullifying the autonomy of the Church secured with the establishment of the Catholicate by Mar Abdul Messiah and (ii) that they imply the sacraments and the ordinations celebrated by the Catholicos were invalid. The Chingavanam terms were considered, in fact, to be a surrender to the authority of the Church of Syria. In the circumstance, the Metropolitans failed to reach an agreement over the terms.

The Peace League Committee acted quick and announced a two-pronged programme to pressurise the Metropolitans and the Catholicos, viz.

- (i) a Nirahara (fasting) Satyagraha and
- (ii) an ultimatum to the Catholicos and Mar Julios to accept the ten point peace proposals and send them to the Patriarch within two days, till which time they will not be allowed to leave the Seminary. The fasting exercise (Upvas Yajna) began on 27.1.1950 in the premises of Kurish Pally, Kottayam. Being put to such coercion, both of them signed the terms whereafter they were released. Except one, all the Metropolitans of the Catholicos Party also gave their signature; the lone exception was Alexios Mar Theodosius who upheld his objection to points 3, 7 and 8 on the grounds that they implied subordination to Patriarch which was contrary to the concept of autocephaly.

The Catholicos, on reaching Old Seminary from the confinement, denied and decried the Chingavanam terms.

On the the advice of senior members of the Church, the peace League members withdrew the Satyagraha.

The Patriarch duly received the signed peace terms. In his view, they provided him far less authority over the Malankara Church than he visualised and hence, he also denounced them. Further, the Patriarch sent alternate terms, some time in March 1950. They appeared in the local newspapers on March 29, 1950. The conditions superceding the Chingavanam terms were:

- (i) The Patriarch is the High Priest of the universal Orthodox Syrian Church. The Malankara Church falls within his authority and his name shall be remembered in all the parish churches.
- (ii) The Metropolitans accepted under the Chingavanam terms shall present themselves before the Patriarch for acceptance and necessary letters of authority, whereafter appropriate system of administrative powers for Maphrian will be laid down.
- (iii) The delegate of Patriarch will have a prominent place in the Malankara Church synod.
- (iv) Neither the delegate nor the Synod will have authority to consecrate an episcopa to fill up any vacancy caused by any one's death.
- (v) The provisions which are made by the Maphrian and the Synod for the administration of the Church shall have the assent of Patriarch.

Obviously, the above terms were overbearing on the Catholicos Party. Once again peace eluded Malankara Church.

No more efforts were made outside the court to usher reconciliation and peace in the Church. The Church had to wait another nine years, to witness the long expected dove of peace to flutter over it. When it came, it came not as the result of any inter-party reconciliatory moves but through the inescapable law and authority of the country vested in the Supreme Court of India and pronounced on September 12, 1958.

### **Evaluation**

For forty eight years from 1911 to 1958, did the Church struggle to bring unity and peace. It will be interesting to evaluate and analyse the stand taken by both the parties during the

major peace moves dealt with in the preceding pages and the factors on which they floundered. The Catholicos party evinced a keen and firm commitment to preserve the autonomy of the Church enshrined in the establishment of the Catholicate by Patriarch Abdul Messiah. The Catholicos was, however, prepared to subject himself to the humiliating point of being accepted by Patriarch with certain form of prayer invoking Holy Spirit, and even giving up his office, for the sake of unity.

On the contrary, the Patriarch, in all his counter-proposals, was determined and insisted to ensure (i) his claim, prerogatives and authority over the Malankara Church in all matters, spiritual and temporal, as the head of the Church, (ii) a place for his delegate in the synod of the Malankara Church and (iii) repudiation and invalidation of the Catholicate established by Mar Abdul Messiah and the associated autonomy of the Malankara Church. In other words, the Patriarch envisaged the Malankara Church as subordinate to his jurisdiction and sovereignty by annulling the Catholicate already established. The talks which Mar Dionysius and Mar Geevarghese II held with the successive Patriarchs, the mediation efforts made by Lord Irwin, Bishop Westcott, Bishop Gore, Bishop Walsh, lay leaders like K.C. Chacko, the Chingavanam terms—all collapsed on this rock of intransigence of the Patriarch of the Church of Syria, viz. the insistence upon spiritual and temporal sovereignty over Malankara Church. Obviously, not to be, was the will of God. For, the Patriarch and his followers willy-nilly conceded much more than the peace proposals envisaged when the Supreme Court Judgement vindicated the claims of autonomy of the Catholicate of Malankara.

## CONCORDAT OF DECEMBER 16, 1958

The judgement of the Supreme Court pronounced on September 12, 1958 assured the Church its autonomy and the Catholicate, its sovereignty over the Malankara Church. The decrees were legally binding on all concerned in the country. In the Indian national horizon, the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church was, therefore, accorded a legal standing.

### Implications of the Judgement

The judgement implied far reaching consequences to the Patriarchal party at the ecclesiastical, administrative and financial levels. Mainly they were:

- (i) Metropolitans of the Patriarchal Party, although they were consecrated by the Patriarch, if they were not recognised by the Church in the Malankara Association, had no administrative status (over any diocese) in the Church.
- (ii) The ordination of Catholicos and the Metropolitans and other clergy with him was valid and that they were to be accepted as such in good faith.
- (iii) The contention of re-ordination of Catholicos by Patriarch was untenable and a myth.
- (iv) The Patriarchal party was liable to pay a few lakhs of rupees as court expenses to the Catholicos Party.
- (v) The Constitution adopted by the Church in 1934 was valid for its administration.

### Patriarchal Party Seeks Review

These compulsions gravitated the Patriarchal Party prelates and lay leaders to confer on future options, but the emotions of partisan rivalry in a community, kept up for the past fifty years, did not easily wane. It took some time before the reality of the judgement permeated into every strata of the clergy and laity.

The clergy and lay leaders moved with caution and optimism. They gathered at the Aprem Seminary, Chingavanam on September 12 and 14, 1958. Their Managing Committee also met on September 19. It decided to file a review petition to the Supreme Court and also authorised the Malankara Metropolitan Mar Climis to inform Patriarch Mar Yakoub III of the developments and invite him to Malankara. Mar Julios also wrote to the Patriarch.

Subsequently a review petition was filed in the Supreme Court; but, it rejected it on 28.10.1958.

### **Reconciliation Move**

By this time, peace moves gained ground among the Metropolitans. They realised the stark reality that the court had deprived them of their administrative prerogatives and hence, made efforts to reconcile with Catholicos and his associates. Patriarch was accordingly moved in that direction. In these circumstances, Patriarch Ignatius Yakoub III extended recognition to the Catholicos Mar Baselios Geevarghese, in his order No. 447 dated December 9, 1958 sent from Patriarchal headquarters at Homs, Syria to Mar Julios.

### **Mutual Acceptance — Exchange of Documents**

On receipt of the letter of recognition, talks on the procedure to realise the reconciliation were held between the Metropolitans and lay leaders of both the parties, at Mar Aprem Seminary, Chingavanam and Catholicate Palace, Devalokam. The terms of reconciliation and procedure of exchange of letters of reconciliation were settled in the final round of talks on Tuesday, December 16, 1958. The prelates and others of both the parties moved to the venue of Old Seminary, Kottayam. The Catholicos and the Metropolitans of his side except Patros Mar Osthathios and Metropolitans Julios, Climis, Gregorios and Philoxenos except Mar Severios of the Patriarchal Party had assembled on the occasion. At 11.00 P.M. on that august day of December 16, 1958, in the presence of a large gathering of priests and laity, His Holiness Moran Mar Baselios Geevarghese II with Mar Julios immediately behind him and a retinue of all other Metropolitans of both the parties entered the chapel at Old Seminary and both exchanged the documents of terms of mutual acceptance — the glorious event of the century

which was earnestly hoped and longed for by the Church for the last fifty years. The Church members most gladly welcomed the union forgetting the bitter bickerings of the past and fell into line under the banner of the Catholicos of the East.

The relevant extracts from the letters of mutual acceptance are given below.

Excerpts of letter dated 9.12.1958 from His Holiness Moran Mar Ignatius Yakoub III, Patriarch of Antioch.

“We had expressed this wish to you in our formal letter sent immediately after our ascension on the throne of the holy Patriarchate of Antioch. Our Lord is pleased to close this division through us, which sentiment has been gaining strength in us day by day. Glory to Him.

By this, we accept Mar Baselios Geevarghese as Catholicos, in order to establish peace in Malankara.”

Excerpts of letter dated 16.12.1958 from his Holiness Moran Mar Baselios Geevarghese II Catholicos.

We are pleased to accept Moran Mar Ignatius Yakoub III as Patriarch of Antioch, for the sake of ensuring peace in the Malankara Church, subject to the Constitution in vogue which was adopted by the Malankara Syrian Christian Association.

We are also happy to receive the Metropolitans under his obedience in Malankara subject to the provisions of the Constitution.

Full texts of the letters are given at Appendices VIII and IX.

### **Metropolitans submit to the Catholicos**

Following the accord, Metropolitans of the erstwhile Patriarchal Party also submitted to the authority of the Catholicos. Letters declaring their loyalty and obedience to the Catholicos were handed over to him. The letter submitted by Mar Philoxenos is an example and is placed at Appendix X. He had also announced his devotion to the Catholicos in a speech delivered in the Malankara Association meeting held at Puthencav on 28.12.1958. This is at Appendix XI.

### **Ethiopian-Coptic Parallel**

In the annals of Church history, a parallel to the Malankara-Antioch relationship in respect of autonomy may be seen in the example of Ethiopian-Coptic Churches relationship. The Ethiopian Orthodox Church depended upon the Coptic Church (Orthodox Church of Egypt) for episcopal continuity, till they achieved autonomy in 1959. The history may be summarised in the words of Berhanu Leykum, a Deacon of that Church in Addis Ababa, as follows:—

“According to the chronological lists of bishops who were consecrated for the Ethiopian Orthodox Church from Alexandria, Frumentius was succeeded by Bishop Minas who was apparently of Egyptian origin. The peculiar Alexandrian jurisdiction over the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, which was to last for sixteen hundred years, began at this time. Until the middle of the nineteenth century, the Ethiopians were not considered eligible for consecration as bishops of their national church.....

.....at the beginning of the twentieth century, a new wave of independence arose in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. Ethiopians recognized the futility of an apocryphal canon which prevented them from being prelates in their own country. Moreover, it was felt strongly that reform and modernization of the Church could not be achieved by a foreign hierarchy out of touch with national life and problems. Matters came to a head in 1926 with the death of Metropolitan of Egyptian origin, Abbuna Mathews, who was appointed in 1881. The Ethiopian Orthodox Church approached the Coptic Patriarch with a request that authority should be delegated to the new metropolitan to consecrate bishops. A lengthy exchange of views took place between officials of the Coptic Church and the Ethiopian Church. Finally, in 1929, a new Coptic Abbuna, Qerilos, was appointed and by decision of the clergy and laity assembly, five Ethiopian monks were consecrated for the first time in Cairo as diocesan bishops.

During the Italian occupation (1935-1941), the Ethiopian Church went through a very difficult period. Italian policy aimed at weakening and undermining the Church's influence rather than rousing resistance through overt persecution.

After the liberation of Ethiopia in 1941, negotiations were resumed between the Ethiopian Church and the Patriarch of

Alexandria. The Ethiopians renewed relationships with the Coptic Church, which had been suspended for a short period during the war, and again requested the granting of autonomy. An agreement was finally reached in 1948 when the Coptic Synod decreed that Ethiopian monks might be appointed as bishops during the lifetime of the Egyptian Metropolitan, and upon his death an Ethiopian Metropolitan might be consecrated. Abuna Baselios was chosen as the first Metropolitan in 1951; thus the full autonomy of the Ethiopian Church was established.

The Patriarchate of Alexandria confirmed the autonomy of the Church officially in 1959, when the title of the Ethiopian Church was raised from Metropolitan to Patriarch, the late Patriarch Abuna Baselios was consecrated as the first Patriarch".<sup>1</sup>

That agreement continues untampered, unhindered to this day and the Churches enjoy mutual friendship, respect and cordiality. The Coptic Church has no regrets.

### **The Bulgarian Church Parallel<sup>2</sup>**

Similar is the story of the Patriarchate of the Orthodox Church of Bulgaria. In 919 A.D., the Church Council, the administrative authority of the Church, had established a Patriarchate and raised a Patriarch on their own volition. The Patriarch of Constantinople recognised the Bulgarian Patriarch, the autonomy and autocephaly of the Bulgarian Church and entered into a treaty of fraternity with him in 927.

The Church which was independent under a Patriarchate had withered in 11th Century following the Byzantine domination of 1018. Patriarch of Constantinople took over the Church under his shelter, deprived it of its Patriarchate title prevailed upon them and brought it under Greek hierarchy. The supremacy of Constantinople over Bulgarian Church continued till 1767.

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1. Berhanu Leykun : The Ethiopian Orthodox Church-In Martyra Mission-The Witness of the Orthodox Churches today. Edited by Ion Bria for the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism, World Council of Churches Geneva (1980) Pages : 193-4
  2. i. Mathews Mar Koorilos : Bulgarian Orthodox Church and Re establishment of Patriarchate. Malankara Sabha Masika, August-Sept. 1983.  
ii. Prof. Totiu Koev : The Bulgarian Patriarchate. Article in Martyria Missiou Ed. Ion Bria-World Council of Churches. Pp. 102-8.

In the nineteenth century, national patriotism had flared up in the Church demanding freedom from Constantinopolitan authorities. The Ottoman rulers intervened and by a Firman issued by the ruling Sultan in 1870, an Exarch came into position as head of the Church. The Church's independence was restored. "In 1871, a Council of the Church and the People was held in Constantinople. It adopted the statutes of the Bulgarian Exarchate".

### **Patriarchate Re-established 1953**

The political situation in the country again underwent a change following two significant happenings, the First World War (1914-19) and the Socialist Revolution in Bulgaria of 1944. Consequently, nationalism upsurged demanding independent Church in an independent free country. Finally, in a historic meeting held on May 8-10, 1953, the Church Council "restored the Patriarchal status of the Bulgarian Church and elected Metropolitan Kyril of Plovdiv as Patriarch of Bulgaria". Following his demise, Patriarch Maxim came in position on July 4, 1971.

The 30th anniversary of the re-established Patriarchate was held in the Capital city of Sophia on May 20.30.1983. On this occasion, the Patriarch of Constantinople sent his representative to felicitate the Bulgarian Church, which he treats as a sister Church. (Metropolitan Mathews Mar Koorilos, represented Malankara Church in the celebrations.)

### **Orthodox Tradition**

The two inter-church accords on autonomy mentioned above high-light the tradition of the Orthodox Churches in settling inter-Church Problems amicably. Following the accords, they maintain a most favoured fraternal relationship as sister-Churches. The Coptic and Ethiopian Churches fall within the Oriental Orthodox group and the Bulgarian and Constantinople Churches within the Byzantine (Eastern) Orthodox group. Nevertheless, the tradition is the same.

The Coptic-Ethiopian accord of 1948 and the Bulgarian Constantinopolitan accord of 1953 strike a parallel to the Malankara—Antiochene Concordat of 1958. The Orthodox tradition was maintained.

**Syrian Intransigence**

However, the Malankara Antiochene harmony suffered a debacle. The Concordat failed. It could not survive the test of time. It withered. How the Concordat failed casts a reflection on the wisdom of the Church of Syria whether it desires to treat the Malankara Church as an autonomous or a subordinate Church. The Syrian Church preferred the latter and banged a discord in the Orthodox Tradition. The intransigence of Syrian Church is depicted in Chapter Eighteen.

## CHAPTER FIFTEEN

# PATRIARCHS AND PATRIARCHAL DELEGATES IN MALANKARA

In 1653, through the Coonen Kurish Sathyam at Mattancherry and the Aalangad meeting, the St. Thomas Christians made explicit a few fundamental directions in which they would move in future. The positive aspects of the oath were two-namely an ecclesial relationship with the Church of Syria and maintenance/ continuation of an eastern form of worship.

Since then, a number of prelates from the Orthodox Church of Syria came to Malankara, consecrated Metropolitans, ordained priests and introduced Syrian liturgy and Syrian forms of worship and other practices.

During the period of three centuries from 1653 to 1958, when the Peace Agreement between the Malankara Church and the Church of Syria came into effect, nineteen prelates from Syria were known to have come either as visitors or delegates of the Patriarch or on requests from the Malankara Church. They are enumerated below.

<i>Sl. No.</i>	<i>Prelate from Syria</i>	<i>Year(s)</i>	<i>Malankara Metropolitan</i>
1.	Mar Gregorios Abdel Jaleel Metropolitan, Jerusalem	1665-71	Mar Thoma I
2.	Mar Andrews	1678-92	} Mar Thoma II
3.	Baselios Mar Yaldo Catholicos	1615	
4.	Mar Ivanios, Metropolitan	1685-94	
5.	Baselios Mar Sakrallah, Catholicos	1751-63	} Mar Thoma V
6.	Mar Gregorios, Metropolitan	1751-72	

- |    |               |      |         |              |
|----|---------------|------|---------|--------------|
| 7. | Mar Ivanios,  | -do- | 1751-94 | Mar Thoma V  |
| 8. | Mar Dioscoros | -do- | 1806-07 | Mar Thoma VI |

The prelate hardly spent two years since his arrival in 1806 in Malankara before he was deported on orders of Col. Munro, the British Resident.

- |    |                                |  |         |                 |
|----|--------------------------------|--|---------|-----------------|
| 9. | Mar Athanasius<br>Metropolitan |  | 1825-26 | Mar Dionysius I |
|----|--------------------------------|--|---------|-----------------|

Mar Athanasius came to Malankara in 1825. However, at the instance of the European missionaries of the Church Missionary Society, Mar Athanasius left Malankara the next year.

- |     |   |  |         |   |
|-----|---|--|---------|---|
| 10. | Yoyakim Mar Kurilos,<br>Metropolitan        |  | 1846-74 | Mar Dionysius IV                        |
| 11. | Stephanos Mar Athanasios,<br>Metropolitan   |  | 1848    | Mathews Mar<br>Athanasius               |
| 12. | Moran Mar Ignatius<br>Peter III, Patriarch  |  | 1875-77 | Pulikottil Joseph<br>Mar Dionysius V    |
| 13. | Simeon Mar Athanasius<br>Metropolitan       |  | 1881-89 |   |
| 14. | Moran Mar Abdullah II<br>Patriarch          |  | 1909-11 | Geevarghese Ma<br>Dionysius VI          |
| 15. | Moran Mar Abdul<br>Messiah II, Patriarch    |  | 1912-13 |   |
| 16. | Sleeba Mar Osthathios<br>Metropolitan       |  | 1908-30 |   |
| 17. | Moran Mar Elias III,<br>Patriarch           |  | 1931-32 | Baselies Moran<br>Mar<br>Geevarghese II |
| 18. | Elias Mar Julios<br>Metropolitan            |  | 1924-62 |   |
| 19. | Ramban Abdul Ahad<br>(Patriarch Yakoub III) |  | 1934-46 |   |

The roles the prelates played in the course of the history of the Church, especially those of Patriarchs Peter III, Abdulla and Abdul Messiah, have already been explained elsewhere. It may, however, be noted that there has been a perceptible change in the vision of the prelates regarding the Malankara Church, from the second half of the eighteenth century onwards. While the Church of

Syria ensured apostolic episcopacy in the initial period, it later on insisted on supremacy over the Malankara Church, both on spiritual and temporal matters.

The introduction of the title 'Mar Dionysius' replacing the local 'Mar Thoma', is an evident manifestation. But stationing a representative of the Patriarch to gain temporal authority was a calculated move introduced from the times of Mar Peter III after 1876. They helped only to create tensions, dissensions and division in the Church, and as a result, depleted the strength of the Church, distorted its vision, thwarted and retarded its progress. All this tended to cause an erosion of the morality of the Church before the non-Christian population in the country.

### A SUBORDINATE MALANKARA—Views of Patriarchs

#### Mar Peter III

The canons adopted at the Mulanthuruthy Synod at the instance of Patriarch Peter III were intended to keep Malankara Church subordinate to Church of Syria (Ref. Chapter Ten). The division of the Church into seven dioceses and desiring each Metropolitan to be directly responsible to the Patriarch were definite acts in that direction.

#### Mar Abdullah II

Mar Abdullah was keen in enforcing his ideas of a subordinate Malankara. A few instances may be quoted.

- (i) At the time of issue of Staticon, Mar Abdullah pointed out to Mar Dionysius that he would function as caretaker to the Patriarch and not as Malankara Metropolitan in succession to Pulikkottil Mar Dionysius. He was asked, "Why do you want succession to Malankara Metropolitan? Why can't you be epithropo (caretaker?) of Patriarch?"
- (ii) Mar Osthathios, a Metropolitan not belonging to Malankara, was given power over all seven dioceses in Malankara and indicated in the Staticon. He was to function as Patriarchal delegate. All dealings with the Patriarch were expected to be routed through Mar Osthathios.

- (iii) Mar Abdulla extracted bonds of allegiance to the Patriarch, Church of Syria from individual parishes and Metropolitans.
- (iv) Vattasseril Mar Dionysius who refused to execute the bond, was excommunicated.
- (v) Mar Abdullah told John E.J. who sought clarifications regarding the grounds of ex-communication of Mar Dionysius, "If Mar Dionysius does not execute the bond as other Metropolitans did, there will not be any peace in your Church."

### **PATRIARCHAL PARTY GROWTH 1876-1958**

The Patriarchal Party in the Malankara Church came into public life with the visit of Patriarch Mar Abdulla in 1909-11. Its formation was consequent of the disagreement of Malankara Metropolitan Geevarghese Mar Dionysius with the Patriarch over the latter's demand for jurisdiction over the temporalities of the Church.

His predecessor Patriarch Peter III who returned to Syria in 1876 after introducing various measures to streamline the administration of the Church and to resist the growth of the Reform Movement, was very much interested in its affairs. Church history reveals that from 1881 onwards, a personal representative of the Patriarch has been in Malankara continuously, except for a break from 1889 to 1908, to safeguard their interests. These representatives, otherwise called Patriarchal delegates, were posted to serve as a centre of power to limit the Malankara Metropolitan's authority and autonomy of the Church as well. By instituting a delegate in Malankara, the Patriarchs conceived that:

- i. The Malankara Metropolitans will consult them through the delegates in all matters of administration;
- ii. the delegates will function as the image and agent of the Patriarch in Malankara.

The system of Patriarchal delegate was, obviously, schemed at bringing the Malankara Church under the control and jurisdiction of the Church of Syria.

The Patriarchal delegates encouraged this divisive tendency in order to secure their goal. In retrospect, it may be said that

the Malankara Church members who should have strived together as one man to do away with the Antiochene tendency to subordinate the Church, instead split into two camps—the Patriarchal party and the Metropolitan party—fought against each other, one supporting the Church of Syria to nullify the nationalistic upsurge vis-a-vis the autonomy advocated by the other.

## Patriarchal Delegate

### **Simeon Mar Athanasius 1881-89**

The first Patriarchal delegate was Simeon Mar Athanasius who accompanied by Deacon Sreeba, arrived at Cochin on January 1, 1881. They took up residence at Cheriapalli, Kottayam. On June 11, 1889, Mar Athanasius died and was buried there.

### **Sreeba Mar Osthathios 1908-30**

Deacon Sreeba continued to stay in Malankara. In 1906 he left for Syria. Patriarch Mar Abdulla in March 1908 consecrated him as Metropolitan with the title of Mar Osthathios and appointed him as his representative in Malankara. In the Sthathicon issued to him, Mar Abdullah had vested in him administrative authority over all the seven dioceses of Malankara. Mar Osthathios returned to Malankara along with Vattasseril Mar Dionysius in 1908 and resided at Old Seminary. In the Malankara Episcopal Synod, Mar Osthathios had claimed allocation of Dioceses but was denied. Later, the Metropolitan shifted to the Simhasana Palli (Patriarchal church) at Kunnamkulam in 1921. On March 19, 1930, the Metropolitan expired.

### **Elias Mar Julios 1924-62**

Following Mar Osthathios, Mar Julios who came along with Vattasseril Mar Geevarghese in 1924 from Syria, became the next Patriarchal delegate in Malankara. The Metropolitan remained in Malankara guiding the Patriarchal Party in the management of their Party affairs. In the Reconciliation of 1958, Mar Julios played a crucial part. The Metropolitan continued to stay in Malankara till death in 1962.

The Patriarchal Party held three representative meetings which had all the features of the Malankara Syrian Christian Association, except for its legal validity. These three meetings are briefly reported in the following pages.

### **Parallel Malankara Association Meeting at Alwaye 1911**

On June 8, 1911, Patriarch Mar Abdullah ex-communicated Malankara Metropolitan Geevarghese Mar Dionysius. Thereby, it was meant that Mar Dionysius would no more be Malankara Metropolitan and ex-officio President of the Malankara Syrian Christian Association. To prove his point, Mar Abdullah convened a meeting of the representatives of the parishes on August 30, 1911 at Alwaye. In this effort, the Patriarch obtained the support of three Metropolitans viz. Paulose Mar Kurilose, Paulose Mar Athanasius and Mar Severios who had executed the bond of allegiance to the Patriarch the Clergy Trustee Konat Kora Mathan Malpan and Lay Trustee C.J. Kurien, both of whom had deserted Mar Dionysius. Paulose Mar Kurilose was made the Malankara Metropolitan ex-officio President of the Association. The Trustees were retained in their respective positions.

### **Second Parallel Malankara Association Meeting at Karingachira 1935**

The Patriarchal Party in 1934 was faced with a situation where:

- (i) Since the death of Mar Kurilose in 1917, the Party had no elected Malankara Metropolitan, although Paulose Mar Athanasius was their de facto head.
- (ii) Clergy Trustee Kora Mathan Malpan and Lay Trustee C.J. Kurien too had expired.
- (iii) Patriarch in his letter of 1934 had given his directions that the Party may have nothing to do with Mar Dionysius and his partisans.

In these circumstances, the Party convened a representative meeting, strictly confined to their parishes, at Karingachira on August 22, 1935. This Assembly elected Paulose Mar Athanasius as Metropolitan Trustee and President of the Malankara Association, Pookunnel Avira Joseph Kathanar as Clergy Trustee and Thukalan Paulo Avira as Lay trustee.

### **Third Parallel Malankara Association Meeting at Manarcad St. Mary's Church Hall June 21, 1957**

On January 25, 1953, Paulose Mar Athanasius, the Malankara Metropolitan, passed away. Earlier in 1950, the clergy trustee Pookunnel Avira Joseph Kathanar too had died. This left only Thukalan Paulo Avira as the trustee of the (Parallel) Malankara

Association. At the same time, law suits against the Catholicos Party was being pursued. The Party, therefore, convened a representative meeting at Manarcad on June 21, 1957, to elect candidates to fill up these posts.

At this time, the Metropolitans in the Patriarchal Party were four in number viz. Vayaliparampil Geevarghese Mar Gregorios, Vayala Abraham Mar Climis, Paulose Mar Severios and Paulose Mar Philoxenos. Mar Julios continued to remain as the Patriarchal delegate.

The meeting was convened by Thukalan Paulo Avira as per the decisions of the Kerala High Court Judgement of December 31, 1956. Sri Yagneswara Iyer was appointed as Commissioner by the Court to hold the election. Mar Climis was elected as Malankara Metropolitan and Fr. P.M. Varghese as the Clergy Trustee. The election was confirmed by Patriarch on November 3, 1957.

### THE METROPOLITANS IN THE PARTY

A brief sketch of each of those Metropolitans raised till 1958 in the Party is given below:

#### **Paulose Mar Kurilose 1908-17**

Kochuparambil Poullose Ramban was elected along with Vattasseril Geevarghese Ramban, as Metropolitan designate by the representative general body meeting convened by Malankara Metropolitan Joseph Mar Dionysius in 1908 at Old Seminary, Kottayam. Both had proceeded to Syria and at Jerusalem, Paulose Ramban was consecrated as Mar Kurilose on May 31, 1908 along with Vattasseril Malpan. Ankamali was the diocese assigned to Mar Kurilose on return to Malankara. In 1911 Patriarch Mar Abdullah raised Mar Kurilose as the Malankara Metropolitan in the meeting at Alwaye as stated earlier. Thus Mar Kurilose became the head of the Patriarchal Party and continued as such till death on December 15, 1917. His tomb is at Panampady.

#### **Paulose Mar Athanasius 1910-53**

Alangad Pinadeth Paulose Ramban from the Seminary at Thrikunnath, Alwaye was consecrated as Metropolitan with the title of Mar Athanasius by Patriarch Mar Abdullah, following

execution of a bond of loyalty (Udampadi) on June 7, 1910. The Diocese of Ankamali was given to his charge. The Metropolitan was elected as successor to Mar Kurilose in the meeting of the Patriarchal Party held at Karingachira on August 22, 1935. The Metropolitan led the Party till he died on January 25, 1953.

### **Geevarghese Mar Severios 1911-27**

Patriarch Mar Abdullah created a diocese for the community of Cnanaya Christians within the Church. Edavazhikal Geevarghese Kathanar of that ethnic group executed an Udampadi with the Patriarch who thereupon consecrated him as Metropolitan with the title of Mar Severios on August 31, 1911 to be in charge of Cnanaya diocese. After serving 16 years, Mar Severios expired on June 11, 1927.

### **Michael Mar Dionysius 1926-56**

### **Thoma Mar Dioscoros 1926-39**

Mar Osthathios the Patriarchal delegate (1908-30), had convened a representative meeting of the partisan parishes and elected two priests-Michael Kathanar (son of Evangelist Aalumoottil John of Kayamkulam who had joined the splinter group of Yustus Joseph from Tamil Nadu) and Ottathayckal Thoma Kathanar as Metropolitan designates. They proceeded to Jerusalem, where they were consecrated by Patriarch Elias III as Metropolitans on October 20, 1926.

Michael Kathanar was named Mar Dionysius and was assigned the charge of a diocese consisting of parishes of the Patriarchal party lying scattered in areas south of Kottayam. The Metropolitan expired on January 18, 1956.

Thoma Kathanar assumed the title of Mar Dioscoros and took charge of the Cnanaya Diocese succeeding Mar Severios. The Metropolitan, however, crossed floor to join the Syro-Malankara Church started by Mar Ivanios, in 1939.

### **Paulose Mar Severios 1946-62**

Mulayirikkal Paulose Mar Severios and Vayali Parambil Pinadeth Geevarghese Mar Gregorios were consecrated by Patriarch Mar Aprem on August 4, 1946.

Mar Severios was Metropolitan for the Diocese of Cochin at the time of Reconciliation in 1958 and continued to be till his death.

The Metropolitan expired on March 17, 1962 and was buried at Arthat Puthenpalli at Kunnamkulam.

### **Geevarghese Mar Gregorios 1946-66**

Mar Gregorios was born on July 17, 1869 to parents Kurien Thoma and Sosamma of Vayalypampil Pinadeth family at Nedumbassery, Ankamali and was known as Thomas Varghese. After graduating from U. C. College, Alwaye, he received ordination as deacon on November 16, 1934 from Mar Julios and as priest on 1936 from Mar Athanasius. While serving as Vicar in St. Mathai's Church in Madras he took his L. T. degree. In 1945, the representative meeting of the Ankamali diocese elected Fr. Thomas Varghese as metropolitan-designate along with Mulayirikkal Paulose Ramban. In 1946, both reached Syria (Homs) and were consecrated as Metropolitans Geevarghese Mar Gregorios and Paulose Mar Severios on August 4, 1946 by Patriarch Mar Aprem. Mar Gregorios took over the charge of Ankamali Diocese following the death of Mar Athanasius in 1953.

Mar Gregorios was an enlightened prelate of varied interests and attainments. As a trained teacher, Mar Gregorios was keenly interested in educational enterprises and had started a High School at Nedumbassery, served as its Manager and Headmaster and was Chairman of Mar Athanasius College, Kothamangalam. The Metropolitan loved travelling and had visited Singapore and other Far Eastern countries in 1936, Syria in 1946 and 1966 and thrice undertook all India tour. He was responsible for starting a printing press — The Gregorios Press — and the Diocesan publication 'Sabha Chandrika'. A number of books, especially, the Life History of Joseph, Life History of Patriarch Mar Elias, Catechism, etc. adds to his credit as an author.

Mar Gregorios had shown a commendable spirit of accommodation following the Reconciliation of 1958. After Reconciliation, Mar Gregorios continued as Metropolitan of Ankamali. On July 5, 1966 the Metropolitan proceeded on a tour to Middle East countries of Bahrain, Kuwait, etc., called on the Patriarch and returned to Alwaye on 5th November, 1966. The next day, on November 6, the Metropolitan expired following cardiac arrest.

### **Paulose Mar Philoxenos 1952**

Son of Assistant Malpan Dr. P.P. Joseph, Paulose Mar Philoxenos was consecrated as Metropolitan by Patriarch Aprem at

Homs, Syria on October 19, 1952. Till 1958, Mar Philoxenos continued as Metropolitan of the Kandanad diocese. Following the Reconciliation of December 16, 1958, he became a member of the Episcopal Synod of the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church. Later life of Mar Philoxenos is detailed in Chapters Seventeen and Eighteen.

#### **Abraham Mar Climis 1954—**

On April 15, 1954, Fr. Abraham of Cnanayite parish of Ranni was consecrated as Metropolitan of the Cnanayite diocese at Homs, Syria. Three years later, Mar Climis was elected as the Malankara Metropolitan of the Patriarchal Party at their Malankara Association meeting held at Manarcad on June 21, 1957.

Mar Climis and the Cnanayite diocese became part of the unified Malankara Church following the Reconciliation of 1958. The Malankara Metropolitan and Catholicos Mar Geevarghese Baselios had issued an order on Feb. 25, 1959 entrusting the Cnanayite Diocese to the charge of Mar Climis. As a Metropolitan of the Malankara Church, Mar Climis was one of the Vice-Presidents of the Malankara Association, President of the Planning Commission set up by the Managing Committee on 18.2.1960, and also was a member of Malankara Medical Mission Constitution Committee set up by the Managing Committee at its meeting on 5.10.1965. His continued activities are detailed in Chapter Eighteen.

#### **Patriarchal Party Ceases**

With the Reconciliation and the participation in the Malankara Syrian Christian Association meeting in December 1958, the factional role of the Patriarchal Party ceased. The Metropolitans of the Party acknowledged the Catholicos as head of the Church. They were enrolled as members of the holy Episcopal Synod of the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church and allocated dioceses in the unified Church. The system of Patriarchal delegate also came to an end.

## CHAPTER SIXTEEN

# THE THRONE OF ST. THOMAS, CATHOLICATE AND CONSTITUTION

The Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church is built on three unassailable foundations. They form the sources of her strength, character, stability, integrity, progress and development. They provide a picture of her hoary past and at the same time project a bright future. They are: The Apostolic Throne of St. Thomas of the East, the Catholicate and the Constitution.

### **The Apostolic Throne of St. Thomas of the East**

“The Malankara Church was founded by St. Thomas, the Apostle”, declares Article 2 of the Constitution of the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church.

Jesus Christ ascribed thrones to the twelve disciples when He told them: “Ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel” (Mathew 19/28). They were thus assigned thrones in an eschatological world as well as in a notional sense in the prosaic world, to sit and judge.

The word ‘throne’ generally means the ceremonial seat identified with Princes, Kings, Emperors or Rulers and Bishops. It also means a seat or centre of administrative or episcopal authority. The throne, therefore, denotes two ideas—a ceremonial seat of a person of dignity and authority to sit and govern and secondly, subjectively, a centre of authority. In the Christian conception, this authority to administer was vested in the Apostles by Christ. They further delegated this authority to successor Metropolitans. Hence, their position of authority as heads of Apostolic Churches has been notionally associated with the Apostles’ thrones which they are assumed to be occupying.

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*Note :* Other denominational Churches which were formed out of the St. Thomas Christian Community also claim their origin to St. Thomas.

St. Thomas, the Apostle, was one of the twelve disciples of Christ who were promised a throne by Christ. The Apostle has been historically confirmed as the Apostle of the East, since he preached in Persia and India, where he established Churches. Thus St. Thomas was counted as the founder of the Persian and Indian Churches, and as responsible for providing them priesthood. Consequently his successors heading these Churches assumed the throne of St. Thomas. In this background, the Churches and the Catholicates of Persia and India (Malankara Orthodox Church) uphold the exalted position of the Apostolic Throne of St. Thomas the Apostle of the East. The Catholicate of Persia re-established in Malankara in 1912 and confirmed by the Church's self-declared Constitution of 1934 is, therefore, attributed to be of the order of the apostolic throne of St. Thomas of the East.

### **Gift of Priesthood of St. Thomas**

Further, the Malankara Church received priesthood from St. Thomas. Priesthood devolved on St. Thomas and other disciples (Mark 6/13) when Christ made them his disciples and vested the gift of spiritual powers and authority in them on different occasions during his public ministry. The scripture indicates that the apostles had preached, healed the Sick, baptised, remitted sins, ordained deacons elders by laying hands, etc. (Math.28/16, Acts 1/23-26, 1 Cor. 11/24-26, Acts 6/6). The Apostolate of the disciples, therefore, imply the gifts of Ministry, (Msamsonooso) Priesthood (Kohanooso) and Epicopay (Episcoposo). St. Thomas exercised these gifts during his missionary work in India as is evident from historical records, especially, the Doctrines of the Apostles, composed in 250 A.D., which says : "India and all its countries and those bordering on it, even to the farthest sea, received the Apostles' hand of priesthood from Judas Thomas who was Guide and Ruler in the Church which he built there and ministered there."<sup>1</sup> According to the Kerala tradition, St. Thomas had baptised the brother of the King of Kodungallur by name Keppa and raised him as episcopa. Priests were also ordained from among the families of Kalli, Kaliankal, Sankarapuri and Pakalomattom who accepted Christianity.

1. Doctrines of the Apostles (P.33) Quoted by William G. Young: Handbook of Source Materials (24) P:26.

### Some Historical Records

A document written at Kodungallur in 1301 by deacon Zacharias, a disciple of Mar Jacob the ruling prelate in Malabar and preserved in the Vatican Library as Vatican Syriac Codex XII gives the title of the Metropolitan of India as "The Metropolitan Bishop of the Throne of St. Thomas and of the whole Church of the Christians in India."<sup>2</sup> In course of time, the apostolic throne of St. Thomas in Kerala was recognised by the Church of Syria also. Baselios Catholicos of Tigris (1560-89) who is believed to have presided over the Synod which enthroned Dudisha as Patriarch of Antioch is described as Baselios Catholicos of the East and India on the throne of St. Thomas, the Apostle. This aspect is also witnessed by the writings in the sanctuary of Orthodox Church at Raccat near Moovattupuzha, Kerala. It reads. "During the time of Patriarch Moran Mar Iganatius Yacob II, Maphrian Mar Basselius Bahanam and Mar Kurilose Yuachim who was on the throne of St. Thomas the Apostle of Malabar, in the year of our Lord 1857, on the mid-lent day 13th Meenam, Patriarch Gregorios V of Jerusalem alias Abded Nuharo of Uraha (Edessa) arrived at this Church".

In the light of this basic authenticity of St. Thomas, the Catholicos of the Church use the title "The Catholicos enthroned on the Apostolic throne of St. Thomas of the East.", and the Malankara Church claim apostolic origin and powers and privileges as of any other Apostolic Churches, be it of Antioch or Rome.

### The Catholicate of the East

"The Throne of the Catholicos", it is enshrined in Article 99 of the Malankara Church, "was re-established in the Orthodox Syrian Church of the East which includes the Malankara Church in A. D. 1912 and this Constitution has been functioning ever since in the Orthodox Syrian Church of the East."

The Article pre-supposes that the Catholicate (re-) established in Malankara in 1912 was the one which already existed in the Church some where else at some point of time. The Malankara Church as pointed out in Chapter *Three* had enjoyed ecclesiastical relationship with the Catholicate of Seleucia in the early centuries, and the Maphrianate at Tigris. The autonomy which these insti-

2. St. Thomas Christian Encyclopaedia P.31.

tutions envisaged was known to the Malankara Church. Malankara Church people as St. Thomas Christians were independent except for their dependence for spiritual leadership on the Persian Church till the Roman Catholic Church, and later the Church of Syria, laid claim over both spiritual and temporal domains from 16th Century onwards. This stifling tendency on the part of both the Churches, the Malankara Church resisted. The Church desired to regain the freedom and autonomy which the Church as St. Thomas Christians enjoyed. To remove their ills, the Church, therefore, wanted a system which will assure their independence and, at the same time, ensure generation of its own ecclesiastical leadership. Establishment of a Catholicate which preserves full autonomy was the answer, the Church realised. The Catholicate of Seleucia was conceived as their model and not the Maphrianate with its dependence on Patriarch of Antioch. The Malankara Church, at the same time, did not wish to separate itself from the spiritual fellowship and the friendly relationship with the Church of Syria. It was in this background that the Malankara Church sought the leadership of Patriarch of Antioch to re-establish the Catholicate which was once in Seleucia and developed in Tigris. The institution created at Tigris by the Church of Syria was originally Maphrianate, but which later developed into Catholicate, in effect.

On Sunday September 17, 1912, soon after the ceremony of installation of the Catholicos at St. Mary's Church, Niranam, Patriarch Mar Abdul Messiah declared in a sermon<sup>3</sup> to the congregation :

“The Malankara Church is one which was established by St. Thomas, one of the twelve Apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ. God has been merciful to establish the throne of St. Thomas here to maintain the apostolic priesthood for ever. Hereafter, it is not necessary for your people to go to Turkey for being consecrated as Metropolitan.

The Catholicos, who has now been consecrated, is enthroned with the title of Moran Mar Baselios as successor to the Catholicos of the East on the throne of St. Thomas, which existed in ancient times at Seleucia.

3. Malayala Manorama September 18, 1912. Quoted in the Catholicate Saphathi Souvenir 1982 (English translation by the author).

The Metropolitans here have the authority as a body to consecrate a successor Catholicos, following his death. May the Catholicate, now established, cause the Malankara Church to remain autonomous for ever. This is the foundation stone of freedom of your Church.....

The Catholicos has all the powers of the Patriarch. You can perform the consecration of Metropolitans and other requirements fulfilled by the Catholicos. You should respect and revere the Catholicos in all manner.”

However, the Patriarch used the term Maphrian synonymous to Catholicos in the two Staticons (Appendices VII A & B) which he issued following the installation of the Catholicos—One on 17.9.1912 and the other much later on 8.2.1913. In the former, the Patriarch wrote.”

“We have consecrated our spiritual and beloved Ivanios as Maphrian under the name of Baselios, Catholicos of the East, on the throne of the diocese of St. Thomas in India and other places.”

Here, two things are evident. One, although Mar Ivanios is basically a Maphrian, he was given the status and title of Catholicos. Secondly, the Catholicos adorns the throne of the See of St. Thomas in India. The Patriarch, in the second Staticon, equated Maphrian with Catholicos. However, in view of her original stature of an independent Church and ever-eager desire to preserve autonomy, the Malankara Church stood for the re-establishment of the Catholicate rather than a Maphriante.

This was the request of the Malankara Church which he fulfilled. That was why the Patriarch equated the Maphriante (which had the reference to the Maphriante of Tigris established by Patriarch Athanasius Gamalo in 629 and which the Malankara Church did not want for obvious reasons) with the Catholicate of Seleucia. The Patriarch stated:

“We pray of our Lord Jesus, who by His Holy Spirit, showed us that it is good to fulfill your request and your need. For this cause, according to your request, by the Grace of God, we have consecrated the Maphrian, that is Catholicos, in the name of Baselios Paulose.....”

In this manner, the Catholicate of Persia was re-established in the soil of India in 1912.

### **The Status, Powers and Privileges of Catholicos**

Patriarch Abdul Messiah had himself outlined the powers and privileges of the Catholicos in the two Staticons which he issued on 17.9.1912 and 8.2.1913. To quote:

*First Staticon:* Just as the disciples were bestowed by our Lord Jesus Christ, “Mar Ivanios was also bestowed authority by Holy Spirit to serve the Church and to dispense the spiritual gifts necessary to exercise the prerogatives of the Church in consultation with the Malankara Syrian Christian Association of which Mar Dionysius is the President, that is, to consecrate Metropolitans and Episcopas and Holy Mooron to dispense all other spiritual gifts”.

*Second Staticon:* “The Catholicos alongwith the Metropolitans shall consecrate for you chief priests and hallow for you the Holy Mooron in accordance with the canons of the Holy Fathers. And when a Catholicos shall die, there is permission and authority to your prelates to consecrate in his place one as Catholicos and there is no power to any body to restrain you from it. Every thing shall be done in order according to custom in consultation with the members of the Committee of which the President is the Metropolitan Dionysius of Malabar”.

In 1934, when the Church promulgated its Constitution, these powers and privileges, vested in the Catholicos, were ensured. The Constitution enshrines four positions of the Catholicos in the Church.

1. The Catholicos is the Primate of the Church. (Article 2.)
2. The Catholicos is the President of the Episcopal Synod. (Article 104).
3. The Catholicos holds the office of the Malankara Metropolitan. (Article 98)
4. The Catholicos, as Malankara Metropolitan, is the President of the Malankara Syrian Christian Association (Article 98).

The relevant provisions of the Constitution are enumerated below:

*Primate of the Church*

**Article 2**

The Malankara Church was founded by St. Thomas the Apostle and is included in the Orthodox Syrian Church of the East and the Primate of the Orthodox Syrian Church of the East is the Catholicos.

*Powers of Catholicos—President the of the Synod*

**Article 64**

The Catholicos shall in consultation with the Malankara Association Managing Committee and according to the recommendations of the Malankara Episcopal Synod, allocate Dioceses to the Metropolitans.

**Article 100**

The powers of the Catholicos include the consecration of Prelates, presiding over the Episcopal Synod, declaring its decisions and implementing them, conducting administration as representative of the Synod and consecrating the Holy Mooron.

**Article 104**

The Catholicos shall be the President of the Synod.

**Article 105**

The Catholicos shall convene the Synod and Preside over the Synod.

**Article 112**

The Catholicos shall consecrate with the co-operation of the Episcopal Synod the required number of Bishops and Metropolitans for the Malankara Church. On the occasion of the consecration of a Bishop or a Metropolitan, such Bishop or Metropolitan shall submit a statement regarding faith and submission (Salmoosa) to the Catholicos, the President of the Synod. The Catholicos shall give a certificate of consecration (Stacon) to the prelate so consecrated.

**Article 113**

If any one is to be consecrated a bishop or Metropolitan, he shall be elected to such office by the Association. If such

election is approved by the Episcopal Synod, the Catholicos shall consecrate the candidate canonically with the cooperation of the Synod.

**Article 118**

Complaint against prelates shall be made to the President of the Episcopal Synod and the President shall bring it before the Synod and after giving notice to both parties and receiving evidence and hearing arguments, the President shall pronounce the decision in accordance with the majority opinion of the Synod.

3. *Malankara Metropolitan*

*President of Malankara Association — Trustee*

**Article 98**

The Catholicos may also hold the office of the Malankara Metropolitan. As the Malankara Metropolitan, he shall be the President of the Association and the Managing Committee and the Metropolitan Trustee of the Community properties. The Malankara Metropolitan may officially visit all the parish churches of the Malankara Church and if found needed, he may convene the Parish Assembly and the Diocesan Assembly after giving information to the Diocesan Metropolitan. When the Catholicos and Malankara Metropolitan happen to be two individuals, regulations needed shall be made about their respective rights and powers.

**Article 94**

The Prime jurisdiction regarding the temporal, ecclesiastical and spiritual administration of the Malankara Church is vested in the Malankara Metropolitan subject to the provisions of this Constitution.

It is evident from the provisions of the Constitution that the Malankara Church is self-sufficient regarding ecclesiastical, spiritual and temporal administration. In other words it is autonomous and autocephalous. The Church is not subservient or subordinate to anyone.

**Catholicos-Patriarch Relationship**

The Constitution envisages a friendly relationship between the Malankara and the Antiochene Churches. This bond depends upon observing three conditions viz, Primacy of the Patriarch, and

the Catholicos in their respective domain, cooperation of Catholicos in the installation of the Patriarch and the cooperation of the Patriarch in the installation of the Catholicos. The position accorded to the Patriarch in the Constitution is primacy and not the position of supremacy. He is Primate of the Church in Syria, not Supreme Head of the Orthodox Syrian Church.

The relevant Constitutional provisions are:

**Article 1**

The Malankara Church is a division of the Orthodox Syrian Church. The Primate of the Orthodox Syrian Church is Patriarch of Antioch.

**Article 101**

The Malankara Church shall recognise the Patriarch, canonically consecrated with the cooperation of the Catholicos.

**Article 114**

If any one shall be consecrated as Catholicos, he shall be elected to that office by the Association. If such election is approved by the Episcopal Synod, the Synod shall consecrate that person as Catholicos. If there be a Patriarch recognised by the Malankara Church, the Patriarch shall be invited when the Catholicos shall be consecrated and if the Patriarch arrives he shall, as the President of the Synod, consecrate the Catholicos with the cooperation of the Synod.

**Article 118**

Complaint against prelates shall be made to the President of the Episcopal Synod and the President shall bring it before the Synod and after giving notice to both parties and receiving evidence and hearing arguments the President shall pronounce the decision in accordance with the majority opinion of the Synod. If the complaint is against the Catholicos, the Patriarch, if there is a Patriarch recognised by the Malankara Church, shall also be invited and in the event of his arriving, he shall be the President of the Synod and if he does not arrive, the Synod shall pronounce the decision.

In the light of Article 1, when the Patriarch is present with the Catholicos, he will have the chief place of honour and the Catholicos, the second place.

These are the only privileges attributed to the Patriarch in the Constitution provided he is one recognised by the Malankara

Church. It is obvious that the Patriarch has no authority, jurisdiction, control, supervision, or concern over or with the temporalities of the Malankara Church.

There is no dependence on the Patriarch either, in any manner whatsoever. The privileges of the Patriarch are exercisable only on the basis of mutual acceptance and recognition of the Patriarch and Catholicos. On violation of these statutes, these privileges are lost by the Patriarch.

### **Church of Syria recognises Catholicate**

Patriarch Mar Abdul Messiah had re-established the Catholicate and installed a Catholicos in 1912. But the later Patriarchs did not recognise the installation of the Catholicos till the Supreme Court of India confirmed its validity on September 12, 1958. In his peace Agreement letter of December 9, 1958, Patriarch Ignatius Yakoub III officially recognised and accepted the Catholicos and Catholicate unconditionally when he declared: "We hereby accept Mar Baselios Geevarghese as Catholicos." This recognition of the Catholicate by the Church of Syria was further confirmed when the Patriarch accepted an invitation of the Malankara Church Synod, came to Malankara and enthroned Mar Ougen Timotheos as Catholicos in 1964 in succession to Moran Mar Geevarghese in cooperation with the Synod of Malankara Church.

### **Dr. Alex Paul Urumpackal's Comments**

In the light of the constitutional provisions on the status of the Catholicos, Dr. Alex Paul Urumpackal sums up the position of the Catholicos as under :

"The Constitution clearly states the rights and powers of the Catholicos in Malabar. The status of the Catholicos in the Constitution is as the Prime Head of the Catholicate. He is given the same status in his Catholicate as that is enjoyed by the Patriarch in his Patriarchate. It is important to note that according to the Constitution, the Catholicos of Malabar has no more dependence on the Jacobite Patriarch of Antioch. Only the Ecumenical Synod is above the Catholicos of Malabar. This independence really and juridically makes the Head of the Jacobite Church of Malabar a Catholicos in the real juridical sense. He is, therefore, no more a

Maphrian. In other words, our contention is that by the promulgation of the Constitution in 1934 the Maphrian of Malabar has become not only de facto but also de jure Catholicos of Malabar.”<sup>4</sup>

The Peace concordance letter of 9.12.1958 from Patriarch Yakoub III, implied that the Patriarch unconditionally recognised and accepted :

- (i) the re-establishment of the Catholicate in Malankara.
- (ii) the ruling Catholicos on the throne of St. Thomas.
- (iii) the primacy of the Catholicos;
- (iv) the Constitution of the Church;

The subsequent event of mutual acceptance on 16.12.1958 proclaimed that the Churches achieved mutual appreciation and cooperation. In this manner the Catholicos/Catholicate of Malankara Orthodox Church was recognised by the Patriarch Church of Syria.

### **Catholicos-Patriarch**

It has been categorically found that the Catholicos is the Primate of the Malankara Church and that his powers and privileges have been safeguarded in the Church's Constitution which is a legally and morally binding document for the preservation of the character and autonomy of the Church. Also, in the ecclesiastical context, the powers and privileges of the Catholicos are valid and equated with those of Patriarch. The Catholicate and Constitution have, therefore, established beyond doubt the autocephalous and autonomous character of the Malankara Church. In the circumstances, the logical conclusion in the development of thought regarding the status of the head of the Malankara Church would be to elevate the present Catholicate to the level of Patriarchate and title the Primate as Catholicos Patriarch. This would not only concretise the position of the Church's equality in the Commonwealth of Churches but, more significantly, also ensure a positive role and position of honour and respect in the Indian national horizon. Dr. Samuel V.C. visualises a leading part for the Malankara church in the Indian national scene and puts this idea forthright as under: “the Catholicate, however it came into being, represents succession to St. Thomas and apostolic continuity and is the ecclesiastical

4. Dr. Alex Paul Urumpackal: The Juridical Status of the Catholicos of Malabar. (Rome 1977) : p. 16.

head of the Christian Church in India symbolising its freedom in the national context, which the Kerala Church is most eligible to claim. In order to realise this vision, it is not the "Catholicos of the East" that is required; the term "East" should be replaced by the term "India". The nomenclature "Catholicos-Patriarch of India" is more befitting to the incumbent of the ecclesiastical head of the Indian Church".<sup>5</sup>

Further, on the occasion of celebration of the seventieth year of the re-establishment of the Catholicate in 1982, His Holiness Ilia II, Catholicos-Patriarch of All Georgia, USSR, designated the present Catholicos as Catholicos-Patriarch of the East, while decorating him with the Order of St. George. Historian Dr. Alex Paul Urumpackal also anticipates such a move as he said, "Juridically, the Catholicos has all the powers to administer the Catholicate independently. But, as a living ecclesiastical organism, it needs a Patriarch for the perfection. There is no law or tradition which prohibits an autocephalous Church to consecrate its Head as a Patriarch. Time has come that Malankara Church think of consecrating its Head as the Patriarch and declaring itself to be a Patriarchate."<sup>6</sup>

## **Constitution**

### *Evolution*

The introduction of the trustee-ship in 1840 and the institution of the Malankara Syrian Christian Association by the Mulanthuruthy Synod in 1876 have been in the right direction and sufficient in themselves. They, however, did not express all the aspirations and status of a Church and safeguard its rights and privileges, its autonomy and autocephaly. This prompted the leaders of the Church to work out a Constitution for the Church.

Malankara Metropolitan Vattasseril Geevarghese Mar Dionysius initiated action in this regard. He desired the Managing Committee to take up the task of drawing a Constitution for the Church at its meeting on 15.8.1928. A sub-Committee with O.M. Cherian as Convenor was constituted and directed to submit a draft Constitution. The Malankara Association held on September 4.1930 ratified the decision.

5. Dr. Samuel V.C. Ithu Oru Indian Sabhayo? (Malayalam) 1975. p. 134.

6. Dr. Alex Paul Urumpackal : The Juridical Status of the Catholicos of Malabar. pp. 135-6

The Constitution was finalised during the time of Catholicos Mar Geevarghese (II). It was presented in the Malankara Association meeting of December 26, 1934 held at M.D. Seminary, which adopted it and brought it into force.

Twice, the Constitution was amended, on May 17, 1951 and on April 14, 1967, by the Malankara Association. The amended Constitution was later approved by the Holy Episcopal Synod also and was promulgated by His Holiness Moran Mar Baselios Augen First, Catholicos of the East and Malankara Metropolitan per his Order No. 156/67 of 26th June, 1967.

### **Supreme Court on the Legal Status of Catholicos, Catholicate and Constitution**

The Catholicate and the Constitution are the two pillaric institutions on which the edifice of Malankara Church virtually exists—the hall marks of her autonomy and autocephaly. The Catholicate of the East was re-established on 17.9.1912 by the Patriarch Abdul Messiah of Antioch, with the installation of a Catholicos, Mar Paulose. Whereas, the Constitution was adopted by the Malankara Syrian Christian Association on December 26, 1934.

These two institutions were questioned about their validity and sanctity by the Patriarchal Party in law courts at various levels, with a view to undermine the independent status and instead, foist the imperious supremacy of the Patriarchate of Antioch on Malankara Church. The issues finally came before the Supreme Court of India.

Seized of the issues, the Supreme Court pointed out that<sup>7</sup> :—

“the actual issues raised in this case, quite clearly indicate that the principal contention of the plaintiffs in the present suit is that the defendants had become heretics or aliens to the Church or had voluntarily gone out of the Church only by reason of certain conduct definitely particularised in paragraphs 19 to 26 of the plaint namely (i) the acceptance of Abdul Messiah as a validly continuing Patriarch; (ii) the acceptance of the establishment of the Catholicate with power

7. Judgement of the Supreme Court of India : Para 28. p. 24

to the Catholicos for the time being (a) to ordain Metropolitans, (b) to consecrate Moorone, (c) to issue sthathicons, (d) to allot Edavagas and (e) to receive Ressissa. These are the specific acts on which is founded the charge of heresy or going out of the Church by setting up a new Church. It has not been disputed that the power to issue Sthathicons and to allot Edavagas are not independent powers but are incidental to and flow from the power to ordain Metropolitans. The question is whether these contentions are concluded by the final decision (Ex. 256) pronounced only July 4, 1928 in the interpleader suit (O.S. No. 94 of 1088) which is reported in 45 T.L.R. 116.”

These were decided by the Travancore High Court on review. “That judgement decided that neither (a) the repudiation of Abdullah II nor (b) acceptance of Abdullah who had ceased to be a Patriarch, nor (c) acceptance of the Catholicate with powers as herein before mentioned nor (d) the reduction of the power of the Patriarch to a vanishing point, ipso facto constituted a heresy or amounted to voluntary separation by setting up a new Church”. (Page 32 Para 32).

One of the new charges contended by the Patriarchal Party before the Supreme Court was:

“(iv) The re-establishment of the institution of the Catholicate of the East in Malabar having jurisdiction over India, Burma and Ceylon and other countries in the East is different from the institution of Catholicate that was the subject matter of the interpleader suit (O.S. No. 94 of 1088)”.<sup>8</sup> (Para 33 (iv))

On this argument, the Supreme Court had made it clear that the Catholicate of the East established by Patriarch Mar Abdul Messiah in 1912 and the Catholicate envisaged in the Constitution are the same without any distinction and that, in fact, the Patriarchal Party had accepted the position in their appeal to the High Court of Travancore. The relevant extract is reproduced below:-

“38. Re. (iv): An attempt is made by learned counsel for the respondents to make out that what was referred to in the interpleader suit (O.S. No. 94 of 1088) was the ordination of a

8. Ibid : Para 33 (iv) Page 33

Catholicos whereas in the present suit reference is made to the establishment of a Catholicate and further that, in any case, the Catholicate of the East referred to in the plaint in the present suit is an institution quite different from the Catholicate which was the subject matter of discussion in the interpleader suit (O.S. No. 94 of 1088). We do not think there is any substance whatever in this contention. A reference to paragraphs 30 and 31 of the written statement clearly indicates that the institution of Catholicate, which is relied upon by the defendants, is no other than the Catholicate established in Malabar in 1088 by Patriarch Abdul Messiah. This position is accepted by the plaintiffs themselves in their grounds of appeal Nos. 13, 15, 17, 18 and 27 to the High Court of Travancore from the decision of the District Judge of Kottayam in this case. Issues Nos. 14 and 15 as well as the judgement of the District Judge in this case also indicate that the subject matter of this part of the controversy centered round the Catholicate which had been established by Abdul Messiah in the year 1088. Before the argument advanced before us, there never was a case that the impugned Constitution (Ex. A.M.) had established a Catholicate of the East. The purported distinction sought to be drawn between the ordination of Catholicos and the establishment of a Catholicate and a Catholicate established by Abdul Messiah in 1088 and the Catholicate of the East created by the impugned Constitution (Ex. A.M.) and which is sought to be founded upon as a new cause of action in the present suit, appears to us to be a purely fanciful after thought and is totally untenable.<sup>9</sup>

The validity of the Constitution was objected mainly on the ground of competency of the Malankara Association meeting held at M.D. Seminary at Kottayam on December 26, 1934 which adopted it. The Supreme Court took note of the issue and decreed:

“In our opinion the M.D. Seminary meeting was properly held and the first defendant, who is now the sole appellant before us, was validly appointed as the Malankara Metropolitan and as such became the ex-officio trustee of the Church properties....”<sup>10</sup> (Para 43).

9. *ibid* : Para 38 Pp. 36-7.

10. *ibid* : Pp. 42-43.

Now that the validity and competency of the Malankara Association meeting at M.D. Seminary held on December 26, 1934 and the Malankara Metropolitan elected in that meeting are established, it ipso facto implies the validity and acceptance of other proceedings of the said Association. It was this Association meeting which adopted the Constitution of the Church. The validity of the Constitution is beyond question.

### **Features**

The Constitution enshrines the fundamental features of the Church, provides directions for its internal administration and preserves its integrity and autonomy. The essential features of the Church are provided in five Articles under Part I Declaration which form the Preamble of the Constitution. The first Article emphasises the bond of relationship between the two Churches of Syria and Malankara, the second, the foundation of the Malankara Church by St. Thomas and the Primacy of the Catholicos, the third refers to the name of the Church, the fourth about the Faith, Traditions etc. and the fifth about the canons governing the administration of the Church.

#### *I. Declaration*

1. The Malankara Church is a division of the Orthodox Syrian Church. The Primate of the Orthodox Syrian Church is the Patriarch of Antioch.
2. The Malankara Church was founded by St. Thomas, the Apostle and is included in the Orthodox Syrian Church of the East and the Primate of the Orthodox Syrian Church of the East is the Catholicos.
3. The ancient and the real name of the Malankara Church is the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church although it is also wrongly called 'The Jacobite Church'. for the same reasons for which the Orthodox Syrian Church has been also called so.
4. All men and women, who have received Holy Baptism and believe in the divinity of the Holy Trinity, the incarnation of the Son, the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father, the Holy Church and the application of the Nicene Creed, three-in-all, the divine inspiration of Holy Traditions, the mediation of the Mother of God and the saints, the commemoration of the departed ones, the

administration of the seven sacraments, and the canonical observances like fasting etc. and have accepted the obligation to observe them, will be members of this Church.

5. The approved Canon of this Church is the Hudaya Canon written by Bar Hebraeus (the same canon book as the one printed in Paris in the year 1898).

The Articles quoted above highlight the objectives of the Constitution. Briefly they are (a) to put in the correct and right perspective, the relationship of the Malankara Church with the Orthodox Church of Syria (b) to ensure the autonomy of Malankara Church; (c) to establish the juridical status of the Catholicos; (d) to provide rules and regulations for the internal administration of the Church; and (e) to identify the Orthodox Faith and practices followed by the Church. All these have been codified in 134 paras under 13 Sections.

After making an analytical study of the Constitution and its adoption by the Malankara Church, Dr. Urumpackal concludes:

“The Malankara Church formulated and promulgated its Constitution fully independently of the Patriarch. This Constitution is similar to the self-declaration of Seleucia in 410 by which it became a Catholicate. Our contention is that this formulation and the promulgation of the Constitution is a self-declaration of the Malankara Church about its juridical rights and independant status. By this Constitution, this Church declared that its Head is a Catholicos and Malankara is a Catholicate in the real sense.”<sup>11</sup>

### One Church two Parts

The Constitution conceives one whole Orthodox Syrian Church, with two parts namely, the Orthodox Syrian Church in Syria under the Patriarchate and the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church of the East in India under the Catholicate. The Primate of the Orthodox Syrian Church in Syria is the Patriarch.

### Bar Hebraeus's Views

Bar Hebraeus, the Catholicos of the East at Tigris in the 13th century (1266-86) produced a voluminous history of the Eastern

1. Dr. Alex Paul Urumpackal : The Juridical Status of the Catholicos of Malabar (Rome 1977) : Page 106.

Church. He conceived the Eastern Church in two hierarchical divisions — the western and the eastern. The western divisional Church with headquarters at Antioch developed under the Patriarchate of Syria and the Eastern division church with the further eastern Christian domain outside the Roman empire developed around Seleucia under a Catholicate. The history of the western church is depicted in Part I from the times of St. Peter, its founder, till his own times; the second part which deals with the eastern division begins with the apostolic times of St. Thomas who preached to Mazdais and Persians and in Tigris before he proceeded to India.

### **Dr V.C. Samuel's Comments**

The comments of Dr. V.C. Samuel on the Patriarch-Maphrian relationship following the development of Maphrianate at Tigris in 629 is also note-worthy. To quote: "After 629, the Patriarch of Syria at Antioch and the Maphrian of Tigris were considered as two heads of Churches representing the Western and Eastern divisions of One Church. They decided to function within one's own sphere of authority without interfering administratively in the other's domain.... The Maphrian used to be called the Catholicos and the Catholicos of the East."<sup>12</sup>

The idea is clear here that a concept which visualised a Patriarchate in Syria and a Catholicate at Seleucia/Tigris heading the western and eastern divisions of one Orthodox Syrian Church was the tradition of the Church.

### **Malankara Church is Autocephalous**

The Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church claims that she is autocephalous. It means that she is self-sufficient in all aspects of ecclesial requirements. By definition "an autocephalous Church is a self-governing body under the leadership of its own ecclesiastical head, say Patriarch or Catholicos, or even Archbishop or Metropolitan" and autonomous Church means "one" having its own laws or individuality and self-hood."<sup>13</sup>

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12. Samuel Dr. V.C. : "Antioch and Patriarch, Catholicos, Maphrian designations. — Article published in Malayalam in Church Weekly (Kottayam) September-October 1978.
13. Samuel Dr. V.C. . An Orthodox Catechism on the Faith and Life of the Church (1983) : P. 2.

The Church was always autocephalous. It had installed native Archdeacons, Mar Thomas as heads on its own authority. The Church confirmed its autocephalous nature when it re-established the Catholicate and installed a native of Malankara as Catholicos in 1912 and later adopted a Constitution independently for her internal administration in 1934.. According to the provisions of the Constitution, the following privileges are conferred on the Church:

<i>Powers regarding</i>	<i>Operating Authority</i>	<i>Article</i>
1. Election of Metropolitan	Malankara Syrian Christian Association	113
2. Election of Catholicos	—do—	114
3. Consecration of Metropolitan	Catholicos	100,112 & 113
4. Consecration of Catholicos	Episcopal Synod	114
5. Allocation of Dioceses to Metropolitans	Catholicos	64
6. Consecration of Holy Mooron	Catholicos	100
7. Prime jurisdiction regarding the temporal, ecclesiastical and spiritual administration	Malankara Metropolitan	94
8. Matters concerning faith, order and discipline	Episcopal Synod	107
9. Complaints against Prelates and Catholicos	Episcopal Synod	118

From the preceeding account it is abundantly clear that the Constitution conceives the Malankara Church as self-sufficient in all her requirements be it temporal, ecclesiastical or spiritual in nature and upholds that the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church is rightly autocephalous in character. To conclude, therefore, the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church which has an apostolic foundation and throne of St. Thomas of the East, a Catholicate proclaiming her autonomy and a Constitution guaranteeing her the right of

self-government, has elevated herself to the stature of a national Church in an independent India — THE ORTHODOX CHURCH OF INDIA.

## CHURCH ADMINISTRATION

### Development of Administrative Authority

The Malankara Church was episcopal in nature from the beginning. The local head of the Church used to be the Arch-deacon. However, as the Church grew steadily in strength and responsibilities, this type of single handed administration could not survive long. Education spread giving a new outlook to the people. Western influences in the nature of Roman Catholic absolutism and Protestant liberalism gained an impact on the minds of the Syrian Christians. Also, the Church found herself in a strange predicament of resorting to civil courts for redress of her grievances from early nineteenth century. In these circumstances, it was found necessary to define the autonomous nature of the Church, its episcopal functions, the relation between Churches in Syria and Malankara and its pattern of administration.

### Episcopal Authority

By virtue of being an episcopal Church, its authority is vested in the apex body of the council of all the Episcopas (Metropolitans) of the Church with the Catholicos presiding over it, called the SYNOD. The authority of the Synod is final and binding. It has exclusive rights and privileges in the matter of upholding the Faith of the Church, its discipline and order of Apostolic succession. As regards temporal administration, the Church is guided by the Malankara Syrian Christian Association.

The Metropolitans rule the dioceses assigned to them by the Synod. They appoint vicars for the parishes. The vicars are, therefore, responsible to the Metropolitans. The Church administration is, therefore, a three-tier system; the Vicar-Metropolitan-Synod tier.

The Vicar is not only a priest ordained by a Metropolitan for discharging ecclesiastical duties but also a representative of the Metropolitan in the parish and is obliged to serve the interests of the former while at the same time keeping in view the welfare of the parish.

### Representative Body

The earliest reference in history to any 'body' vested with

administrative authority is found in the council of four members elected in the meeting held at Aalangad in 1653 to assist the Mar Thoma. The members were Kadavil Alexander (Chandy) Kathanar of Kadamattom, Abraham Thomas Kathanar of Kallichery, George Kathanar of Ankamali and Palliveetil Alexander (Chandy) Kathanar of Kuravilangad. With the split of the Church and a predominant group embracing the Roman Catholic Church, the Council ceased to exist. The Aalangad meeting, however, was the first known representative meeting of the Church. The next important occasion measuring to the status of a representative body of the Church was the **MAVELIKARA SYNOD** of January 16, 1836. This assembly was summoned by Cheppad Mar Dionysius to consider the proposals of Bishop Daniel Wilson of the Anglican Church. The next representative meeting was held in 1869 for the purpose of electing co-trustees to manage the properties of the Church in the wake of the Cochin Award of 1840. The Trusteeship of the ruling Malankara Metropolitan, a Clergy Trustee and a Lay Trustee was the first step towards any definite form of management of the properties of the Church. The **MULANTHURUTHY SYNOD** of 1876 set the landmark in the development of administration of the Church affairs with the evolution of Malankara Syrian Christian Association and the Managing Committee.

**The Structure and Management of Administration**

TABLE I  
THE ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE CHURCH

Subject Allocation	Administrative Body
1. All Ecclesiastical administrative matters	(i) Malankara Syrian Christian Association, Managing Committee and its Working Committee. (ii) Diocesan Council/General Council. (iii) Parish General Body/Parish Managing Committee.
2. Faith, Order and Disciplinary matters	(i) Episcopal Synod presided by the Catholicos. Members- All Metropolitans of the Church.

TABLE II  
THE ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE

Structural Levels	Administrative Machinery	Administrative Head	Functionary
CHURCH	Malankara Syrian Christian Association Managing Committee Working Committee	Malankara Metropolitan -do- -do-	Secretary Co-trustees
DIOCESES	Diocesan General Council Diocesan Council	Diocesan Metropolitan	Diocesan Secretary
PARISHES	Parish General Body Parish Managing Committee	Vicar	Secretary Treasurer

### Parishes

Parishes are the constituent units of the Church. They were represented in the Malankara Association of 1934 which adopted the Constitution. The Constitution, therefore, is applicable to all the parishes of the Church. It also follows that the parishes are within the Constitution and obliged to the operation of its provisions in so far as they are concerned. They are neither outside the umbrella of the Constitution nor independent entities. Thus the Constitution safeguards the rightful place of the parish in the Church (Articles 6-44) and enshrines an administrative machinery for its management.

### The Malankara Syrian Christian Association

THE MULANTHURUTHY SYNOD, summoned by the Patriarch Peter III, had resolved that the Church should have an elected body called the MALANKARA SYRIAN CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION to manage and control all the religious and social concerns of the whole Church. It also decreed that the Association should have four (A.B.C & D) categories of representatives, each paying a membership fee of Rs. 100, Rs. 50, Rs. 25 and Rs. 10,

respectively and that whereas it may be difficult for the whole body of the Association to manage the affairs of the Church, it may have a Managing Committee consisting of eight priests and sixteen lay people with the ruling Metropolitan as its President. This was the original Constitution of the Association and the Managing Committee.

The Constitution adopted specific provisions for the composition of Malankara Association. The following Articles are relevant.

### **Composition and Representation**

#### **Article 70**

The Malankara Arch-diocese shall have an Association by the name "Malankara Syrian Christian Association".

#### **Article 71**

A priest and two laymen elected by each parish Assembly and the members of the existing Managing Committee shall be members of the Association.

#### **Article 72**

The Malankara Metropolitan shall be the President and the remaining prelates having administrative charge of Dioceses shall be Vice-Presidents of the Association.

#### **Article 73**

The Malankara Metropolitan shall preside over meetings of the Association.

### **Malankara Metropolitan**

The Malankara Metropolitan is the administrative head of the Church and in him "the prime jurisdiction regarding the temporal, ecclesiastical and spiritual administration of the Malankara Church is vested". (Article 94). Only a Metropolitan elected by the Malankara Syrian Christian Association could hold this office, for the Constitution stipulates that "the Malankara Metropolitan shall be elected to that office by the Association". (Article 97).

The administrative powers, duties and responsibilities of the Malankara Metropolitan compass the temporal, ecclesiastical and spiritual affairs of the Church. To enumerate, they are :

1. The Malankara Metropolitan shall be the president of :
  - (a) the Malankara Syrian Christian Association,

- (b) the Managing Committee (Article 98) and
  - (c) the Working Committee (Article 87).
2. He shall convene the Association and the Managing Committee. (Articles 74 and 81).
  3. He shall nominate members to :
    - (a) the Managing Committee corresponding to the number approved by the Association (Article 79) and
    - (b) the Working Committee (Article 87)
  4. *Trustee :*  
 He shall be the Metropolitan Trustee ;
    - (a) for the Trust Fund and the Kottayam Syrian Seminary along with the other two Clergy and Lay trustees (Article 91) and
    - (b) for the rest of the community properties if they are not subject to other special provisions (Articles 92 and 98).
  5. *Dioceses and Parishes :*
    - 5.1 The Malankara Metropolitan has power of supervision over the Diocesan Metropolitan in the administration of the Diocese. (Article 66)
    - 5.2 He shall hear any appeal against any decision of the Diocesan Metropolitan before his Advisory Council. (Article 62)
    - 5.3 He, if found necessary, can convene the Diocesan Assembly after giving information to the Diocesan Metropolitan (Article 98).
    - 5.4 He shall directly administer any diocese in case there is no Diocesan Metropolitan (Article 96)
    - 5.5. He may officially visit all the parish churches of the Malankara Church and if found needed, he may convene the Parish Assembly after giving information to the Diocesan Metropolitan (Article 94)
  6. *Income :*
    - 6.1 The Malankara Metropolitan is entitled to a fixed percentage of the income out of the annual gross income of a parish church. (Article 122)

6.2. He may allocate a percentage of this annual income to himself, Dioceses, Metropolitans, Diocesan Fund and Malankara Diocesan Fund—(Article 123)

7. *Faith, Order and Discipline :*

In all matters concerning the faith, order and discipline of the Church, the Episcopal Synod is the supreme authority (Article 107). None has the right including the assemblies of the parish diocese and the Malankara Association to alter the faith of the Church but in case of any dispute, the decision of the Synod shall be final (Articles 108 and 128)

8. *Ordination :*

In the matter of ordination also, the Malankara Metropolitan oversees the process of selection and theological study of the candidates desiring ordination. He receives the requests of candidates duly recommended by Diocesan Metropolitan. According to his convenience, the Malankara Metropolitan shall send the applicants to the theological Seminary for theological study and provided the Principal of the Seminary certifies the fitness of the candidates for ordination, the Malankara Metropolitan or Diocesan Metropolitan at their discretion, ordains them. (Article 111)

**Importance of laity in Church Administration-Democratic Character**

Evidently, three groups in the Church are represented in the Association General Assembly—the Metropolitans, the clergy and the people. A distinct feature and significant factor to be observed is that two-third of this administrative body is composed of the laity and only one-third by clergy, This ratio is maintained in regard to the composition of Managing Committee also. (Articles 78 & 79)

**Community Trustees**

The Constitution provides for a three member trusteeship of Malankara Metropolitan, Clergy Trustee and Layman Trustee for the management of community properties and its finance and that these three Associate Trustees are elected by the Association (Articles 91, 92 & 93).

**Association Secretary**

The Constitution stipulates that there shall be a Secretary for the Association and that he shall be elected by the Association

Managing Committee (Article 75). This Secretary is assigned three roles. He functions as Secretary of the Malankara Association, (Article 75) Secretary of the Managing Committee (Article 82) and Secretary of the Malankara Metropolitan's Consultative Committee (Article 89). He is also a member of the Working Committee (Article 87).

The duties and responsibilities of the Secretary are also specifically laid down. They include i) Maintaining the minutes of the Malankara Association and the Managing Committee, ii) recording and maintaining the accounts of the income and expenditure from the assets of the Community and the revenues of the Malankara Archdiocese, iii) preparing and presenting upto-date statement of accounts at the meetings of the Managing Committee (i to iii) Article 77) and iv) maintaining a register for the movable and immovable properties of the Community (Article 76).

The Secretary is accountable to the Managing Committee. It has the right to remove him from office without assigning any reason (Article 75).

The office of Secretary for the Church formally came into being with the adoption of the 8th canon of the Mulanthuruthy Synod of 1876 and later the Constitution in 1934. But a Secretary personal to the Malankara Metropolitan was in existence although not elected and responsible to Managing Committee. To mention, E. M. Philip was the Secretary to Pulikottil Joseph Mar Dionysius and Fr. Jacob Manalil to Vattasseril Geevarghese Mar Dionysius. Usually, the Secretary is a layman.

A list showing the Secretaries who were in position in the past is placed at Appendix XII.A. The present Secretary Paul Mathai was elected by the Managing Committee on December 27, 1985.

By virtue of the elected representative character, the Association is beholden as the Parliament of the Church-the supreme administrative authority of the Church. Two-thirds of the composition of the Association is, as already seen, made up of the elected laity. The Constitution has, therefore, entrusted the laity with an important and responsible role in the management of the Church as a whole. It upholds a democratic feature.

The higher percentage of laity does not minimise the impor-

tance of clergy. In their own right, the clergy has equal responsibilities to shoulder in the administration of the Church. Along with the laity, the clergy serve as the mind and voice of the community.

Notwithstanding the importance of laity in the administration of the Church, the Malankara Association blends episcopal and democratic traditions and features in a most equitable and justicial manner without either of them losing grace and grounds or dominating.

A comprehensive table showing the representative body/ Malankara Association meetings since 1843 is given in Appendix XIII

### **Management of the Finance of the Church**

The finance of the Church is managed by the Managing Committee. The Constitution has laid down that "For the income and expenditure of the Community, a budget shall be prepared by the Committee in the beginning of the year and any expenditure exceeding the same shall only be incurred with the consent of the Committee" (Article 84).

The assets of the Church are the landed property, buildings, and institutions. It derives income from these sources and other programmes and projects managed at different Church levels — by Malankara Metropolitan, Managing Committee, Trusts, Societies, Dayara etc. The Managing Committee on 27.12.1966 appointed a sub-committee to rationalise the accounting procedure of the assets and revenue sources. This Committee recommended categorisation of the assets and income resources under four schedules, for preparation of its budget.

**Schedule A :** Properties, institutions and projects the accounts of which should be rendered to the Managing Committee. These are : Old Seminary, M.D. Seminary, Catholicate Fund, Catholicate Office, Malankara Sabha Magazine, General Accounts, Malankara Church Coffee Estate, Pallikunnu, St. Mary's Hospital, Eraviperoor, St. Thomas Dayara, Vettickal, Mar Dionysius Centre, Church Centre Development Fund. Budget Estimates 1986-87 : Rs 42.34 lakhs.

**Schedule B :** Organisations, institutions etc., the accounts of which are to be rendered to the Episcopal Synod and for information of the Managing Committee: Missionary Organisations, Sectoral Organisations, Theological Seminary, Monasteries, Convents, Child Welfare Centres, Parumala Seminary and institutions under its management, Paret Mar Ivanios Hospital, Puthuppally, St. Geroge Hospital, Puthuppady, Malankara Orthodox Church Publications. Budget Estimates 1986-87 : Rs 196.53 lakhs.

**Schedule C :** Institutions, the accounts of which are to be rendered to respective Governing Boards. Colleges and Schools under the corporate managements, Malankara Medical Mission Hospital, Kolencherry, Basilius Mar Thoma Charity Fund. Budget Estimates 1986-87 ; Rs 561.49 lakhs.

**Schedule D :** Budgets of all dioceses. Budget Estimates : 149.74 lakhs.

This rationalised budgeting procedure in four schedules was accepted by the Managing Committee and was introduced for the first time in 1967-68 and continues since then.

### **Budgetory Growth<sup>15</sup>**

The budget provisions for a ten-year period 1976-77 to 1986-87 shown below indicates the improvement in the system of budgeting and accounts of the Church.

<i>1976-77</i>	<i>1981-82</i>	<i>1986-87</i>
<i>Rs. 1.32 lakhs</i>	<i>Rs. 4.70 lakhs</i>	<i>Rs. 9.50 lakhs</i>

The above figures also point to the tremendous developmental growth of the Church.

### **Orthodox Church Administration — A view**

The form of Orthodox Church Government is neither authoritarian (monarchical) nor majority-rule (purely democratic). It believes in sharing of authority, keeping in view the special roles of the Clergy and the Laity — the mind of the community.

15. The figures are as reported in the Malankara Sabha Magazine—May, 1986 (Page 6) and earlier issues.

An exposition of this concept is given by Rev. Dr. K.C. Joseph as follows:-<sup>16</sup>

The Orthodox Church is organised according to the Episcopal System. As St. Ignatius put it, the Church is where the faithful are gathered around their bishop. To understand St. Ignatius rightly, the background of his Epistles has to be kept in view. St. Ignatius lived and taught and wrote his Epistles as the Pastor of a Church under persecution, to console and strengthen people whose loyalty to Christ was being tested in the crucible of suffering inflicted by enemies of the gospel. When he asked those harrowed Christians to preserve their unity by keeping close to their bishops who were themselves under persecution, his words were surely not meant to support any authoritarian claims of individuals who wanted power over others. In traditional Roman usage, Episcopacy came to mean something rather different from what St. Ignatius had in mind. Monarchial Episcopacy, in which the Bishop is conceived of as the source of *authority* in the Church, is a carry-over from the government of Imperial Rome. The Orthodox conception of episcopacy may be described as Pastoral Episcopacy, where the Bishop is not the monarch or ruler, but the Shepherd or Father of the people. The Bishop is counsellor and guide rather than magistrate and rules by consent rather than by fear. The Roman promotion of episcopal autocracy inevitably led to the growth of Congregationalism in the West. The Orthodox Churches did not pass through this kind of revolution because the Orthodox episcopal system was not incompatible with some of the values which Congregationalism arose to conserve, and which the old Roman episcopal system did not permit. Even Rome is beginning to recognize this and make adjustments.

The Orthodox system of Church government is based on what may be called "the mind of the community", which depends *neither* on the "infallibility", of person or any section of the Church *nor* on a democratic vote. Dictatorship, and "majority rule", are

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16. Rev. Dr. K.C. Joseph (Christian Counselling Centre-Vellore) — The Laity's participation in Orthodox Church Administration-Speech delivered at a Seminar in Madras, 13.2.1977. Note: This article is based on a paper which the author presented in 1966 to a high power Constitution Committee for the Ethiopian Orthodox Church—Published as Supplement to the Church Weekly, 20.3.1977.

both alien to the spirit of Orthodox Church administration. It is a perversion of ecclesiological concepts to teach or act as if 'conciliarity' or 'synodicality' means that the *episcopal* synod has some kind of infallibility or stands above any need for correction by the whole body of the Church. If St. Irenaeus believed that the best guarantee of 'apostolic' faith would be the bishop in the 'apostolic succession', he surely did not ever imagine that the laying on of hands would make any bishop infallible in all matters of Church life! In the Church, the Bishops have an honoured place because they are the custodians of sacramental grace, but they are not the whole Church and their authority is not meant to be dictatorial. The clergy have a special position in the life of the Church because they are the instruments through whom sacramental grace is conveyed to all members of the Church, but they are only a section of the Church and cannot be treated as a whole. The Laity are the most numerous element in the Church; they are, in fact, the Church in its relation to the world, and on the Laity will depend the impact of the Church on the world. Nevertheless, the Laity too, in spite of numbers, must be subject to "the mind of the whole community". The point is that no section of the Church should arrogate to itself exclusively the authority of the Church. All sections should have a share in this authority and every separate section should be subject to the authority of the whole. This is the basic principle of Orthodox Church Government.



Patriarch His Holiness Mar Abdul Messiah II (1895 1915)



Chathuruthy Geevarghese Mar Gregorios  
Parumala Saint

## CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

### THE CATHOLICOSES 1912-75

#### 1. MORAN MAR BASELIOS PAULOS 1912-14

Moran Mar Baselios Paulos was the first Catholicos, the titular head of the Orthodox Church of India and all the East.

#### **Early Life**

The Catholicos was born on January 19, 1836 at Kolencherry. As a boy the Catholicos joined Pampakuda Seminary and started studying Syriac. Later, he got his theological training from Mar Kurilose of Syria while the Metropolitan was in Malankara. Mar Kurilose initiated him into the priestly order and was soon ordained as a priest. Known as Murimattom Paulos Kathanar, the future Catholicos had been the vicar of the Kolencherry parish and also the Secretary of Mar Kurilose.

#### **Metropolitan 1876-1912**

Paulos Kathanar was one of the six Metropolitans consecrated by the Patriarch Mar Peter III, in 1876. Titled as Mar Ivanios, the Metropolitan was given charge of the Diocese of Kandanad. Mar Ivanios supported Vattasseril Geevarghese Mar Dionysius in his struggle for independence of the Church. Although a few Metropolitans of the Church had executed the 'Udampadi' (Bond) to the Patriarch, Mar Abdulla, Mar Ivanios stoutly refused any such obligation. Further, the Metropolitan was also bold in attitude for we find that he had issued a statement decrying the unjustified and unreasonable order of excommunication of the Patriarch on Mar Dionysius. It is no wonder, therefore, that the mantle of Catholicos fell on the shoulders of Mar Ivanios when the Patriarch Abdul Messiah decided to reactivate the defunct Catholicate in Persia and re-establish the same in India. It was a right choice and a right decision.

#### **Catholicos 1912-14**

On Sunday, the 17th September, 1912, Patriarch Moran

Mar Abdul Messiah assisted by the Malankara Metropolitan Vattasseril Geevarghese Mar Dionysius and the Metropolitan Mar Gregorios Kallacheril (who became the third Catholicos later) consecrated Murimattoth Paulos Mar Ivanios as the Catholicos of India and all the East, with the title of Moran Mar Baselios Paulos, at St. Mary's Church, Niranam.

The Catholicos, along with the Patriarch Abdul Messiah consecrated two Metropolitans viz Kandanad Karot Yuachim Mar Ivanios and Vakathanam Kaaruchira Geevarghese Mar Philoxenos on February 7, 1913.

The venerable pontiff did not, however, live long to see the fruits of his labour; for, hardly two years after assuming office, the Catholicos passed away on May 2, 1914 while at Pampakuda, near Muvattupuzha and was buried there itself.

## 2. MORAN MAR BASELIOS GEEVARGAESE I 1925-28

Vaakathanam Karuchira Geevarghese Mar Philoxenos, Metropolitan of the Kottayam Diocese, succeeded Baselios Paulos in 1925, as the second Catholicos and remained in position for a brief period of three years before succumbing to death in 1928.

### Early Life

Born on Dhanu 29, 1045 (January, 1870) to parents Karuchira Punnen and Oonichiamma, the young Geevarghese received ordination at the age of sixteen as deacon (Korooyo) on Midhunam 1, 1061 (June 1886) from Metropolitan Kadavil Poulouse Mar Athanasius at Vaakathanam Church. In this, his uncle Kalapurackal Poulouse Kathanar was his guide and benefactor. The young deacon had theological training in Old Seminary. Kadavil Mar Athanasius ordained the young deacon Geevarghese as priest on 18.8.1896 and Ramban (Dayarouso) the next week on 25.8.1896. Ramban, Geevarghese was made Secretary to the Metropolitan and in that capacity laboured a great deal in the construction of the Thrikunnath Seminary at Alwaye which served as the headquarters of Mar Athanasius. When the Metropolitan expired, Ramban Geevarghese was appointed as Manager of the Seminary by his Will. However, the Ramban left the Seminary and came over to the Dayara at Vallikkat, Vaakathanam.

### **Metropolitan 1913-25**

While leading a life of sequestered contemplation at Vallikkat, the Ramban was called by the Church for shouldering higher honour and responsibility, in the position of a Metropolitan. On February 7, 1913, Patriarch Abdul Messiah with the cooperation of Catholicos Paulos I consecrated Ramban Geevarghese as Metropolitan with the title of Mar Philoxenos at Chegannur Church and entrusted him with the charge of Kottayam diocese.

### **Catholicos 1925-28**

In 1925, Mar Philoxenos was conferred the highest office of Catholicos, the head of the Church. On May 2, 1925, the Malankara Metropolitan Geevarghese Mar Dionysius along with Metropolitans Kallacheril Geevarghese Mar Gregorios and Karot Yuachim Mar Ivanios elevated him as the Second Catholicos of the Malankara Church with the title of Baselios Geevarghese I at St. Mary's Church, Niranam.

The duration of Mar Geevarghese's tenure was a short period of three years only. His period is known for mainly two things—The Catholicos, on the next day of his investiture, consecrated Fr. P.T. Geevarghese, the founder of the Monastic order of Imitation of Christ at Bethany, Perunad (Vadasserikara) as Episcopa with the title of Geevarghese Mar Ivanios at St. Mary's Church, Niranam. Secondly, at this time of history, the Trust Fund Suit was at its closing stage in the High Court. The High Court, on July 4, 1928, pronounced its judgement in favour of Malankara Metropolitan. The important features of the judgement were that it held the ex-communication of Mar Dionysius, invalid and the alleged sole right of Patriarch to consecrate Holy Mooron and Metropolitans for Malankara Church “reduced to a vanishing point.”

### **Obituaries**

The Church lost two Metropolitans in 1925 and 1927, namely, Karot Yuachim Mar Ivanios who expired on June 6, 1925 and Edavazhikkal Mar Severios, on June 11, 1927. The tomb of the former is at Parumala and of the latter, at Valia palli at Kottayam.

### **Last Days**

The Catholicos's life was cut short on December 17, 1928

following an abdominal operation at Neyyoor. With all befitting honours, the Catholicos was buried in the Dayara premises at Vallikkat which he had chosen as his headquarters.

### III MORAN MAR BASELIOS GEEVARGHESE II 1929-64

Moran Mar Baselios Geevarghese II succeeded Moran Mar Baselios Geevarghese I on the throne of Catholicos of the East in 1929. Endowed with an all-absorbing grace, an exceptionally brilliant personality and undaunted courage, the Catholicos excelled every one and guided the Church through a series of crisis, helped her to achieve unprecedented rate of progress and expand her frontiers beyond the limits of Malankara. The Catholicos remained as the head of the Church for a period of thirty-five years from 1929 to 1964, perhaps the longest single tenure in the history of any Church.

As a person, the Catholicos was known for his integrity; abject faith in truth and justice, high sense of devotion to the Church, steadfast faith in Orthodoxy, deep knowledge in theology, strict observance of prayers and fasts, and implicit belief in divine guidance, so much so that no one of his generation equalled the divine grace and poise the Catholicos had.

#### Early Life

The Catholicos was born on June 16, 1874 to parents Kallacheril Ulahannan and Naithi at Kurichi near Kottayam. Though Geevarghese was the baptismal name, the infant was endearingly called Punnose. He was called to priestly vocation at the tender age of nine. The story goes that when he was nine years, Punnose was taken seriously ill. The vexed parents vowed to present him for God's work as soon as he recovered. Punnose got well and as promised, his parents took him to Parumala Seminary where he was given to the care of Metropolitan Gregorios. For about six years Punnose had his training from Mar Gregorios and Malpan Vattaseril Geevarghese and thereafter, shifted to Old Seminary. Punnose had his school education initially at CMS College High School and later at the M.D. Seminary High School till Matriculation.

At the age of seventeen on May 24, 1892, Punnose received ordination as Deacon (Koroooyo) from Kadavil Mar Athanasius at St. Peter's and St. Paul's Church and seven years later, as a priest

on November 26, 1898 from Chathuruthy Mar Gregorios, assisted by Pulikottil Mar Dionysius, Kadavil Mar Athanasius and Murimattom Mar Ivanios. Kuttikkatil Deacon Paulose, later Paulose Mar Athanasius, had also received ordination along with him.

### **Ramban 1889-1912**

On November 29, 1898, three days after the ordination as a priest, Mar Gregorios raised Punnose Kathanar to the ascetic order of Ramban. For thirteen long years, the future Catholicos remained as a Ramban. During this period, he assisted Mar Gregorios in the administration of the diocese of Niranam and Thumpamon, served as Manager of the Parumala Seminary after the death of Mar Gregorios, helped in the teaching of deacons at the Old Seminary and translated into Malayalam a few Syriac books viz 'Pardaiso' and Mar Youhanon Maumiono', 'Private Prayers' and 'Lives of Martyrs'.

In 1908, Ramban Punnose had the first opportunity to travel abroad when called upon to accompany the Metropolitan designates Vattasseril Geevarghese Ramban and Kochuparampil Paulos Ramban on their journey to Syria. While in Syria, he utilised the opportunity to gain acquaintance of Moran Mar Abdulla, the then reigning Patriarch, and also to make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem and other holy places.

### **Metropolitan 1912-29**

On September 10, 1912, Patriarch Moran Mar Abdul Messiah consecrated Ramban Punnose, Metropolitan with the title of Geevarghese Mar Gregorios at Parumala church with the assistance of Vattasseril Mar Dionysius and Murimattom Mar Ivanios. Mar Gregorios was assigned the charge of the diocese of Niranam and Thumpamon.

### **Catholicos 1929-64**

For about seventeen years Mar Gregorios remained as Metropolitan before being called upon to adorn the throne of Catholicos in 1929. On December 11, 1928, the Second Catholicos died. Mar Gregorios was soon designated as Catholicos and was raised to the throne on February 15, 1929 by the Malankara Metropolitan Vattasseril Mar Dionysius. Mar Ivanios of Bethany also participated in the services.

During his long tenure of thirty five years, the Catholicos had the rare fortune of consecrating eleven Metropolitans. Not less than a thousand priests and deacons were also estimated to have been ordained by the Catholicos. The Church was greatly strengthened.

The eleven Metropolitans were:

<i>Name</i>	<i>Date of consecration</i>	
1. Kuriakose Mar Gregorios	14.2.1929	{ Rev. Fr. { Pezahmattom { Kuriakose, Pampady
2. Jacob Mar Theophilos	14.2.1929	{ Ramban Jacob, { Bethany
3. Geevarghese Mar Philoxenos	9.11.1930	{ Rev. Fr. { K.T. Geevarghese { Puthencavu.
4. Joseph Mar Severios	5.5.1932	{ Rev. Fr. { V.O.Ouseph { Valakuzhy, { Mallappally
5. Alexios Mar Theodosius	7.4.1938	{ Rev. Fr. { Alexios Mattackal { Niranam.
6. Thoma Mar Dionysius	6.5.1940	{ Rev. Fr. { C.M. Thoma, { Kallumpurath, { Poovathur, { Mavelikara.
7. Patros Mar Osthathios	15.5.1953	{ Rev. Fr. { Patros, Mooken { cheril, Thrippunithura
8. Mathews Mar Ivanios	—do—	{ Rev. Fr. Mathew { Paret, Puthuppally
9. Mathews Mar Kurilos	—do—	{ Rev. Fr. V.K. Mathew { Othara.
10. Mathews Mar Athanasius	—do—	{ Rev. Fr. Mathew { Vattakunnel, { Kottayam.
11. Daniel Mar Philoxenos		{ Rev. Fr. { P.E. Daniel, { Basil, { Pathanamthitta.

### **Mooron Consecration 1931, 1951**

In 1931, the Catholicos exercised his high-priestly function of consecrating the Holy Chrism, called "MOORON" in Syriac. It is the custom of all ancient episcopal Churches to keep this sacred oil for anointing for years together for use on occasions of sacraments Baptism, Holy Unction and consecration of churches. The sacrament of consecration of Mooron by invoking Holy Spirit is, therefore, a great event held in all solemnity and holiness rarely. The Catholicos performed this awe inspiring ceremony on April 22, 1931 and repeated the performance on April 20, 1951.

### **Death of Vattasseril Mar Geevarghese Dionysius 1934**

The Catholicos suffered an irreparable personal loss in the passing away of his master and guide, the Malankara Metropolitan, Vattasseril Geevarghese Mar Dionysius VI, on February 20, 1934. Consequently, the office of Malankara Metropolitan fell vacant.

### **Peace Mission to Patriarch, 1934<sup>1</sup>**

Following Mar Dionysius's death, efforts for bringing the two factions in the Church to a path of peace and concord were revived. Proposals for reconciliation were evolved and it was agreed that Catholicos will go to Syria and meet the Patriarch Moran Mar Aprem for holding discussions on the proposals. Accordingly, the Catholicos undertook a journey on June 2, 1934 to Syria along with Mar Julios, the Patriarch's representative in Malankara, Ramban C.M. Thomas (Thoma Mar Dionysius) and Cheriamadhothil Scaria Malpan. They reached Homs, Patriarchs' headquarters in Syria, on June 26, 1934 and deliberated over the proposals. The Patriarch and Catholicos exchanged proposals but could not come to any solution although the parleys stretched over a period of more than two months. The Catholicos and other delegates found that the proposals from the Patriarch were aimed at subordination of Malankara Church to the Patriarch. They rejected the proposals. Dissatisfied and disappointed at the stance of the Patriarch, Catholicos and his party returned to Malankara on September 20, 1934.

### **Patriarch Aprem's reaction**

The Patriarch was, obviously, angry with the Catholicos for

1. Paret. Z.M. : Mar Geevarghese Baselios (1972) : p. 25.

spurning his proposals and expressed his ire in a long letter addressed to his partisans in Malankara. The letter dated 1934 Kanni 10 (27?) (October 26–November 12) was presented as Document 'Z' in the Trust Fund Suit. In this letter, the Patriarch referred Catholicos Mar Baselios as old man Punnose, accused him of rejecting his advice and proposals and characterised him as an infirm man. The Patriarch further stated that old man Punnose and his sympathisers had cut themselves off from the Holy Church of Antioch which is mother of life. They, therefore, were aliens and shall be outcast from the Holy Church. None had permission either from God or from him to cooperate with them or participate in any divine services with them. Unless and until they repented and received absolution from him, they should be treated as devoid of any right admissible in the Church.<sup>2</sup> The above letter from the Patriarch contributed to the sharpening of emotions and polarisation of adherents to either Patriarch or Catholicos.

A few very important developments took place in 1934 and 1935 which had a direct bearing on the litigation that ensued in 1938, viz. the M.D. Seminary Assembly of December 1934 and the Karingachira Assembly of August 1935, held by the Catholicos Party and the Patriarchal Party respectively.

#### **Malankara Association Meeting 1934**

The Catholicos convened a meeting of the Malankara Syrian Christian Association on Wednesday, December 26, 1934 at M.D. Seminary, Kottayam, as per notice issued on December 3. The agenda items were mainly;

1. Election of Malankara Metropolitan-designate
2. Election of Metropolitans.

This notice was followed by two more from the three Vice-Presidents, Kuriakose Mar Gregorios, Geevarghese Mar Philoxenos and Joseph Mar Severios and the other from 11 clergy and 23 laity members of the Managing Committee. This procedure was adopted to secure credibility to the convening of the Association meeting in the absence of a Malankara Metropolitan, the President of the Association.

The Association met accordingly and elected Catholicos Mar Geevarghese as Malankara Metropolitan. It also elected Fr. Alexios of Bethany Ashram as Metropolitan designate.

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2. Ibid. p. 91.

This Association meeting is very important in the Church history for its other major decisions namely:—

- (i) the two offices of Catholicos and the Malankara Metropolitan were vested in the same person, for the first time. Consequent of this election as Malankara Metropolitan, Mar Baselios became the ex-officio President of the Malankara Association as well as one of the Trustees of the Church properties along with Mani Paulos Kathanar and E.I. Joseph.
- (ii) Adoption of the Constitution for the Church.
- (iii) Establishment of Catholicate Fund for the development programmes of the Church. O.M. Cherian was given charge of this venture.
- (iv) Elected K.M. Mathan Mappillai as Association Secretary.
- (v) Raised the strength of the Managing Committee from 24 to 60 and constituted a working committee of 10 members from the Managing Committee.

### **Patriarchal Party Assembly at Karingachira 1935**

The Patriarchal Party held a meeting of the supporting and partisan parishes on August 22, 1935. A notice dated July 9, 1935 was issued in the name of four Metropolitans: Mar Athanasius, Mar Michael, Mar Dioscoros and Mar Timotheos.

The main agenda items were;

- (i) Election of Malankara Metropolitan to the offices of Metropolitan Trustee and President of Malankara Association and passing of a resolution seeking approval of Patriarch of the same.
- (ii) Election of clergy trustee and lay trustee in place of Palappallil Mani Paulose Kathanar and E.I. Joseph.

The Patriarchal Party Association meeting was duly held at Karingachira on August 22, 1935 and as per agenda items elected (i) Paulos Mar Athanasius as Metropolitan Trustee and President of the Association. (ii) Pookunnel Avira Joseph Kathanar as Clergy Trustee and Thukalan Paulo Avira as Lay Trustee. Other important decisions of the Association were:

- (i) 96 members should be elected to the Association.
- (ii) A few members from dioceses were to be nominated to the Association.
- (iii) The Trustees shall conduct the law suits.
- (iv) The President was authorised to send the decisions of the Assembly to the Patriarch.

### **Law Suit in District Court, Kottayam 1938-43**

On March 10, 1938 was, therefore, filed a suit (No: QS 111) in the District Court of Kottayam by the Patriarchal Party against the Catholicos Party claiming to be the trustees of Church properties and praying for the restoration of such properties to them.

The important issues raised in the pleadings were :

- (i) Whether the title to trusteeship of Church properties enjoyed by those elected in the M.D. Seminary meeting at Kottayam on December 26, 1934, was valid?
- (ii) Whether the Patriarch of Antioch is the ecclesiastical head of the Malankara Jacobite Syrian Church or is he only the supreme spiritual head?
- (iii) What is the nature, extent and scope of the Patriarch's ecclesiastical or spiritual authority, jurisdiction or supremacy over the Malankara Jacobite Syrian Church?

### **In High Court 1943-56**

The suit was dismissed by Judge B. Krishna Iyer on January 18, 1943. The Patriarchal Party preferred an appeal to the Travancore High Court. The learned judges Chief Justice Krishna Swamy Iyer, Justice Nokes and Justice Satyanesan allowed the appeal on August 8, 1946. The Catholicos Party thereon applied to the High Court for a review. That review application was dismissed by a full bench of the High Court consisting of Chief Justice Kunjuraman Justice Subramanya Iyer and Justice Joseph Vithayathil on December 21, 1951.

### **Peace Moves 1941-51**

While law suits were proceeding in Courts, peace-proposals were being pursued by well-wishers of both factions in the Church. The following proposals were the important among them.

- (1) Proposals of Bishop Pakenhalm Walsh, 1935
- (2) The Always Round Table Conference 1941
- (3) The Peace-League proposals of 1949-50

As in the past, they were also turned down since they did not provide supremacy to the Patriarch over Malankara. For details of the Peace proposals see Chapter Thirteen.

### **Malankara Association Meeting 1951**

The Catholicos assembled the Association at M.D. Seminary, Kottayam on May 17, 1951. As per agenda, the Association (i) elected two Metropolitan designates, Vattakunnel V.K. Mathews Kathanar and P.E. Daniel Kathanar, (ii) amended the Constitution, (iii) raised the strength of the Managing Committee — Clergy 22 Laity 44 — and (iv) elected all the members to the Managing Committee. The Malankara Metropolitan had also nominated 15 members to the Committee.

### **The Pledge of 1951**

On December 21, 1951, the High Court had dismissed the Review application filed by the Catholicos on the adverse Judgement of 1946. At that time, the Catholicos was at Calcutta. On hearing the judgement, the Catholicos said in a message, "In the same manner as the Truth which was crucified on Friday, resurrected on Sunday, Truth (of this case) will resurrect over this judgement which was given on Friday. Neither the Judgement of this case nor the consequences do not worry me. I am confident that you will remain unperturbed and courageous. I send the same divine message which Christ gave to his disciples, before sending them out for spreading the gospel, "Fear not, Little Flock."

On December 31, 1951, when the Catholicos returned to Kottayam he was given a mighty and splendid reception. The Catholicos was taken in procession on a decorated open vehicle followed by hundreds of cars and thousands of people, from Adoor to Kottayam. *En route* to Kottayam, the Catholicos made a memorable speech at Tiruvalla, in which he declared, "In India, where St. Thomas preached the gospel, he would not allow us to be under the yoke of any".<sup>3</sup>

At Kottayam, a public reception was held that evening in the M.D. Seminary ground. The will of the Orthodox Church was reflected in a momentous pledge which tens of thousands of its

3. Ibid. p: 369

members assembled there made which may be rendered thus:

“In witness before God, We firmly declare the freedom of the Malankara Church and also solemnly pledge that we and our children by generations will stand by the banner of Holy throne of Catholicos which is the symbolic expression of that freedom”.<sup>4</sup>

### **The Catholicate Headquarters-Devalokam 1951**

A new headquarters for the Catholicos was arranged on his return. A plot of land covering 7 acres with a building at Devalokam on an enchanting site was bought a day earlier for Rs. 1.75 lakhs. This building became the Catholicate Palace. An adjacent 1.75 acre was also added at a cost of Rs. 34,000 in 1961.

The Catholicos desired to raise a monumental structure befitting the stature of the head of the Church and which will also serve as its headquarters. On May 29, 1961 construction of a new Catholicate Palace started. Today, it is a complex-with a 3 storied structure of architectural beauty providing spacious accommodation for the Catholicos, visiting dignitaries, and others with all modern facilities and a chapel. The Palace was formally inaugurated by Catholicos-Patriarch His Holiness Ilia II of the Georgian Orthodox Church on September 6, 1982.

Besides the Palace, there have come up at the site—the Resort for the Casket preserving the part of relic of St. Thomas and the two tombs of Catholicoses Moran Mar Geevarghese II and Moran Mar Ougen.

The Catholicate Office, Malankara Sabha Masika, Sunday School Association Office are also situated in the premises of the Palace.

### **Review Application 1952**

In 1952, the Catholicos Party moved the Supreme Court for special appeal for re-hearing of the suit under Article 136 of the Constitution. By its judgement delivered on May 21, 1954, the Supreme Court allowed the appeal, set aside the judgement of the High Court and admitted the review application and directed

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4. *ibid.* p: 370

the entire appeal to be re-heard on all points. The Travancore High Court, thereupon, took up the rehearing of the appeal. On December 31, 1956, the High Court Bench consisting of Justice Sankaran, Justice G. Kumara Pillai and Justice M.S. Menon delivered a unanimous judgement allowing the appeal and decreeing the suit. On March 21, 1957, the Catholicos Party obtained a certificate from the High Court under Article 133 of the Constitution of India and preferred an appeal to the Supreme Court. (1958 KLT 772-Moran Mar Baselios Catholicos versus T.P. Avira and others).

### **Judgement of the Supreme Court of India 1958**

On the issues raised, the Supreme Court of India, gave the final verdict on September 12, 1958. Concluding the judgement, the learned judges, Chief Justice S.R. Das, Justices Bhagwati, B.P. Singh, Wanchoo and Subba Rao decreed :—

“The result, therefore, is that this appeal must be accepted, the judgement of Kerala High Court set aside, the decree of the trial court dismissing the suit must be restored and we order accordingly.” (Para 44)

The decree of the trial court may be summarised as follows:

- (i) “Mar Geevarghes Dionysius was the lawful Malankara Metropolitan and was recognised and accepted as such by the Malankara Syrian Church and as such had become a trustee of the Church properties;
- (ii) The Patriarch had only a power of general supervision over the spiritual government of the Church but had no right to interfere with the internal administration of the Church in spiritual matters which rested only in the Metropolitan and that the Patriarch has no authority, jurisdiction, control, supervision or concern over or with the temporalities of the Arch-diocese of Malankara;
- (iii) Mar Geevarghese Dionysius was excommunicated by Patriarch Abdulla II; but such excommunication was opposed to the Constitution of the Malankara Church as laid down by the Synod of Mulanthuruthy and was canonically invalid and he was still recognised and accepted as the Malankara Metropolitan by a large majority of Malankara Syrian Christian community;

- (iv) Kora Mathan Malpan and C.J. Kurien had been validly removed from the office of trustee and Mani Paulose Kathanar and Kora Kochu Korula had been validly appointed in their places.

(The Trust Fund suits are treated in Chapter Twelve.)

### **Concordat of December 16, 1958**

The Supreme Court Judgement finally vindicated the Catholicos's position as Malankara Metropolitan, the establishment of the Catholicate, the autonomy of the Church, and the Catholicos's Primacy over Malankara Church. The decrees were legally binding on all concerned in the country. In the national scene, the Church gained legal validity and position of authority.

In a short period, the Patriarch came to terms with the Catholicos and issued a Letter of Reconciliation dated 9.12.1958. This letter stated: "we hereby accept Mar Geevarghese as Catholicos". It was an unconditional acceptance. On receipt of this letter, leaders of both parties again conferred. The Catholicos also, in a Letter of Reconciliation extended on 16.12. 1958, said, "We are pleased to accept Moran Mar Ignatius Yakoub III as Patriarch of Antioch, for the sake of ensuring peace in Malankara Church, subject to the Constitution. We are also happy to receive those Metropolitans under his obedience in Malankara subject to the provisions of the Constitution."

Now that the basic documents of mutual acceptance were ready, both the Catholicos and Mar Julios with their supporting-Metropolitans, priests and laity assembled at the Old Seminary Chapel on December 16, 1958 and at 11.00 P.M. exchanged the Letters of Acceptance-the glorious Seventh of reconciliation which was earnestly hoped and longed for by the Malankara Syrian Christians for the last fifty years. This was the moment of tryst with destiny of the Malankara Orthodox Church.

The blessed Catholicos thus had seen in his life time, the beginning and end of a law-suit and the beginning of a new era of peace in the Church.

### **Malankara Association Meeting 1958**

Immediately following the Concordat, the Catholicos convened a meeting of the Malankara Syrian Christian Associa-

tion at St. Mary's Church at Pathencav, Chengannur on December 26, 1958. The main issue before the Association was election of clergy Trustee and Lay Trustee.

The Association met as scheduled and elected Manalil Yakoub Kathanar as Clergy Trustee and Ooppoottil Kurien Abraham as Lay Trustee.

The Association meeting at Puthencavu was significant for a few reasons. Firstly, it was the first meeting after the Reconciliation. Parishes of the erstwhile Patriarchal Party and their Metropolitans were represented in the meeting. The Metropolitans had issued instructions to all parishes under their charges to send their representatives to the meeting. Secondly, Mar Philoxenos representing the Patriarchal Party had made a statement of unequivocal support to the Catholicate. He said "we will remain under the Catholicate till the moon and stars last. This Catholicate will last here for ever. May God be pleased that we all stand united under the leadership of this Catholicos who adorns that throne. We, the Metropolitans, will, hand in hand, serve, under the holy throne of Catholicate. May this bond of friendship and mutual understanding with the Patriarchate of Antioch ever increase in us".<sup>5</sup> Thirdly, the Metropolitans of the Patriarch were accepted by the Malankara Association.

### **Process of Reconciliation**

With the exchange of the letters of mutual acceptance by the Catholicos and Patriarch, the process of reconciliation, peace, unity in the Church began. An era of conflict ended. Party considerations waned. The process received tremendous support from the Metropolitans. This was evinced in three distinct actions. Firstly, all the metropolitans of the Patriarchal Party viz. Paulos Mar severios of Cochin Diocese, Geevarghese Mar Gregorios of Ankamali Diocese, Paulos Mar Philoxenos of Kandanad Diocese and Abraham Mar Clemis of the Cnanaya Diocese executed a bond of loyalty, undertaking to abide by the canons and Constitution of the Church and by the Catholicos. Secondly, the Metropolitans soon after the reconciliation, issued circulars to all parishes in their respective dioceses to elect representatives to the forthcoming Malankara Syrian Christian Association to be held on

December 26, 1958. Thirdly, all the Metropolitans attended the Association meetidg held on December 26. 1958 at Puthencav (Chengannur). Representatives from their parishes also participated in the proceedings of the meeting.

The participation of the Metropolitans and the elected Parish representatives in the proceedings especially in the election of the Clergy Trustee, Manalil Jacob Kathanar and Lay Trustee Ooppoottil Kurien Abraham, confirmed their acceptance by the Malankara Association and consequently the Malankara Church. Further, the restriction implied by the Supreme Court judgement on the Metropolitans of the Patriarchal Party was thus removed. This enabled them eligible to hold administrative charges of dioceses.

A fortnight after the Malankara Association Meeting, all the Metropolitans assembled at Old Seminary on January 12, 1959 which lasted for six days till January 16. According to Z.M. Paret, the Metropolitans discussed, "unification of the organisations like Sunday School, Youth League, Martha Maria Samajam. Theological Seminary, bringing under the Catholicate, the Patriarchal Churches and organisations; enforcement of Constitution; streamlining of ordination of priests according to the provisions of Constitution, arrangements for settling the law suits in parishes; evolving a procedure for accepting priests who were excommunicated, evolving procedueral arrangements for the administration of dioceses, dissolution of the current Managing Committee etc". It also uniformly decided tentative allocation of dioceses among the Metropolitans.

The Episcopal Synod met on February 2, 1959 and formally decided the reallocation of the dioceses among the Metropolitans, as already finalised informally. The Catholicos issued order No 31/59 dated 25.2.1959 to this effect. The re-allocation of dioceses was as under :—

<i>Metropolitans</i>	<i>Diocese</i>
Patros Mar Osthathios	Malabar
Paulos Mar Severios	Cochin
Geevarghese Mar Gregorios	Angamali

<i>Metropolitan</i>	<i>Diocese</i>
Ougen Mar Timotheos Paulos Mar Philoxenos	} Kandanad
Kuriakos Mar Gregorios (Senior Metropolitan) Mathews Mar Ivanios (Asstt. Metropolitan)	} Kottayam
Thoma Mar Dionysius	Niranam
Daniel Mar Philoxenos	Thumpamon
Alexios Mar Theodosius (Sr. Metropolitan) Mathews Mar Koorilos (Asstt. Metropolitan)	} Quilon
Abraham Mar Clemis	Cnanaya
Alexios Mar Theodosius (Addl. Charge)	Outside Kerala
Malankara Metropolitan	Cheria Palli, (Kottayam) and other parishes/Chapels responsible to it; Mar Elia Chapel, Kottayam

Paulose Mar Philoxenos was not happy with the allocation and the joint-responsibility with Mar Timotheos. However, when Mar Timotheos became Catholicos in 1964, Mar Philoxenos was appointed Metropolitan of Kandanad Diocese.

#### **Trust Fund Interest Drawal 1959**

Following the Supreme Court Judgement and election of Trustees at Puthencav, the Malankara Metropolitan-Catholicos and the two co-trustees Manalil Yacob Kathanar and Oopoottil Kurian Abraham drew on August 1, 1959, a sum of Rs. 21,840/- as accumulated interest on Trust Fund for the period 1933-59. The last trio of trustees who received the interest were Vattasseril Mar Dionysius, Palappallil Paulos Kathanar and E.I. Joseph.

#### **Malankara Association Meeting 1959<sup>6</sup>**

On September 16, 1959, the Catholicos called a meeting of

6. Zacharia Dn. T.G. : *Biography of His Holiness the Catholicos (Malayalam)* 1962 : Pp. 95-96.

the Malankara Association to elect a new Managing Committee. The Association met on September 16, 1959 at M.D. Seminary Kottayam. It was in this meeting that the erstwhile Patriarchal Party parish representatives also participated in the election of Managing Committee members of the unified Church. 11 Metropolitans and more than 400 priests and 1000 lay representatives had attended this Association meeting.

The Association elected a new Managing Committee of 72 members comprising of 24 clergy and 48 lay members. It also decided to raise its strength to 92—74 elected and 18 nominated.

### **Association With the World Council of Churches 1937-61**

Another important development during this period of history was that the Malankara Church enrolled herself as a member of the World Council of Churches. The association with the Council started with the attendance of the Catholicos in the Conference on Faith and Order held in Edinburgh in August 3-9, 1937. The other members of the delegation representing the Church were Mattackal Alexios Ramban (Mar Theodosius O.I.C.), C.M. Thomas Ramban (Thoma Mar Dionysius, Deacon K. Philipose and Elenjical E. John Philipos.)

Since the Edinburgh Conference, the Catholicos invariably sent representative delegates of the Church to the later Conferences held at Amsterdam (1948), Evanston (1954) and New Delhi (1961).

### **Canonisation of Saints 1947**

The Malankara Church has had the privilege to be guided by two holymen of outstanding virtue and divine grace. Stories of their command over men and material are living memories to many even to-day. Their prayerful life had exerted great influence on successive generations. The two holy prelates of such distinction were Catholicos Moran Mar Baselios Yalda of Persia who reached Malankara and died at Kothamangalam; and Chathuruthy Mar Gregorios of Parumala fame, who had breathed his last on November, 2, 1902. The Catholicos in consultation with the holy Synod canonised both Mar Baselios and Mar Gregorios on November 2, 1947. To-day, the shrines of both the Saints are pilgrim centres.

### **Pan Orthodox Conference 1960**

Taking into account the need for close co-operation among the Orthodox Churches, the Catholicos sent Philipos Mar Theophilos and Daniel Mar Philoxenos as representatives of the Church to the Conference of the Pan Orthodox Churches held in Rhodes in 1960.

### **Philoxenos plays Antiochene Masque 1959-60 - Beginning of a Rumpus**

“Fair is foul, and foul is fair.”<sup>7</sup> That was the game which pleased Paulos Mar Philoxenos. The game became evident in his actions during the two years following the Reconciliation of 1958 and which ended in his expulsion from the Malankara Episcopal Synod in 1960.

On December, 26, 1958 at Puthencav, Philoxenos had pledged loyalty to Catholicos in all fairness. Further, in the meeting of the Kandanad diocese held at the diocesan head-quarters at Moovattupuzha on November 26, 1959, both Mar Timotheos and Mar Philoxenos had entered into written agreement duly signed by them to function as Joint Metropolitans of the Diocese. The Metropolitan, however, acted in violation of the Peace Concordat, Diocesan agreement and caused dissention in the Church. From January 1960 onwards he showed a volte face, speaking foul of the Reconciliation and Acceptance of the Catholicos etc.

Mar Philoxenos initially showed his dissatisfaction with the Reconciliation by rejecting the allocation of the diocesan responsibilities of Kandanad along with Mar Timotheos. Later, he wrote thrice on 14.3.60, 29.3.60 and 20.4.60 to the Catholicos denying the validity of Reconciliation, defying the Catholicos, the Constitution and the bonds of allegiance to Catholicos which the Metropolitan himself had executed, on the one hand and upholding the Patriarch's authority and asserting his loyalty and responsibility to him alone on the other. The Catholicos provided Philoxenos reasonable chances for explaining his conduct before the Synod and correcting himself. The stand taken by Mar Philoxenos may be summarised as under:

- (1) The Reconciliation of 16.12.1958 was held so that the people may not be disappointed over their desire for peace and it was expected that the Patriarch will accept

<sup>7</sup> Shakespeare : Macbeth. Scene I

the ceremony of mutual acceptance later. There was no confirmation from the Patriarch. It was also hoped that the succeeding synods and other decisions, procedures etc. would receive the approval of the Patriarch. The letter from the Patriarch (to Mar Philoxenos) indicated that this hope was borne out of a misunderstanding.

- (2) The Patriarch was not aware of the Constitution or the conditions thereof subject to which he was accepted.
- (3) By accepting Catholicos, the powers of Patriarch were not diminished in any way.
- (4) The tentative decisions taken by the Metropolitan in regard to the allocation and administration of dioceses did not have the approval of Patriarch or the people and consequently, were denied by the Patriarch and the people. Mar Philoxenos, therefore, withdrew, ignored and denied all the bonds and agreements which he executed or submitted in regard to these decisions, which were taken, following the mutual acceptance of 1958 December.
- (5) Patriarch had specifically instructed him to look after certain dioceses and, therefore, he shall not do any thing in contradiction to the powers and rights vested in the Patriarch.
- (6) Catholicos did not have the powers of a superior authority either by sanction of the Court or from the Patriarch, to demand explanations as required in his letter of 10.3.1960.
- (7) He did not accept the Constitution of any Church which was not accepted by the Patriarch.
- (8) The orders which were issued under the impression that the Catholicos or the Synod had the authority over him, were irrelevant and he was not obliged to abide by them.
- (9) No pledge was ever taken by him before the Catholicos.
- (10) He would continue with the administration of the parishes he had been administering as before (the Reconciliation).

The Patriarch had personally supported Philoxenos in holding such a defiant face. This was proved by two letters dated

18.10.1959 and 18.11.1959 from the Patriarch quoted by him. Anyway Philoxenos appeared to be figure-heading a force or movement wearing an Antiochene masque, not being happy with the Reconciliation.

### **Guilty of Conduct**

The Synod at its meeting held on April 28, 1960 found Mar Philoxenos guilty and passed the following resolution:

Whereas Mar Philoxenos was performing himself in accordance with the rights and privileges which he received consequent to the pledge to honour the Malankara Metropolitan, Catholicate and the Constitution which he submitted in writing on 22.12.1958, the decision of the Synod of 21.2.1959 and the subsequent Order No. 31/59 dated 25.2.1959 from the Catholicos.

Whereas he was observed acting against and denying these orders and conducting himself wilfully in an illegal manner against the interests of the Church causing dissention, therefore, Mar Philoxenos is found ecclesiastically guilty of conduct.

However, the Synod also decided to give Mar Philoxenos another chance for correction before the proposed disciplinary action was taken and appointed Metropolitan Geevarghese Mar Gregorios and Abraham Mar Clemis to convey to Mar Philoxenos the decision of the Synod. They met the erring Metropolitan, informed him of the Synods' decision and counselled him to retrace his illegal steps. The two Metropolitans reported back to the Synod which considered it on 27.5.1960.

### **Suspension Order on Mar Philoxenos**

In these circumstances, Catholicos served a suspension order dated June 17, 1960 on Philoxenos in which he was informed that the Synod found him guilty of causing dissention in the Church, working against the Church, the Catholicate, the Constitution of the Church, and against the administrative authority of the Catholicos in contravention of the pledge given to the Catholicos and therefore, till the Metropolitan returned to the fold of the Church and the Synod accepted him, the following decisions were taken by the Synod :—

- i. Mar Philoxenos may be removed from the office of the

Metropolitan of the Kandanad Diocese and from all responsibility in connection with the administration of the Kandanad Diocese.

- ii. the Metropolitan while residing at the Piramadom Gathsemame Ashram should not interfere in the administrative affairs of the diocese or enter any of the churches or institutions of the diocese.
- iii. the Metropolitan should not interfere in the administrative matters of any of the other dioceses of Malankara or any parishes under the Catholicate outside Malankara or enter any churches or institutions thereunder.
- iv. The Metropolitan should be removed from the membership of the Synod.
- v. Mar Philoxenos should be removed from the position and privileges eligible to a Metropolitan of the Malankara Church and all its Committees. He will not have any right or privilege to perform any religious acts like ordination, consecration of any church.
- vi. In case the Metropolitan desired to visit any church or institution for any purpose other than administrative matters, he should obtain permission from the concerned diocesan Metropolitan.

Philoxenos replied the suspension letter of Catholicos on 28.6.1960. It was a stiff one, denying any obligation to the Catholicos alleging that neither the Catholicos nor the Synod has any authority over him, since the position he enjoyed was received from the Patriarch of Antioch and as such, the restrictions placed on him by the Catholicos were irrelevant; on the contrary, he would be administratively concerned with the diocese entrusted to him by the Patriarch. In the circumstances, neither the Catholicos nor the Synod had any right to remove him.

Philoxenos continued the foul game with his Antiochene masque. He went to Syria and sought from the Patriarch support for his divisive activities. But, the Patriarch refused any such support and also directed him to abide by the Catholicos. Later, on February 28, 1961, Philoxenos inaugurated a Jacobite convention at Kottayam in which he narrated his meeting with the

Patriarch who, he intimated his listeners, would render appropriate support when necessary.

### **Patriarchs Reply of 1962**

In the year 1962, Catholicos invited Patriarch Yakoub to Malankara for a formal visit, vide letter dated January 18. But the Patriarch replied from Damascus on February 21, 1962 that "his friends in Malankara were not prepared for any reconciliation (with Catholicos) even in the presence of Patriarch and that since they do not at all agree for peace and to change their stand and since there is no hope of reconciliation with them, even if we come, there might ensue a catastrophe. If we take any disciplinary measures against them they might go out of the fold of the Church. Our delegate Mar Julios has also expired recently. In the circumstances, we have decided to postpone our visit to another opportune moment."

The Patriarch's reply indicated the presence of a strong group in Malankara not happy with the Reconciliation and the unwillingness on the part of Patriarch to displease them.

### **Election of a Successor**

Meanwhile taking into consideration the old age of the Catholicos, the Managing Committee on February 28, 1961 decided that it was necessary to elect a successor to the Catholicos-Malankara Metropolitan and for which the Malankara Association may be convened on April 27, 1961 at M.D. Seminary. Accordingly, the notice for the meeting was also issued on April 4.

### **Association Case 1961-69<sup>8</sup>**

Can a successor Catholicos be elected when the predecessor is in position? Is the Malankara Association competent to elect a successor? The issue became the subject of a law suit generally known as the Association Case, which took nine years to settle from 1961 to 1969.

Looking back, the history of the Church reveals that there has been more than one occasion when successors to ruling Malankara Metropolitans were nominated and consecrated while the predecessors were in position. To enumerate:

<sup>8</sup>. Paret: Malankara Nazranikal (Vol.V)-Mar Geevarghese Baselios: pp. 572-593

<i>Ruling Metropolitan</i>	<i>Period</i>	<i>Successor designate</i>	<i>Remarks</i>
1. Mar Thoma I	1653-70	(Nephew) Mar Thoma II	Consecrated by Mar Thoma I
2. Mar Thoma V	1729-65	Nephew Mar Thoma VI	Consecrated by Mar Thoma V in 1761
3. Mar Thoma VI	1765-1808	Nephew Ramban Mathew Mar Thoma VII	Consecrated by Mar Thoma VI in 1796.
4. Mar Thoma VII	1808-09	Mar Thoma VIII	Consecrated by Mar Thoma VII
5. Mar Thoma VIII	1809-15	Mar Thoma IX	Consecrated by Mar Thoma VIII
6. Cheppad Mar Dionysius IV	1825-55	Palakunnath Mathews Mar Athanasius	Consecrated by Patriarch Mar Elias III in 1842
7. Palakunnath Mathews Mar Athanasius	1842-77	Pulikottil Joseph Mar Dionysius	Consecrated by Patriarch Mar
8. Pulikottil Joseph Mar Dionysius	1864-1909	Vattasseril Geevarghese Mar Dionysius	Elected by the Malankara Association in 1908

It will be observed from the above, that successors used to be elected/nominated during the life-time of ruling Malankara Metropolitans with a view to manage an orderly transition/transmission of the reins of administration of the Church to successive hands. The Church as a whole, had accepted the procedure in successive centuries and it was never disputed in the past. Further, this was never raised as an issue among the various negative points of claims of the Patriarchal party in the Trust Fund Suits. The attempt to raise this issue in 1961 was, therefore, significant for its nuisance value only.

### High Court Injunction 1961

The die-hards of the erstwhile Patriarchal Party enlivened by the Philoxenos-affair, hastened to emit fire on this decision of the Managing Committee. A petition questioning the competence of the proposed election and seeking an injunction to holding the Association meeting, on 27.4.1961 was filed by the Party members before the vacation Judge of the Kerala High Court on 20-4-1961. Justice Raghavan allowed the Petition and decreed injunction to the Association meeting on 26-4-1961, the preceding day of the meeting. It was also ordered that the suit may be heard in the lower court soon after the vacation.

### Appeal-Injunction Vacated

The Catholicos preferred an appeal over the Injunction Order to the High Court on May 10, 1961 praying that the vacation judge was competent only for granting a temporary injunction but not for decreeing one, valid till the claims are settled by the court finally. Justice Vaidyalingam and Justice Velu Pillai who heard the appeal lifted the injunction and gave the following verdict on 13.6.1961.

1. Malankara Metropolitan was competent to elect a successor.
2. The authority of the successor so elected to exercise any of his powers will, however, be subject to the decision of the lower court.

### In the sub-Court, Kottayam 1961-63

In the light of the High Court Judgement, the Catholicos submitted a counter statement to the petition of the Plaintiffs in the Sub-Court, Kottayam. The Plaintiffs had pleaded in the sub-court that :

- (i) the 1st Defendant, the Malankara Metropolitan, neither was competent nor had the right either to convene the Malankara Syrian Christian Association to elect his successor or to take any action to hold such an election, and
- (ii) hence a Permanent Injunction forbidding any such assembly of the Association may be ordered.

Later, the suit was transferred to the Additional District Court, which delivered its judgement on November 19, 1963. Inter alia, the judgement stated :

- (i) The Church canons or tradition do not forbid Malankara Metropolitan from either consecrating or appointing a successor during his life time.
- (ii) Malankara Association has the right and competence to elect a candidate even before a vacancy of Metropolitan arises.
- (iii) That the Malankara Association has authority to elect a Catholicate designate to be installed as Catholicos by the Synod is valid and under the provisions of the Constitution governing the Church. The Association, therefore, is competent to elect one as Catholicos to succeed the 1st Defendant.
- (iv) The 1st Defendant as the President of the Malankara Association is competent to convene a meeting of the Association as enshrined in the Constitution.
- (v) The objection to the first Defendant holding the twin offices of Catholicos and Malankara Metropolitan in himself attracts res judicata provision since the Patriarchal Party had not raised any objection to this position in the Trust Fund Suit.

### **Appeal to High Court 1964-69**

The Patriarchal group appealed on the judgement to the High Court in March 1964. After five years, the Court rejected the appeal in December 1969.

Here ended an exercise in futility on the part of the Antiochene partisans. It, however, became very evident to all concerned that there existed a group dissatisfied with the Concordat of 1958 and that they were gathering strength to foment disaffection in the other-wise, tranquil atmosphere in the Church and also to sabotage peaceful management of the transition of heirarchical succession.

### **Malankara Association Meeting 1962**

#### **Election of Cotholicose-designate**

Following the High Court order of 13.6.1961, the Catholicos-Malankara Metropolitan issued a notice convening the Malankara

Association meeting on May 17, 1962 at St. Mary's Church, Niranam to elect a successor to him. A few days before the Association meeting, the holy Synod met and unanimously decided to sponsor the Senior Metropolitan Mar Timotheos as Synod's candidate as Catholicos-designate. In the Association meeting, Mar Timotheos was duly declared as elected.

### **Missionary Movements**

The Catholicos also could see the birth of two missionary movements in the Church during his rule viz "The Society of Servants of the Cross" at Mulanthuruthy and the St. Pauls Missionary Society at Mavelikara.

### **New Dioceses**

It may also be noted that the Catholicos formed two new dioceses one for the Outside Kerala parishes beyond the frontiers of Kerala and the other for Malabar parishes. Both these dioceses had developed key centres of Orthodox community which opened areas for future evangelisation work of the Church.

### **Educational Activities**

The Catholicos had paid attention to the development of educational activities in the Church. Mention may be made of a few outstanding events. A number of Catholicate/Mar Dionysius Memorial schools which were started earlier were brought under corporate management known as the Catholicate and M.D. Schools Corporate Management of which His Holiness was the Corporate Manager. The Church also started three colleges viz the Catholicate College at Pathanamthitta, Mar Baselios College at Kottayam and St. Mary's College at Sultan Batory.

### **Youth Organisations**

To cater to the development of the Church, various organisations have been working at different levels. They are: Sunday School Samajam, Orthodox Christian Youth Movement and Martha Mariam Samajam. His Holiness invariably attended and blessed the activities of these organisations.

### **Publication Malankara Sabha Magazine**

In 1946, a monthly publication by the title Malankara Sabha was started as the formal mouth-piece of the Church on all matters concerning faith, history and all other developments in the Church.

**World Church Dignitaries Visit Malankara**

Dignitaries of the Churches of Armenia, Cyprus, Egypt, Ethiopia, Greece, Rumania, Russia, Oecumenical Patriarchate and the Prime Minister of India called on the Catholicos and felicitated him at different periods of time. A list is given below.

- 1956 October 21 : Emperor Heille Sellasi of Ethiopia
- 1957 February : Jawaharlal Nehru  
Prime Minister of India
- 1958 February : Metropolitan James, representative of  
Oecumenical Patriarch.
- 1957 April 6 : Bishop Polladion of Armenian  
Orthodox Church
- 1961 December 6 : Russian Orthodox Church—  
Archbishop Nicodem, Archbishops Sergius,  
Bishop Antony Bloom of London,  
Professor Fr. Valadimir of Leningrad.  
Theological Seminary, Professor  
Fr. Floresky of Haward University  
(Russian Orthodox Church delegates to  
the W.C.C General Assembly at New Delhi.)  
Coptic Orthodox Church—
- December 7 : Metropolitan Mar Youhannes, Fr. Macarius.  
Ethiopian Orthodox Church—  
Abuna Theophilos.  
Greek Orthodox Church—  
Bishop Spiridon. Bishop Barnabas  
Professor Conidaris, (Athens Theological  
Seminary).  
Romanian Orthodox Church—  
Metropolitan Justin Moisecu  
Archpriest Alexander Joneseu  
Mr. Joseph Chirvu
- December 9 : Oecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras.  
Bishop Embros, Bishop Constantinius.
- 1962 November 7 : Arch Bishop Macarios  
President of Cyprus.
- December 21 : Catholicos Vuscan of Orthodox  
Church of Armenia.

**Obituaries**

A few Metropolitans including those of the erstwhile Patriarchal Party passed away during the period Mar Geevarghese was the Catholicos. They were :

<i>S.No.</i>	<i>Metropolitan</i>	<i>Diocese</i>	<i>Date of Expiry</i>	<i>Place of Tomb</i>
1.	Vattasseril Geevarghese Mar Dionysius	Malankara Archdiocese	23.2.1934	Old Seminary Kottayam
2.	Geevarghese Mar Philoxenos	Thumpamon	17.4.1951	St. Mary's Church Puthencav
3.	Kadavil Paulos Mar Athanasius	Ankamali	25.1.1953	Thrikunnath Seminary Alwaye
4.	Michael Mar Dionysius	Kottayam	18.1.1956	Panampadi Kottayam
5.	Paulos Mar Severios	Cochin	17.3.1962	Arhatt Kunnamkulam (Puthenpalli).

**Last Days**

The Catholicos, although diabetic, kept reasonably good health all along his 90 years of his life 89 years 6 months and 19 days to be exact. The only major physical ailment he had was urinal obstruction in 1953 December for which he had an operation at the Christian Medical College, Vellore. In March 1954, the Catholicos returned from Vellore. However, age was taking its toll on him. The last Holy Qurbana the holy father was able to celebrate, was on August 15, 1963. A bruise appeared on his right side and caused acute distress and pain. It is said that at night St. Mary appeared beckoning him.

On September 3, 1963, the sacrament of Holy Unction was performed on him. That gave the Catholicos great relief and enabled him to attend the feast of St. Gregorios on November 1, 1963 at Parumala. Thereafter, his bodily weakness increased. On January 2, 1964, the Catholicos fell unconscious and passed away peacefully on Friday, January 3, 1964 at 4.30 A.M. to his heavenly abode. His tomb is beside the Catholicate Chapel at Devalokam.

#### IV. MORAN MAR BASELIOS OUGEN I 1964-75

Moran Mar Baselios Ougen I succeeded Baselios Geevarghese II on January 3, 1964. Mar Ougen was, earlier on May 17, 1962, elected as Malankara Metropolitan and Catholicos-designate in succession to Mar Geevarghese by the Malankara Syrian Christian Association at its meeting held at Niranam. Consequently, Mar Ougen officially came into position as Malankara Metropolitan on January 3, 1964 following Mar Geevarghese's death. This, he confirmed by a circular issued on the same day under the titles Malankara Metropolitan and Catholicate-designate.

Born in July 26, 1884 to Rev. Fr. Abraham of Turuthi Chettakullathumkara family of Vengola, Perumbavur, the Catholicos was known as Mathai to his people, in his younger days. The family was partisan to Patriarchal Party. Young Mathai had elementary education at Puthenkurish and later at M.D. High School at Kottayam. Thereafter, he began his theological studies under the guidance of Konat Mathan Cor Episcopa at Pampakuda Seminary and continued it at Kurkuma Dayara at Murdin in Syria.

#### **Deacon 1900-08**

In 1900, the Catholicos received the first steps of the order of deacon from Kadavil Mar Athanasius. At this time, he came into contact with Deacon Sleetba of the Church of Syria who was in Malankara. Later, along with Deacon Sleetba, Mathai Deacon reached in Kurkuma Dayara in 1906. While residing in the Dayara of Mar Ougen at Thurabdin in Syria, the young deacon adopted the name of OUGEN in place of the baptismal name of Mathai. For three years the Deacon lived in Syria visiting the holy land, various historical monasteries and studying theology. Also he had the fortune to stay with and know personally Patriarchs Moran Mar Abdulla at Mardin and Moran Mar Abdul Messiah at Thurabdin. In 1908, Mar Abdulla ordained Deacon Ougen to the monastic order of Ramban, at the Dayara of Mar Markos in Jerusalem.

#### **Ramban 1908-27**

Returning to Malankara In 1908. Ramban Ougen rendered spectacular services in the development of the Church. He built Sion Ashram at Kodanad, paved the way for the

famous Vadakara English High School and held the office of the Manager of the Schools at Piravam and Kolencherry. The missionary zeal of the Ramban was none too less. Hundreds of non-believers were brought into the loving care of the Lord.

### **Metropolitan 1927-64**

In October 1926, Ramban Ougen was elected to the office of Metropolitan by the Kandanad Diocese General Body Meeting held at Pathenkurish. Thereupon, the Ramban made a second trip to Syria. On May 15, 1927 Patriarch Ignatius Elias III consecrated the Ramban as Metropolitan Ougen Mar Timotheos at the Dayara of St. Markos in Jerusalem. Thereafter, Mar Timotheos returned to Malankara and was assigned the charge of the Diocese of Kandanad. His head quarters was at Moovatapuzha.

In those days, the Church was undergoing the agonies of the law suits. Grieved at the dissensions in the Church, Mar Timotheos earnestly tried to effect a rapprochement between the contending Patriarchal and Catholicos parties. At his initiative a round table conference of the leaders of both the parties was held at Alwaye in 1942. The Peace-talks, however, did not bear any fruit. The unhappy ending worried the Metropolitan; but it helped him to take a decisive step. Mar Timotheos was more than ever convinced of the imperative need and inevitability of a Catholicate for Malankara. The Diocesan Council was immediately summoned. It met on October 7, 1942, decided to recognise the Catholicos Mar Baselios Geevarghese and to be under the Catholicate. The whole diocese pledged loyalty to the Catholicos. The Catholicos welcomed the Metropolitan and the diocese very warmly. There were, however, a few elements of the Patriarchal party in the diocese. The Metropolitan had to face opposition from them, later. His Grace, however, continued to hold the charge of the Diocese of Kandanad. The Diocese of Thumpamon also was assigned to him some times thereafter.

### **Persecution at Piravom 1943<sup>8</sup>**

The Patriarchal Party members who were not happy with his acceptance of the Catholicos, showed their ire and turned violent on the occasion when the Metropolitan was at Piravom

8. Mammen K.V. : Mar Ougen Catholicos Bawa (1976) : p. 49.

St. Mary's Church to conduct Passion Week services in 1943. On Maundy Thursday evening, he was given a reception. Later that night, a gang of terrorists called him out of sleep, beat him up and forced him to walk bare-foot to the Piravom Seminary where they left him tortured. It was obvious that the terrorists were arranged by the Patriarchal Party members. Following this incident, the Catholicos Party members used to hold a silent procession from the Seminary to the Church every year during the Passion Week. This practice was discontinued, subsequent to a reception given by the united Church to both Patriarch Yakoub and Catholicos Mar Timotheos in 1964.

### **MALANKARA METROPOLITAN-CATHOLICOS 1964-75**

The Episcopal Synod which met on Sunday January 5, 1964, deliberated over the enthronement of the Catholicos, and decided to invite the Patriarch His Holiness Mar Ignatius Yakoub III to formally install Mar Ougen as the Catholicos of the East. This was in accordance with the spirit of reconciliation generated by the Concordat of 1958 and also Article 114 of the Constitution which provided that if there was a Patriarch recognised by the Malankara Church at the time of the proposed installation of Catholicos, he should be invited to conduct the ceremony. Mar Yakoub III was the Patriarch in position and he was recognised by the Malankara Church in 1958.

#### **Patriarch Yakoub III in India 1964**

##### **In Delhi**

The Patriarch accepted the invitation and arrived in Delhi on 16.5.1964 en route to Malankara. At Delhi, the Patriarch and accompanying Metropolitans made courtesy calls on the President of India, Vice President and Prime Minister. A public reception was also arranged in honour of the Patriarch. On 19.5.1964, the Patriarch laid the foundation stone of the present St. Mary's Orthodox Cathedral in New Delhi.<sup>9</sup>

##### **In Malankara**

On 20th May 1964, the Patriarch and his troupe reached Kottayam. After attending a ceremonious reception, the Patriarch moved to Mar Ignatius Dayara at Manjinikara, Omalloor.

9. The author was the Treasurer of the Delhi parish church in 1964.

The Patriarch was not new either to Malankara or Manjanjara. As Ramban Abdul Ahad, the prelate had come to Malankara in 1934 and lived for the next twelve years till 1946 at the Dayara. The Ramban used to teach Syriac to clergy-trainees. These twelve years in Malankara had enabled him to learn Malalam language, the historical development of the Malankara Church and also to write a book on the history of the Church titled *History of the Syrian Church*. The book positively asserts the establishment of the Church by St. Thomas, the Apostle. On returning to Syria, the Ramban was consecrated as Metropolitan Yakoub Severios of Beirut in 1950 and was elevated as Patriarch seven years later on October 27, 1957 with the title of Yakoub III, following the death of his predecessor Patriarch Moran Marprem I on June 25, 1957.

#### **Jurisdiction Over Middle East Parishes**

An issue was raised by the Patriarch soon after his arrival about the jurisdiction of the Catholicos over the parishes in Kuwait and other places in the Middle East which mushroomed following a large number of members of the Church getting employed there. The Patriarch desired restriction on the jurisdiction of the Catholicos in the Middle East. The Synod, which considered this issue on May 21, 1964, decided that the territorial jurisdiction of the Catholicos should not hereafter be extended to either Arabian countries or Persia but be confined to the countries east of them. But the Patriarch should agree to the existing arrangement under which priests were sent from Malankara to the Arabian Gulf countries to fulfil the spiritual needs of the members of the Malankara Church so long as they were there. This decision satisfied the Patriarch.

#### **Installation**

On Friday, May 22, 1964, in a solemn and austere ceremony held at Mar Elia Chapel, Kottayam, the Patriarch, with the cooperation of Metropolitans of the Synod and in the presence of a multitude of laity, enthroned Mar Ougen I to the accompaniment of the loud declaration of Oxios Oxios Oxios. The Patriarch functioned as the President of the Synod as envisaged in Article 114 of the Constitution of the Church.

Regarding the Catholicos, Kadavil Rev. Ramban Paul, later Paulos Athanasius of Jacobite Church, wrote: "The new Catho-

licos is now known as Baselius Ougen I, Catholicos of the East and Malankara Metropolitan. He is the supreme head of the Orthodox Syrian Church in India, which has gained autonomy of administration". (The Orthodox Syrian Church -Its Religion and Philosophy (1973) P. XXIII). The Church recorded its thanks to the Patriarch by a resolution passed by the Malankara Association on December 25, 1965 at M.D. Seminary, Kottayam.

The ecclesiastical dignitaries present in the sanctuary included Arch Bishops of Armenia, Ethiopia and the Chaldean Church, Metropolitan of Thozhiyur Church, the three Metropolitans of the Syrian Church who accompanied the Patriarch and the other Metropolitans of the Malankara Church. (One of three, Syrian prelates Severios Mar Zacca later succeeded Mar Yakoub as Patriarch). During the service of installation, the Patriarch made a sermon in which he emphasized his earnest desire to maintain peace in the Church. Excerpts from the sermon are reproduced below:

"After I became Patriarch, I seriously thought about ensuring peace in the Church and before completing one year I had sent, as you all know, the letter of Reconciliation (No. 407 of 9.12.1958). Thereby, I had accepted the late Catholicos. Thus, it was possible to lay the foundation for peace. Now I have also the obligation to perfect the reconciliation. That is why I have come to your midst from far-off place. Now that the peace is perfected, our happiness is perfect. Our happiness is beyond expression, now that it has been possible to install a Catholicos of the East for this Church. Consequent of this deed, I believe the Church will achieve progress and development."<sup>10</sup>

For about a month, the Patriarch had sojourned in Malankara visiting places of interest, attending receptions and holding discussions with Catholicos and other Metropolitans and emphasising the importance of maintaining peace in the Church<sup>11</sup>.

Mention may also be made of the episcopal meeting of the Patriarch, Catholicos and all the Metropolitans of the unified Church held on June 3, 1964 at Old Seminary. It was held in an informal atmosphere where points of concern to the erstwhile Patriarchal Party were discussed. By and large, the Patriarch

10. Malayala Manorama, May 23, 1964. Report in Malayalam. Translation by the Author.

11. Paret Z.M. : Mar Ougen Baselios P. 43.

maintained a stance of non-interference and desired the administrative machinery of the Church to deal with them. Above all, maintenance of peace in the Church was the keynote of his approach.

#### **Departure**

Finally, His Holiness left Malankara satisfied with his visit and reached Damascus on June 30, 1964.

Mar Ougen led the Church for eleven years from 1964 to 1975. The atmosphere in the Church was peaceful. The Church was free from hostilities and law suits. But this accord was short-lived. Soon dark clouds appeared in the horizon and cold war ensued between the Malankara and Syrian Churches. This did not alter or affect the normal administration and other activities of the Church.

#### **Roman Catholic Church Contacts**

Two instances glare in the relationship of Malankara Orthodox Church with the Roman Catholic Church during the time of Mar Timotheos. One was the occasion when His Holiness, while as a Metropolitan, celebrated Holy Qurbana in the Roman Catholic Cathedral in Mylapore in Madras on December 5, 1963 and the other, the historic meeting with His Holiness Paul, Pope of Rome, in Bombay on December 3, 1964.

#### **Conference of Oriental Orthodox Churches, Addis Ababa 1965**

His Holiness attended the Conference of the Heads of the Oriental Orthodox Churches held at Addis Ababa in Ethiopia on January 15-24, 1965. It was the first time in many a century that the heads of Oriental Orthodox Churches met. The Conference was convened at the initiative of the Emperor of Ethiopia, His Excellency Haille Selassie. *Inter alia*, it considered the avenues of co-operation in the field of theological studies and missionary work, the kind of common approach to be adopted in their relationship with Churches other than the Oriental Orthodox Churches and establishing a machinery for maintaining the contacts, with the sister Churches. Apart from His Holiness Moran Mar Ougen, the other Heads of Churches who attended the Conference were : Curilos, Patriarch of Alexandria; Masken I, Supreme Patriarch of Armenia and Ignatius Yakoub III, Patriarch of the Orthodox Church of Syria. The other representa-

tives from Malankara were Metropolitans Paulos Mar Philoxenos, Daniel Mar Philoxenos Rev. Dr. V.C. Samuel, Rev. Dr. K.C. Joseph and Rev. Fr. C. Jacob.

The Standing Committee of the Oriental Orthodox Churches continue in their efforts to evolve a co-ordinated common approach to the problems facing them.

### **Holy Relics of St. Thomas — Sunoro of St. Mary**

En route to Malankara from Ethiopia, the Catholicos paid a visit to Mar Yakoub III, the Patriarch, at Damascus on February 2, 1965 and also on Mar Severios Zacca, Metropolitan of Mosul. From the latter, the Catholicos received a portion of the relics of St. Thomas. (Ref : Chapter One).

The Catholicos was also pleased to secure a part of the Sunoro (part of a dress tied over women's robe at the girdle) used by St. Mary, which was found in the foundation of an alter of a church known by that name—St. Mary's Sunoro Church at Homs. The story goes that on the occasion when St. Mary was taken up into heaven, St. Thomas the Apostle was not present. But he too was taken up in the high and met St. Mary. To prove this meeting, St. Mary had given him her veil and Sunoro. Later, when he came to Jerusalem, St. Thomas insisted on seeing the tomb which was found empty. The Apostle then showed the veil and Sunoro given to him by St. Mary. These two were passed on to posterity. The Sunoro was put in a casket and placed in the foundation of an alter and the church housing the articles came to be called St. Mary's Sunoro Church. The part of this relic, received by the Catholicos, has been placed in the Kottayam Cheria Pally.

### **Theological Seminary Jubilee Celebrations 1965**

During this period of history, the Theological Seminary had taken significant steps to improve its image. Keeping in view the development of its academic standard and the need to train qualified priests, the Theological Seminary was affiliated to the Serampore University, Calcutta on 1.2.1965. Since then, the Seminary awards B.D. and post-graduate degrees.

In 1965, the Theological Seminary, which was established in 1815 by Pulikottil Joseph Mar Dionysius, celebrated its 150th year jubilee on December 26-30. Representatives of Pope of

Rome, Patriarch of Russia, Catholicos of Armenia, Patriarch of Ethiopia and the Luthern Church had come on the occasion. They were Fr. Long from Rome, Bishop Conitas of Georgia and Archbishop Alexi of Esthonia from Russia, Archbishop Abrahamian of Calcutta and Fr. Vikre Mariam from Ethiopia respectively.

Later in 1969, the Seminary completed a new block and it was opened by Patriarch Justinian of the Rumanian Orthodox Church on January 7, 1969, who had come on special invitation.

Rev. Dr. K. Philipos, later Mar Theophilos, was the Principal of the Seminary in 1965-66. The Holy Synod later appointed Fr. Paul Varghese, who was serving as Associate General Secretary of World Council of Churches at Geneva, as its Principal. On January 3, 1967 Fr. Paul Varghese, now Metropolitan, Dr. Paulos Mar Gregorios, took over its charge.

### **Relaxations on the Observance of Lent 1966**

The Malankara Church do give utmost importance to observance of lent, feasts and fasts for the spiritual nourishment of its members. During the days of lent, the Church for centuries used to enjoin its members to abstain from taking milk, milk products, fish and meat. The observance of lent and the restrictions were emphasised last in an Order dated 24.1.1959 by Catholicos Mar Geevarghese II, when references were made to relaxations effected in the Church of Syria. However, the Synod under Catholicos Mar Ougen, relaxed the restrictions vide his circular of February 9, 1966. In this order, while all the periods of lent were retained in full, restrictions on usage of milk and milk products and fish were removed during the periods of lent except for the 3 days-lent and Wednesdays and Fridays in 40 days lent and the Passion Week.

### **Malankara Syrian Christian Association Meetings**

Mar Ougen, during his tenure had convened the Malankara Association thrice, in 1965, 1970 and 1974.

#### *1. Association Meeting December 1965*

The Managing Committee of the Malankara Association has decided at its meeting on December 18, 1965 to convene a meeting of the Association on December 25, 1965 :—

- (i) to elect a new Managing Committee in place of the existing Committee, the term of which had expired;

- (ii) to elect a new Clergy Trustee in place of Fr. Manalil Jacob who resigned due to ill health;
- (iii) to elect six Metropolitan-designates.

Accordingly, the Malankara Metropolitan convened the Association on December 25, 1965 at M.D. Seminary, Kottayam. The Association made the following elections.

- (i) A new Managing Committee of 86 members with 29 Clergy and 57 lay members.
- (ii) Very Rev. Fr. T.S. Abraham Cor Episcopa as the Clergy Trustee in place of Fr. Manalil Jacob.
- (iii) Metropolitan-designates: (1) Rt. Rev. Ramban C.T. Thomas. (2) Malpan Fr. N.S. Youhanon. (3) Rev. Fr. K. Philipos. (4) Rev. Fr. Paul Varghese and (5) Rev. Fr. M.V. George.

It was also decided in the meeting that the overall strength of Managing Committee be raised to 108.

This Association meeting had the unique distinction of the presence of delegates from the Orthodox Churches of Armenia, Russia, Ethiopia and representatives of Pope of Roman Catholic Church and Lutheran Church to witness its proceedings. They were in Malankara to participate in the 150th year Jubilee celebrations of the Theological Seminary.

## 2. *Association Meeting of December 1970*

During the period 1966-70, the Managing Committee members were agitating over the unwieldy number of representatives totalling about 3000 which was not considered conducive to holding any sensible discussion for taking a decision and hence it was necessary to find a way out for a system by which the number of representatives could be reduced. Various proposals were put forward. However, no tangible alternative to the current system emerged.

In the circumstances, the Managing Committee in its meeting held on 25.6.1970 and later on 27.8.1970 decided to hold the Association meeting in the conventional pattern on December 31, 1970 at M.D. Seminary with the following agenda:

- (i) Election of a successor to the Catholicos-Malankara Metropolitan.
- (ii) Election of a new Managing Committee.

The Malankara Association accordingly met on December 31, 1970 at M.D. Seminary and elected Mathews Mar Athanasius, Metropolitan of Outside Kerala Diocese, as successor Catholicos-Malankara Metropolitan. The new Managing Committee of 86 members was also elected.

### 3. Association Meeting 1974

The next Association meeting was held on October 2, 1974 at St. Mary's Church, Niranam. It was convened to elect (i) five Metropolitan-designates and (ii) new Managing Committee of 86 members.

Mar Ougen was too old and weak and hence the Association meeting was presided over by the Senior Metropolitan Mathews Mar Ivanios of Kottayam Diocese. The members elected by the Association as Metropolitan-designates were; (i) Fr. M.V. George (ii) Fr. Paul Varghese (iii) Fr. K.C. Thomas (iv) Fr. K.K. Punnoose and (v) Fr. P.V. Joseph. 86 members of the next Managing Committee were also elected.

### Malankara Association Secretary

The Managing Committee at its meeting held on March 24, 1966 had elected P.C. Abraham as the Secretary of the Association. By virtue of the re-election in subsequent years he continued to serve as Secretary to the Church till 1980.

### Obituaries

A few venerable Metropolitans of the Church expired during the Catholicos's tenure. They were :—

S. No.	Metropolitans	Diocese	Date of Expiry	Places of tomb
1.	Kuriakos Mar Gregorios	Kottayam	April 5, 1965	Pambady Dayara
2.	Alexios Mar Theodosius	Outside Kerala	August 6, 1965	Bethany Ashram, R. Perinad.
3.	Geevarghese Mar Gregorios	Ankamali	Nov. 6, 1966	Trikunnath Seminary Alwaye.

4.	Patros Mar Osthathios	Malabar	February 2, 1968	Carmel Dayara, Mulanthu- ruthy.
5.	Thoma Mar Dionysius	Niranam	Dec. 3, 1972	Mt. Thabor Dayara, Pathana- puram.

### Mooron Consecration

The Catholicos consecrated Holy Mooron on December 21, 1967. The last occasion was in 1951, held by his predecessor.

### East Asian Christian Conference

In 1969, His Holiness delegated Metropolitan Mathews Mar Kurilos and Rev. Fr. P.V. Joseph (now Metropolitan Mar Pachomios) to the East Asian Christian Conference held in Bangkok. The Conference is a representative body of various Churches in the Eastern part of Asia from Pakistan to Japan. It runs almost on parallel lines of the World Council of Churches. The first Conference was held in Prappat in Sumatra in 1957; the next, in Kuala Lumpur in 1959 and the third in Bangkok in 1964. It was in 1969 that Malankara Church was represented in this august body. This had helped her to project her image and create an awareness of the Orthodox stand among the Churches of Asia.

### Consecration of Metropolitans 1966 and 1975

The Malankara Association had elected worthy clergy to be responsible shepherds of the Church in the meetings held in 1965 and 1974. The Catholicos consecrated them; they were :—

<i>S. No.</i>	<i>Elected Candidates</i>	<i>Date of Consecration</i>	<i>Venue</i>	<i>Metropolitan Title</i>	<i>Diocese Allocated</i>
<b>Elected in 1965</b>					
1.	Ramban C.T. Thomas	24.8.1966	St. Peter's St. Paul's Church, Kolenchery	Thomas Mar Timotheos	Malabar.
2.	Fr. N.A. Youhanon Malpan	-do-	-do-	Yohanon Mar Severios	Cochin.

3.	Fr. K. Philipos	-do-	-do-	Philipos Mar Theophilos	Principal Theological Seminary.
<b>Elected in 1974</b>					
4.	Fr. M.V. George	16.2.1975	St. Mary's Church Niranam	Geevarghese Mar Osthathios	Niranam.
5.	Fr. Paul Varghese	-do-	-do-	Paulos Mar Gregorios	Delhi and the North.
6.	Fr. K.C. Thomas	-do-	-do-	Thomas Mar Makarios	America.
7.	Fr. K.K. Punnose	-do-	-do-	Punnose Mar Theodosius	Calcutta.
8.	Fr. P.V. Joseph	-do-	-do-	Joseph Mar Pachomios	Kandanad.

### Episcopal Visits From Sister Churches

The Church played host to a number of episcopal dignitaries from sister Churches during this period. They were :—

1965. On the occasion of the 150th year Jubilee celebrations of the Theological Seminary, the Church received episcopal representatives from the Pope of Rome, Patriarch of Russia, Catholicos of Armenia, and Patriarch of Ethiopia. (Ref. Theological Seminary Jubilee Celebration).

1967. Most Rev. Dr. Donald Cogen, Archbishop of York, England, paid a visit to the Church in February 1967.

1969. A delegation from the Rumanian Orthodox Church led by His Beatitude Justinian, Patriarch, visited the Church in January 5-12, 1969. The other members of the delegation were: Metropolitans Nicolai of Ardeal, Nicolai of Banat, Antim and Rev. Arachmandrite Bartholomeu.

The Russian Orthodox Church too had sent a good-will delegation on a visit to the Church in January 1969. The delegation members were Archbishop Antoni of Minsk, Fr. Serapion and Fr. George Telpis.

### Catholicos's Pledge on St. Thomas's Throne 1972

The usually calm and benign Catholicos was for once provoked to out burst his deep and unassailable conviction on the

status of St. Thomas in Malankara Church. He declared that he was enthroned on the throne of St. Thomas and even if he had to abdicate, he will not change that faith. This he said in the Managing Committee meeting of August 24, 1972<sup>12</sup> which was considering arrangements for the 19th Centenary Celebrations of St. Thomas's Martyrdom that year. The provocation, for this declaration he made, was a letter addressed to him by three Managing Committee members alleging that St. Thomas had no throne. Following the declaration by Catholicos, these members walked out of the meeting in protest. The Catholicos repeated his unchangeable faith in St. Thomas in the public meeting held at Niranam on October 10, 1972.

### **Martyrdom of St. Thomas-19th Centenary Celebrations 1972**

St. Thomas, the Apostle, had suffered martyrdom in the Indian soil at Mylapore, Madras, on December 21, 72 A.D. The Malankara Church celebrated the nineteenth Centenary of the Saint's martyrdom in 1972 in a wide scale. On October 10, 1972, a memorial public function was held at St. Mary's Church at Niranam which place was hallowed by the footsteps of St. Thomas. The Catholicos Mar Ougen on this occasion declared "We will not do anything which belittle the prestige of the throne of St. Thomas even if we have to lose our position or life. St. Thomas is our father who begat the Malankara Church through baptism and elevated her to episcopal stature by endowing priesthood..... The relationship between Catholicos and Patriarch is clearly provided in the Huddaya Canon and the Constitution of the Church. We will not falter from this not an iota."<sup>13</sup>

In recognition of the stature of St. Thomas, Government of India brought out a 20 paisa stamp depicting the Persian Cross in the Church on St. Thomas Mount, Madras on this occasion. The centenary celebrations were concluded at a grand public function at M.D. Seminary, Kottayam, on December 31, 1972. The Armenian Church delegates, Patriarch His Holiness Derdarian at Jerusalem, Arch Bishop Aslanian, Bishop Alerian, and Arch Priest Tattorian-all of Jerusalem were guests of honour on the occasion.

### **Medical Mission**

The Church evinced keen interest in extending its services in

12. Paret Z.M. : Mar Ougen Basselios (1975): p. 283.

13. *ibid* : Pp. 296-7.



### **Special Stamp on St. Thomas**

New Delhi, June 25: The Posts and Telegraphs Department is bringing out a special stamp on July 3 to mark the 19th death centenary of St. Thomas.

Printed in Raw Sienna and grey colours, the 20 paise stamp is vertical in design and depicts the Cross in the Church on St. Thomas Mount, Madras.



the medical field. In pursuance thereof, beginnings to establish hospitals were made during the period of Mar Ougen, in the following places.

1. *At Kolencherry.* The Medical Mission Hospital was established in a 50 acre plot at Kolencherry, the foundation stone of which was laid by Patriarch Mar Yakoub III on June 7, 1964.
2. *At Sasthamkotta.* Foundation Stone was laid for Mar Theodosios Memorial Hospital at Sasthamkotta, Quilon.
3. *At Parumala.* On 2.11.1968, the memorial day of the Saint Mar Gregorios, foundation stone of a hospital in the Saint's name, was laid at Parumala.

### **Conferences of the World Council of Churches 1968 and 1975**

The Malankara Church is a member of the World Council of Churches since its inception at Amsterdam in 1948. Delegations were always sent to participate in the deliberations of the seven-yearly General Assembly Sessions of the Council. The Council had held its General Assemblies in July 1968 at Upsala, Sweden and in December 1978 at Nairobi, Kenya. The Catholicos had sent delegations from the Church to these Assemblies.

### **Patriarch's Pleasure**

Patriarch Mar Yakoub III was pleased with the rumpus generated by Mar Philoxenos in the Church in 1960 and he followed it up with a series of darts apparently indented to bleed to his pleasure but really did not sting. Imposing the hegemony of the Church of Syria over Malankara Church was what pleased the Patriarch most. Standing on the embankments of Damascus, Mar Yakoub observed a few grills obstructing his designs. Demolition of these obstructions was his pleasure.

The unwitting aides of Mar Yakoub in this foul drama are those who refuse to be enlightened on the apostolic origin, apostolic faith, independent status, a self-governing Constitution ensuring independence in the Indian national context etc. of the Malankara Church—a dissident group of players wearing an Antiochene Masque. In the wisdom the dissidents, although claiming to be free Indian citizens, they have subjugated themselves to the extra-territorial hegemony of the Church of Syria over Malankara Church.

The obstructions which the Patriarch observed in executing his hegemony were :

i. St. Thomas. ii. Apostolic Throne of St. Thomas. iii. The Catholicate established in 1912. iv. The Constitution of the Malankara Church. The dissidents and the Patriarch who found St. Thomas to be the stumbling block started raising voice against Catholicos for claiming "enthroned on the St. Thomas' throne", etc. in public and in the Managing Committee. The Patriarch consistently took measures to obliterate these obstructions in absolute disregard of history, tradition and judgement of law courts of the country. The steps taken one after another gained momentum and as a result, the dissidents were able to gather strength and support among a sizable population of the Malankara Church and ultimately form a denominational Church in 1975.

### **Retrograde Measures**

The calculated moves adopted by the Patriarch to enforce his hegemony were:

- i. Denial of the priesthood of St. Thomas (Letter No. 203 of 27.6.1970).
- ii. Un-Constitutional appointment of Patriarchal delegate to India in 1972. (Letter dated 28.1.1972.)
- iii. Un-Constitutional organisation of parallel Malankara Syrian Christian Association.
- iv. Call for a revolt against the Catholicos and the Holy Synod. (Order No. 245/73 dated 16.6. 1973).
- v. Forbidding Catholicos from convening Malankara Association in 1974. (Letter dated 15.7.1974).
- vi. Uncanonical and Un-Constitutional consecration of Metropolitans.
- vii. 13-point charge-sheet on Catholicos. (Letter dated 30.1.1974).
- viii. Suspension of Catholicos. (Letter No. 15/75 dated 10.1.1975) and Metropolitans (Letter dated 9.4.1975).
- ix. Ex-communication of Catholicos (Letter No. 303/75 dated 23.6.1975).
- x. Installation of a rival Catholicos (Staticon dated 8.9.1975).

- xi. Branding Catholicos and his followers as heretics and aliens to the Holy Syrian Orthodox Church (Staticon<sup>14</sup> dated 8.9.1975).

Details of development of events relating to each of the above moves of the Patriarch are provided in Chapter Eighteen.

#### **Patriarch Yakoub III is De-recognised 1974**

The Managing Committee and the Episcopal Synod had met from time to time to consider the moves made by the Patriarch. The allegations were denied and the Patriarch was urged to desist from all such actions which were ultra-virus of the provisions of the Constitution and under which the Patriarch had no right to interfere in the internal affairs of the Malankara Church. Since the Patriarch had acted contrary to the provisions of the Constitution, the Holy Synod on August, 3, 1974 declared that "the present Patriarch His Holiness Yakoub III disregarding the specific conditions under which he was accepted in 1958 has resiled from the same and disentitled himself to and all the prerogatives and privileges provided in the Constitution of the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church subject to which he was accepted".<sup>15</sup> The conclusions drawn were that the Patriarch i) voluntarily withdrew from the Concordat of 1958 and (ii) lost all privileges following from the Concordat. He became persona non grata to the Church.

#### **Patriarch Suspends and Ex-communicates Catholicos 1975**

The Patriarch on 30.1.1974 charge-sheeted the Catholicos, suspended him on 10.1.1975 and finally ex-communicated on 23.6.1975. The ex-communication was decided by the so-called Universal Synod of the Syrian Orthodox Church held at Damascus on 16.6.1975.

#### **Patriarch Installs a Catholicos September 1975**

The Patriarch followed up the ex-communication of the Catholicos Mar Ougen with installing another Catholicos. The choice was Metropolitan Paulos Mar Philoxenos of the dissidents who was expelled by the Holy Synod of Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church. He was elevated as Catholicos of the

14. Appendix XIV

15. Dr Paulos Mar Gregorios : The Indian Orthodox Church (1982): p.65.

East on September 7, 1975 and titled him Baselios Mar Paulos II of the Jacobite Church.

The Staticon<sup>16</sup> issued by the Patriarch stated that Mar Paulos was under the "Holy See of Antioch and all the east" and also that the throne of St. Thomas was fictitious.

### **Mar Philoxenos and Mar Clemis Expelled 1975**

#### **Mar Philoxenos<sup>17</sup>**

The anti-St. Thomas and the anti-Catholicos stance of Metropolitan Mar Philoxenos and his suspension from the Holy Synod in 1960 have been detailed earlier. The Holy Synod under Catholicos Mar Ougen at its meeting held on 22.5.1975 ex-communicated Mar Philoxenos. The series of moves culminating in the ex-communication are noted below in sequence.

18.4.1975. The Synod took up for consideration a Memorandum submitted by 467 members of the Kandanad Diocese which complained about the anti-Catholicos activities of Mar Philoxenos. These included the active participation of the Metropolitan in the public meeting held on February 23, 1975 at Ernakulam to celebrate the Patriarchal Day and the support he gave to the resolutions passed in the meeting, which were anti-Church and anti-Catholicos. Besides, Mar Philoxenos, though invited, did not attend the meeting of the Synod. After considering the complaint, the Synod framed the charge-sheet on the Metropolitan which was sent to him with the intimation that he may attend the Synod meeting on 22.5.1975 when the charges will be taken up for examination.

9.5.1975. The Synod met on 9.5.1975 and took note of a letter dated 9.4.1975 sent by Patriarch to Mar Philoxenos which indicated suspension of the Metropolitans of the Malankara Church and which entrusted the administration of some of the dioceses to the charge of Mar Philoxenos. The Synod decided that Mar Philoxenos, in case he acknowledged the receipt of the letter from the Patriarch allocating dioceses to the Metropolitans and admitted the right of the Patriarch to allocate dioceses, would lose the membership in the Malankara Episcopal Synod and that he should communicate his views in this regard to the Synod before 20.5.1975 and further that if no reply was received by that time, the Synod

16. Appendix XIV.

17. Paret, Z. M. : Malankara Nazranikal Vol. VIII (1977). Pp 140-143

will treat him as voluntarily withdrawn from the Synod and that he did not wish to continue as Metropolitan of the Malankara Church. Mar Philoxenos received the letter indicating the above decisions of the Synod; but did not reply to the points at issue, but "sent an insolent letter defying the authority of the Synod and the Constitution of the Church."

22.5.1975. The Synod which met on 22.5.75 reviewed the action taken on Mar Philoxenos and decided that:

- (i) Mar Philoxenos ceased to be a Metropolitan of the Malankara Church;
- (ii) He lost all spiritual and temporal privileges, prerogatives and rights befitting a Metropolitan;
- (iii) He shall not enter any parishes of the Church or function in any of the organisations of the Church;
- (iv) He was apostatised from the Church;
- (v) No member of the Church shall have any association whatsoever with him;
- (vi) Till alternative arrangements were made, the diocese will be directly under the administrative control of the Malankara Metropolitan.

The Catholicos issued an order 107/75 to Mar Philoxenos indicating the decisions as above.

### **Mar Clemis**

Metropolitan of the Cnanaya Diocese, Abraham Mar Clemis, who was consecrated on April 15, 1954 at Homs, Syria, always nourished an ethnic affinity to anything Syrian and responded most favourably to Patriarch's overtures. In late November 1973, the Metropolitan visited Patriarch Mar Yakoub at Damascus. Following his visit, the Patriarch issued an order No. 370/73 to the members of the Cnanaya diocese, extracts of which are given below:

"In the light of the recent developments in the Malankara Church many clergy and laity members have sought our directions on what approach they should hold. We are aware of your loyalty and devotion to the Apostolic throne of Antioch and that your Metropolitan do not either accept or promote the present alleged claim of an Apostolic throne for St. Thomas. This, he has informed us and the people often. We, therefore, demand of you that you

should preserve your ancient traditions and be cautious of those who are against the throne of Antioch<sup>18</sup>. This orders of Patriarch was accepted by Mar Clemis and circulated to his parishes with his forwarding order No. 109/73.

The Holy Synod took note of Mar Clemis's activities and expelled him from the Church vide circular No. 108/75 dated May 28, 1975. The development of events leading to the expulsion in sequence are as under :—

9.5.1975. The Synod at its meeting held on 9.5.1975 considered the letter dated 9.4.1975 from Patriarch which suspended the Metropolitans of the Malankara Diocese and entrusted their dioceses to the charge of Mar Clemis and decided that :

- (i) Mar Clemis, in case he acknowledged the letter from Patriarch and admitted the right of the Patriarch to allocate dioceses, would lose the membership in the Malankara Episcopal Synod;
- (ii) he should communicate his views in this regard to the Synod before 20.5.1975.
- (iii) Mar Clemis, if no reply was received by 20.5.1975, will be treated as voluntarily withdrawn from the Synod and did not wish to continue as Metropolitan of the Malankara Church.

Mar Clemis received the communication from the Synod indicating the above decisions but he did not send any reply as desired.

22.5.1975. The Synod, in the circumstances, met on 22.5.1975 reviewed the situation and decided that :

- (i) Mar Clemis voluntarily withdrew from the Synod
- (ii) He ceased to continue as Metropolitan of Malankara Church.
- (iii) In the circumstances, the Catholicos should take over the administration of the Cnanaya diocese till alternate arrangements were made.
- (iv) Mar Clemis should not enter any parish church or other organisations, institutions of the Church.

18. Paret Z.M. : Mar Ougen Baselios : Pp 437-8.

- (v) No member of the Church shall accept Mar Clemis as Metropolitan and associate with him or cooperate with his activities in any manner.

The Catholicos communicated the above decisions to Mar Clemis vide his letter No. 108/75 dated May 28, 1975.

### **Mar Ougen Heretic**

Finally, the Patriarch, quiet characteristically and in agreement all his earlier actions, made a blanket charge on the Catholicos and his followers that, "Catholicos Ougen and all his partisan Metropolitans and all those who follow them in their illegal and ill-advised stand of upholding the fictitious throne of St. Thomas are *heretics* and aliens to the Holy Syrian Orthodox Church". This charge was not made in any formal order or communication to Mar Ougen but in the Staticon No. 383/75 issued to Mar Paulos II on September 8, 1975 by the Patriarch. (See Appendix XIV).

### **A New Denomination — The Jacobites**

With Catholicos Mar Ougen ex-communicated and a rival Catholicos installed, the dissidents on their own separated from the mainstream of Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church. They formed a new denomination—the Jacobite Church.

### **Mar Ougen Retires-Abdicates-1975—Mathews Mar Athanasius Succeeds**

Catholicos Mar Ougen had a weak frame. In 1964, he was seriously ill which situation caused anxiety about his health to all concerned. In the circumstances, the Synod on 29.7.1964 appointed Metropolitan Mathews Mar Athanasius as Assistant to the Catholicos to help him in the administration of the Church. Later, on December 31, 1970, the Malankara Association elected Mar Athanasius as successor to Mar Ougen as Catholicos and Malankara Metropolitan. Because of the limitations of old age the Catholicos appointed Mar Athanasius to assist him in the administration of the Church and the Church Secretariat in May 1972. Further, the Managing Committee on August 19, 1975 passed a resolution requesting the Catholicos to direct and authorise Mar Athanasius to conduct all administrative responsibilities except those of Malankara Metropolitan Trustee.

In response, in his 92nd year, Catholicos Ougen requested the Malankara Episcopal Synod to relieve him of his administrative duties and voluntarily retired from the office of Malankara Metropolitan, on September 24, 1975. Later, on October 27, 1975 he abdicated the throne of Catholicos also.

In these circumstances, Mar Mathews Athanasius, by virtue of his earlier election, took over charge of the two offices of Catholicos and Malankara Metropolitan in 1975. This was the first occasion in the Church when the elected designate took over the portfolios even when the predecessor was still alive.

### **Scholar and Literateur**

A scholar in Syriac, the Catholicos had a number of works to his credit. From original Syriac books, His Holiness had translated into Malayalam, 'Passion Week Hymns', 'Hymns on the Festivals of St. Thomas and St. George', 'Promion', and other prayers. The translation works show His Holiness's deep knowledge in theology and the versatility in conveying them. Other Books in Malayalam include 'Life after Death', 'The Supreme Sacrifice' (Parama Yagam), Mathopadesha Sathyangal (Truths of Religion), 'Holy Synods'. The Church is greatly indebted to the Catholicos for his enlightening endeavours.

### **Last Days**

Mar Ougen led the Church for eleven years and five months from May 22, 1964 to Oct. 27, 1975. By his characteristic humility and calm and serene disposition, the Catholicos had endeared himself to his flock of sheep. But old age sapped his physical strength. He completed 91 years on July 26, 1975, and four months thereafter, he breathed his last on December 8, 1975.

From Devalokam, His Holiness's body was shifted to Old Seminary. On December 9, 1975 the body was taken from there on a farewell procession through the city to M.D. Seminary where obituary speeches were made by dignitaries and thereafter, to Devalokam. At Devalokam, Mar Ougen was buried in a grave in a solemn ritual of prayers befitting the head of the Church adjacent to the late Catholicos Mar Geevarghese.

## CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

### **PATRIARCH MOVES DISSENTION 1970-75**

The divisive tendency spearheaded by Metropolitan Paulose Mar Philoxenos obfuscated the peace which was very strenuously brought about in 1958. Agreements were dishonoured and sentiments were violated. A schism surfaced. Once again the Church was subjected to anguish and agony.

The dissidents' move evidently proved that there were people of the erstwhile Patriarchal Party who were discontented with the Supreme Court Judgment of September 1958 and the subsequent Peace Concord of December 1958. They waited for the lapse of the evokable period of 12 years after the Judgement to be free from the ambit of payment of court fees payable to the Catholicos Party.

The discontenders surfaced and began "to create troubles between the Patriarch and the Catholicos. The Patriarch was advised to attack the throne of St. Thomas since this was the time-honoured symbol of the autonomy of the Indian Church. Patriarch Ignatius Yakoub III writes several letters to the Catholicos saying that the latter should not make himself equal to the Patriarch that he should not use red ink for his letter head, that he should not use the title Holiness and so on".<sup>1</sup>

Yakoub III, who was accepted in 1958 subject to the provision of the Constitution, from 1970 onwards ignored the legality of the same and committed a number of violations of the Constitution, Church Canons and decrees of Courts of law. The list is very long. The most blatant instances which are of historical relevance and significance are recounted below.

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1. Dr. Paulos Mar Gregorios. The Indian Orthodox Church, p. 62

# 1. PATRIARCH DENIES PRIESTHOOD TO ST. THOMAS, THE APOSTLE

## Schismatic letter No. 203 of 27.6.1970

“No more faction in the Church; any attempt to infuse them will be viewed very seriously by the Holy See of Antioch...I came to unite, not to divide”, Patriarch Yakoub III had declared on May 23, 1964 at Kottayam.<sup>2</sup> Six years later, however, by the infamous letter no. 203/70 dated June 27, 1970, the same Patriarch abused St. Thomas the Apostle. In the said letter, the Patriarch wrote: “We were surprised to read in a letter the heading ‘the throne of St. Thomas’, written long time before your letter. The fact is that since the time the Catholicate was established in the fourth century, none of the Catholicoses or the Maphrianas had ever used this term. Secondly, the Apostle Mar Thoma had never established a throne which could be claimed as the ‘throne of St. Thomas’. As is clear from the Gospel of St. John (20/21-24), he had not become a priest. How did he become a High Priest, not being even a priest? How could he institute a Throne, without he being a High Priest? Therefore, no Church Father of ancient times had stated that he had either established a Catholicate or consecrated an Episcopa”.<sup>3</sup>

The charges put forward by the Patriarch in his letter were mainly<sup>4</sup>:

- (i) The Catholicos used the title “The Catholicos Enthroned on the Throne of St. Thomas”.
- (ii) St. Thomas, the Apostle, did not institute any hierarchy (Throne) so as to call ‘the Throne of St. Thomas’. As it is clear from the Gospel of St. John (St. John (20/21-24) he was not even a priest. Then how can he be a High Priest, while he was not even a priest? How could he institute a Throne without he being a High Priest”.
- (iii) The Patriarch installed Mar Ougen as the Catholicos of the East and not on the throne of St. Thomas.

2. Abraham M.K. : The Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church — Then and Now—(1973) P : 13.

3. Cited by Rev. Dr. K.C. Thomas, Kuttikandathil. (Metropolitan Thomas Mar Macarios) in Mar Thoma Sleehayude Simhasanam Oru Naveena Srushtiyo? (Malayalam) Appendix VII—Pp : xii-xiii. Translation by the author.

4. Paret Z.M. : Mar Ougen Baselios. Pp : 174-8.

- (iv) Bar Hebraeu's Church history refers to St. Thomas not as one who established a Catholicate but only as one who evangelised in the east.

Further, the letter closed with a warning "We inform you that these things confound the affairs of the Church.....As soon as you come to know of these, they should be set right. We cannot continue to bear them. If these are not corrected, the Church will split again. That will not be due to the fault of the Syrians".

The Holy Synod repudiated the allegations made by the Patriarch and accordingly, the Catholicos replied the Patriarch. The reply letter dated 21st August 1970, *inter alia*, stated ;

"The statement in Your Holiness's letter about the priesthood of St. Thomas, his throne, the authority of the Catholicate is blatantly against the truth and faith of the Church, history and canons of the Church fathers and hence is unacceptable and deplorable.

We expect that Your Holiness will review the views on the Eastern Orthodox Church which we proudly claim was founded by St. Thomas, the Apostle."

There was no positive response from the Patriarch. On the contrary, having attacked the apostolic stature of St. Thomas, the founder of the Church, and the autonomous status symbol of the Catholicate, the Patriarch proceeded with interfering in the internal administration of the Church which was in violation of the Supreme Court Judgement, the Peace Concordat of 1958 and the established traditional relations between a Catholicate and a Patriarchate. Obviously, the Patriarch was motivated by the object of bringing the Malankara Church subordinate to the Church of Syria—a subordinate Church whose Metropolitans will be responsible to the Patriarch and over which the Patriarch will have supreme spiritual and temporal powers. The Patriarch was moving towards realising a subordinate Church which Pulikottil Mar Joseph Dionysius and Vattasseril Mar Geevarghese Dionysius VI (1908-34) successfully resisted all along their life. Yakoub III was trying where his predecessors Abdulla, Elias and Aprem failed. History was being repeated.

A new generation in Malankara which lacks vision of an independent and selfgoverning Church in a national context suppor-

ted the dissidents and the Patriarch. They include civil Administrative Service personnel who are expected to be safeguarding and upholding the freedom of independent India but, instead, are seen willfully surrendering their honour to servitude of prelates of a foreign (Syrian) authority in the field of religion. A Constitution which provides a place of honour to the Patriarch, which ensures the freedom of the Church and a selfgoverning system does not attract their the wisdom and comprehension.

## 2. UNCONSTITUTIONAL APPOINTMENT OF PATRIARCHAL DELEGATE IN INDIA 1972.

Patriarch Yakoub III on January 9, 1972 consecrated a Syrian monk, Ramban Aprem Aboodi as Metropolitan Timotheos and Patriarch's Apostolic Delegate to India. @ Neither the Constitution of the Church nor the Concordat of 1958 envisages or permits appointment of such a Delegate in Malankara. The Catholicos was not consulted either. Later, on January 28 1972, the Patriarch wrote a letter (No 36/72) to the Catholicos asking him to accept Timotheos, as Apostolic Delegate to India and to heed him. Timotheos delivered this letter to the Catholicos on February 14, 1972 soon after his arrival in India.

### **The Episcopal Synod Reacts**

The Malankara Episcopal Synod which unofficially came to know of the intention of the Patriarch, had met earlier on January 13, 1972 and considered the issue. Convinced of the illegality of the step, the Synod had sent the following telegram to the Patriarch; "The Holy Episcopal Synod of the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church, meeting at Kottayam send Your Holiness respectful salutations and greetings in Christ, Our Lord. Unofficially we understand Your Holiness intends to send one Bishop as your delegate to India. This Synod unanimously regard this as unnecessary and harmful to the peace of the Church and to the relationship between our two Churches. Request Your

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@Note : Timotheos had as Ramban Aprem Aboodi, come to Malankara earlier in 1964 to Serve as devotee at the tomb of late Patriarch Mar Elias II at Mar Ignatius Dayara at Omallur. Patriarch Mar Yakoub had sent him vide his latter dated 28.10.1964 to the Catholicos.

Holiness to reconsider such action if contemplated and inform us that such Bishop will not be coming to India.”<sup>5</sup>

The Patriarch ignored the Cable and sent Aboodi Timotheos, as mentioned above. Soon after his calling on the Catholicos, the Episcopal Synod met on February 19, 1972 considered the Patriarch's letter of January 28, 1972 and unanimously resolved that “neither the letter nor the delegate was acceptable to the Indian Church. The Patriarch was requested to recall the delegate. He refused to do so”<sup>6</sup>. Mar Timotheos continued to stay in Kerala till his visa expired on July 8, 1973.

The Synod, in continuation of the Cable sent the following letter<sup>7</sup> to the Patriarch on 16.2.1972.

H.H. Moran Mar Ignatius Yakoub III  
Patriarch of Antioch and all the East  
Syrian Patriarchate, Damascus, Syria

16th February 1972.

Your Holiness,

The Holy Episcopal Synod here sends to Your Holiness respectfull greetings in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, and requests Your Holiness to continue to remember us with our clergy and people in Your Holiness' parayers and Qurbanas.

On hearing unofficially that Your Holiness is proposing to send us a Patriarchal delegate, our Synod which met on February 13th, 1972 had sent you a cable, confirmed by letter, respectfully requesting your Holiness not to send such a delegate. We regret that even after receipt of our communication, Your Holiness decided to act against the decision of the Holy Episcopal Synod here and has sent Mar Aprem Timotheos Aboodi with Your Holiness's letter of January 28, 1972.

The Episcopal Synod here has officially considered Your Holiness' letter of January 28, 1972. As Your Holiness is well aware the disputes which existed in our Church for about half a

5, Paret : Z.M. Mar Ougen Baselios (1975) : p.239.

6. Dr. Paulos Mar Gregorios: The Indian Orthodox Church (1982) : p.62.

7. Rev. Dr. K.C. Thomas. Kutti kandathil: Mar Thoma Sleehayude.....(1972)  
Appendix VI. pp: x-xi

Century were settled in December 1958 expressly subject to the provisions of the Constitution framed by the Malankara Church and a Patriarchal delegate is clearly incompatible with the terms of that settlement. Further, Your Holiness, in several public announcements and assurances made during your visit to this Church in 1964 had yourself abundantly made it clear that such a delegate is no longer necessary after the settlement.

We, therefore, wish to inform Your Holiness officially that this Church cannot accept Bishop Aprem Mar Timotheos as Patriarchal Delegate as requested in Your Holiness's letter of January 28, 1972. The unanimous decision of the Holy Episcopal Synod here is that his presence here as Patriarchal delegate cannot benefit the Church and can only help undo the settlement and peace effected in the Church.

It is our earnest hope and formal request that Your Holiness will recall him at the earliest possible opportunity.

We hope and pray that the peace effected and preserved till now will continue unhampered and we request Your Holiness's prayers to that effect.

We give below the names of the members of the Synod present in the meeting of to-day which has made this decision.

Your Holiness' Brother in the Lord.

Sd/-

Baselios Augen I, Catholicos of the East.

*Members Present* : 1. H.H. The Catholicos. 2. H.G. Mathews Mar Athanasius 3. H.G. Mathews Mar Ivanios 4. H.G. Abraham Mar Clemis. 5. H.G. Mathews Mar Koorilos. 6. H.G. Paulos Mar Philoxenos 7. H.G. Daniel Mar Philoxenos. 8. H.G. Philopos Mar Theophilos. 9. H.G. Youhanon Mar Severios. 10. H.G. Thomas Mar Timotheos.

The Catholicos issued a Circular No. 50/72 on April 28, 1972 informing the Church members of the illegal action of the Patriarch and the decisions of the Episcopal Synod. In accordance with the Synod's decision, the Catholicos enjoined all members not to receive Timotheos in any manner.

In all these decisions of the Synod, Metropolitans Mar Philoxenos and Mar Clemis, who later defected to form the Jacobite Church, were partakers.

#### UNCONSTITUTIONAL ORGANISATION OF PARALLEL MALANKARA ASSOCIATION.

Mar Timotheos exerted his position as Patriarchal delegate and began entering the parish churches without obtaining the permission of the Diocesan Bishops and instigating them to revolt against the authority of the Episcopal Synod and the Catholicos. Further, he began to ordain priests and deacons in order to create a rival Church loyal to the Patriarch. Many unscrupulous people came forward to be so ordained since they would not be qualified for priesthood through the legitimate channels. They were employed to replace the priests in those parishes which refused to cooperate with him. In this manner, he created unauthorisedly a dissident group of reasonable strength in the Church especially in the dioceses of Ankamali, Cochin, Kandanad and Kottayam and prepared them for a revolt against the Catholicos. Although unauthorised to function in Malankara, Timotheos organised an association called the Malankara *Jacobite* Syrian Christian Association in 1973 as a rival to the legitimate Malankara Syrian Christian Association. The Patriarch gave his blessings to this unconstitutional organisation and began dealing officially with them.

#### Expelled

The Catholicos submitted to the Govt. of India that Mar Timotheos the foreign bishop from Syria, by his illegal actions in violation of the judgement of the Supreme Court of India was interfering in the internal affairs of the Church and sought his expulsion from India. Consequently the Govt. of India refused Timotheos extension of his residence permit and Visa. In these circumstances, the prelate left India on July 8, 1973<sup>8</sup>. He was greatly demoralised by this virtual expulsion and before he departed, he threatened in public that he would destroy the Malankara Church in revenge for the expulsion from India.

#### Patriarch's Call for Revolt 1973.

Patriarch Yakoub III by his order No. 203 of 27.6.1970

Paret Z.M. : Mar Ougen Basselios (1975) : p. 343.

tried to demolish the foundations of Apostle St. Thomas and the Catholicate. This was followed by the posting of a delegate in India. The latter was able to organise illegally a Jacobite Association of the dissident group parallel to the Malankara Syrian Christian Association in 1973. Having succeeded in structuring a base and raising dissident leaders, the Patriarch himself entered the arena and issued an order No. 245/73 dated 16.6.1973 to the faithful people of the Malankara Church calling them for a revolt against the Catholicos and the Episcopal Synod of the Church<sup>9</sup>. This order went directly to several churches in India and to many individuals. This order evidently proved that the Patriarch cared precious little for peace in the Malankara Church.

#### 5. PATRIARCH FORBIDS CATHOLICOS FROM HOLDING ASSOCIATION MEETING 1974.

The Managing Committee at its meeting held on April 19, 1974 had decided to convene the Malankara Syrian Christian Association on October 2, 1974 at Niranam to elect new Managing Committee members and five Metropolitan candidates. The Catholicos/Malankara Metropolitan Mar Ougen issued notice to this effect to all parishes. Coming to know of this move, Patriarch Yakoub III intervened as never before by any Patriarch preceeding him and asked Catholicos not to hold the meeting. Extracts of the Patriarch's letter dated 15.7.1974 as published in Malankara Sabha issue of 1974 September (pages 253-54) are translated and produced here :

“We understand that notice has been issued to parishes about convening the Malankara Syrian Christian Association on October 2, 1974 to elect new office-bearers of the Malankara Syrian Christian Association and Metropolitan candidates. It has been declared in the notice that you are enthroned on the throne of St. Thomas. But we have already informed you through several letters that St. Thomas had no throne as you claim and that St. Thomas who is believed to have come to India for evangelisation had not established a throne. Moreover, it was not on such a throne that we had installed you as Catholicos when we had come in 1964.

You are aware that we have initiated certain measures regarding you for deviating from fundamental Orthodox faith of the

9. Dr. Poulos Mar Gregorios. The Indian Orthodox Church. p.63

Church. We, therefore, in our capacity as the Supreme head of the Church entrusted with the responsibility to preserve and protect the orthodox faith of the Church and as the President of the Episcopal Synod order that you *should not convene* the Malankara Syrian Christian Association or consecrate new Metropolitans but maintain the status quo till our Synod complete the procedures we have started and a decision thereon is taken.”

The points of legal validity to be noted here are :

- i. The legally valid authority to convene Malankara Syrian Christian Association is the Malankara Metropolitan.
- ii. The Supreme Court by its judgement of 1958 had recognised that the notice issued under the letter head title Catholicos enthroned on the throne of St. Thomas, convening the meeting of Malankara Christian Association in 1934 at M.D. Seminary, Kottayam was valid.

In the light of this position, the Patriarch through his letter of July 15, 1974 was illegally intervening and interfering in the freedom of the Church and in her internal affairs.

The Managing Committee also took note of the insulting and offensive letter and passed a resolution on July 30, 1974 recording its protest against the Patriarch in sending the letter of July 15, 1974 which purported to take action on the Catholicos Mar Ougen and also stating that the Patriarch had no authority or right to take such action either canonically or under the provisions of the Constitution. (Malankara Sabha-September 1974, p. 238).

## 6. PATRIARCH'S UNCANONICAL CONSECRATION OF METROPOLITANS AND CATHOLICOS

In furtherance of his objective of creating a rival Church, the Patriarch Yakoub III proceeded in a spree of calling individual priests to Damascus (Syria) clandestinely and consecrating them as Metropolitans for the Malankara Church and later insolently asking the Catholicos to extend support and cooperation to them. The Metropolitans so covertly consecrated during the period 1973-75 were :

<i>No.</i>	<i>Candidate</i>	<i>Date of Consecration</i>	<i>Title</i>
1.	Very Rev. Dr. K.P. Paul Ramban (Kadavil North Paravoor)	27.8.1973	Paulose Mar Athanasius
2.	Fr. P.M. Thomas	1974	Thomas Mar Dionysius
3.	Fr. Geevarghese P.M. Perumpally	1974	Geevarghese Mar Gregorios
4.	Fr. Kuriakose Mepral	1975	Kuriakose Mar Koorilos
5.	Fr. C.M. Thomas	12.6.1975	Thomas Mar Osthathios
6.	Ramban Yakoub (Manjinikara)	12.6.1975	Yakoub Mar Julius
7.	Fr. C.G. Samuel (Pampady)	1975	Samuel Mar Philoxenos.

The Patriarch made Kadavil Mar Athanasius a life-member of the Evangelistic Association of the East and accorded him authority to carry on missionary activities in Kerala, Mysore, different parts of India and in Eastern and Western countries in accordance with Patriarchs's direction.

The Catholicos had informed Fr. P.M. Geevarghese and Fr. P.M. Thomas, vide letter dated January 31, 1974, that it was wrong on their part to receive consecration as Metropolitan in violation of the rules and regulations of the Church, but they replied through their advocates defying Catholicos and professing that they have already decided to receive consecration from Patriarch of Antioch. The Episcopal Synod considered the indisiplined conduct of the priests on March 4, 1974 and forbid them from conducting any spiritual service in the Churches etc.

The Metropolitans were consecrated in violation of the Constitutional provisions. Primarily the Patriarch does not enjoy any right under the Constitution to call any individual of the Church and Consecrate him as Metropolitan in the Church. The consecration was an act of interference in the internal administration of the Church. Article 113 enshrines that if any one is to be consecrated a bishop or Metropolitan, he shall be elected to such office by the Malankara Syrian Christian Association, secondly, the Episcopal Synod shall approve the election; thirdly, the Catholicos shall

consecrate the candidate canonically with the cooperation of the Synod.”

Further the Huddaya Canon, accepted by both the Churches, provides that :

- (i) the Patriarch shall not interfere in the administration of the See of the Catholicos at Tigris unless invited. (Decision of the Kaphthurtha Synod : Chapter 7).
- (ii) the Synod should examine the episcopa, before consecration. He should be one whose faith has been confirmed and of good conduct. (chapter 7:3)
- (iii) An episcopa should not receive consecration except in the presence of the Synod and Diocesan Metropolitan (chapter 7:3).

It was, therefore, highly unethical, uncanonical, unconstitutional and illegal on the part of the Patriarch to consecrate any candidate from Malankara over-stepping the Malankara Association and Episcopal Synod. Insolent too, the Patriarch was when he wrote to the Catholicos vide letter No. 323/73 dated 6.9.1973 “We order you that you give our beloved Metropolitan Paulos Mar Athanasius all necessary support, help and cooperation to strengthen the missionary activity.”<sup>10</sup>

The record of Dr. Paulos Mar Gregorios in this context reveals the disposition of Yakoub III. “The Church sent Fr. Paul Varghese, the Principal of the Seminary to Damascus to protest against this action. He conveyed this protest directly to the Patriarch in the presence of the newly consecrated bishop (Kadavil Mar Athanasius). The Patriarch stated that the new bishop had not been authorised to enter into any of our churches and, therefore, that his action was not uncanonical. The Patriarch was told that he had no canonical authority to call a monk of the Indian Church to Damascus or to ordain him a bishop. The Patriarch’s reply was that he may do it again, if the Catholicos was not properly subservient to him.”<sup>11</sup>

A few words may be said about Kadavil Paulos Mar Athanasius. While Ramban, the Metropolitan submitted a thesis on ‘The

10. Ibid. p. 63

11. ibid : P : 64

Orthodox Syrian Church — Its Religion and Philosophy—” for his Ph. D, to the University of Kerala in 1966, seven years before his consecration in 1973. In his thesis, the Metropolitan had acknowledged and accepted certain features of the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church which he categorically stated after a lot of scholastic research work and which he most conveniently discarded on the earliest opportunity of being offered the red robe. The findings of Dr. Ramban Paul were:

“The Christian Church in Kerala claims its spiritual origin from St. Thomas, the Apostle of Christ, who according to tradition and history came to Kerala in 52 A.D. This is generally accepted.”<sup>12</sup>

“He (St. Thomas) ordained priests from those families and established seven Churches in Kerala”<sup>13</sup>...

“The Syrian Patriarch of Antioch Mar Yakoub III came to Kerala in 1964 May at the request of the Kerala Orthodox Church Synod. Mar Augen was consecrated as Catholicos by the Patriarch and Metropolitans of both the parties in Union. There were present at the consecration also Metropolitans from the Middle East. The new Catholicos is now known as Baselios Augen I, Catholicos of the East and Malankara Metropolitan He is the Supreme Head of the Orthodox Syrian Church in India, which has gained autonomy of administration.”<sup>14</sup>

“The Patriarch is not to enter the jurisdiction of the Catholicos or Maphrian without invitation and vice-versa. The Patriarch or the Catholicos appoints bishops, to the respective dioceses for which they are consecrated. Catholicos has provincial autonomy.”<sup>15</sup>

However, when Mar Yakoub III consecrated Mar Athanasius, it was in utter disregard of the principles and traditions upheld by the Malankara Church and assiduously recorded by him. And Dr. Mar Athanasius did not raise an eye brow to this nefarious game of the Patriarch.

### **Declaration of 1974 – The Church De-recognises Patriarch**

The series of events beginning with the infamous letter 203 of 27.6.1970 to the unlawful consecration of Metropolitans in 1973

12. Dr. Kadavil Paul Ramban. The Orthodox Syrian Church (1973) P. xiv.

13. *ibid* : p. xvi 14. *ibid*. p. xxiii. 15. *ibid*. p. 129

and 1974, caused unprecedented anguish to the Church hierarchy, administrative bodies and to the common parish members. The out-bursting mood of hostility to the Patriarch was reflected in the resolutions passed by the Managing Committee and Episcopal Synod.

On February 20, 1974, the Managing Committee passed the following resolution:

“This meeting records its strong protest and sorrow in His Holiness Moran Mar Ignatius Yakoub III Patriarch of Antioch, having ordained members of this Church as Metropolitans, in violation of the terms of acceptance made in 1958 and the Constitution of the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church, dis-regarding the resolution passed by this Managing Committee in its meeting held on 25-5-1973 and sent to His Holiness, and defying the regulations and practices of this Church, with a view to creating discord in this Church and entering unlawfully into its administration, and requests the Malankara Episcopal Synod to take all the necessary steps in the matter.”<sup>16</sup>

On March 8, 1974, the Episcopal Synod considered the matter and decided to send the resolution of the Managing Committee to the Patriarch. The Synod also decided as follows:

“Since the Synod in considering the said resolution, is inclined to think *prima facie* that the Patriarch has resiled from the terms of acceptance in 1958, it is decided that before the Synod makes the final decision regarding the resolution of the Managing Committee, the Patriarch be requested to inform the Synod within a month whether he has so resiled.”<sup>17</sup>

The Catholicos communicated the decisions of the Managing Committee and the Synod to the Patriarch and requested the latter to give clarification whether he had not resiled from the agreement of 1958, within a month's time. Thus, the Patriarch was given a reasonable opportunity to state his position.

The Patriarch did not reply. On August 3, 1974 the Episcopal Synod met and reviewed the situation. The Synod, “in the absence of a response from the Patriarch, made the declaration

16. Dr. Paulos Mar Gregorios : The Indian Orthodox Church P : 64

17. Ibid : p. 65

that the Syrian Patriarch had resiled from the agreement of 1958 and, therefore, the Indian Church's recognition of him as Patriarch which was based on that agreement, was null and void. The declaration of the Synod meeting of August 3, 1974 concluded as follows :

“On a careful and detailed consideration of all the above matters, this Synod is now convinced and declares that the present Patriarch, His Holiness Yakoub III, disregarding the specific conditions under which he was accepted in 1958, has resiled from the same and disentitled himself to and lost all the prerogatives and privileges provided in the Constitution of the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church subject to which he was accepted.”<sup>18</sup>

The Secretary to the Synod forwarded the declaration to the Patriarch. Thus, the Patriarch of Antioch, ceased to be the Patriarch recognized by the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church and the Catholicate.

With the derecognition of Mar Yakoub III, the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church broke its relationship with the Church of Syria. Mar Yakoub expired on June 26, 1980 and was succeeded by Mar Severios Sakka of Baghdad on September 14, 1980.

There was no invitation to the Catholicos/Malankara Church on the occasion of his enthronement and hence, no attempt to revive the relationship was made. In the circumstances the Malankara Church has not recognised the present Patriarch also. The situation continues.

## 7. PATRIARCH SUSPENDS CATHOLICOS AND METROPOLITANS 1975

### 13 Charges alleged against Catholicos 1974

While the Episcopal Synod and the Managing Committee were considering the unconstitutional actions of the Patriarch, the pontiff himself framed 13 charges against the Catholicos asking him for an explanation vide his letter No. 51/74 dated January 30, 1974. These charges were :

- (i) In the Universal Syrian Orthodox Church there is but one Apostolic throne that is of St. Peter and the Patriarch

18. Ibid : p. 65

of Antioch enshrines it. whereas you declare a throne for St. Thomas and you, the Catholicos, claim to be occupying it.

- (ii) The Patriarch is the Supreme Head of the Universal Syrian Orthodox Church and the Catholicos is subordinate to him. Whereas you claim equal status and declare it to be so.
- (iii) The Malankara Church is only a part of the Universal Syrian Orthodox Church, whereas you declare it to be an autocephalous 'Indian Orthodox Church and that its supreme head is the Catholicos. This declaration is an insult and intimidation of the Antiochian See and authority of the Patriarch.
- (iv) Since St. Thomas did not possess a throne, the claim to be enthroned on it is uncanonical and baseless. This is not an internal matter which concerns Malankara Church but that which concerns the Faith and priesthood of the Universal Church.
- (v) It is uncanonical and not factual to say that Malankara Church has merely a friendly relation with Patriarch, whereas it is subordination.
- (vi) The Patriarchal delegate was not accepted and all possible measures were taken to expel him.
- (vii) You have amended the 'Amalogya' (Profession of Faith) in order to exclude subordination to the Patriarch and the amended Amalogya was used at the time of consecration of the three Metropolitans at Kolenchery in 1966.
- (viii) The Malankara Church do not deny the heretic two-nature theory propounded by Pope Leo at the Chalcedon Synod.
- (ix) The Sunday School books contain false statements which are uncanonical and historically wrong.
- (x) You claim more authority than what accorded by the Synod on local administration.
- (xi) You have proclaimed that you are enthroned on the throne of St. Thomas and are equal to the Patriarch.
- (xii) The resolution passed by the Managing Committee on May 25, 1973 with you in the chair that if the Patriarch

would consecrate a bishop for the Malankara Church it will be construed as a voluntary breaking of all relations between the Catholicate and the Patriarchate. It is uncanonical. This decision indirectly denies the supremacy of Antioch.

- (xiii) The letter dated August 7, 1973 is impolite, insolent and not befitting the status and prestige of Catholicos.

A reply to these allegations was expected within a month.<sup>19</sup>

### **Synod Examines the Allegations**

The Catholicos forwarded the allegations with comments to the Episcopal Synod since under the provisions (Articles 106, 118 & 119) of the Constitution, the Synod is the competent and legitimate authority to hear complaints against the Catholicos. The Synod considered the documents at its meeting held in 4.3.1974. It denied all the allegations and also observed that the Patriarch was incompetent to raise complaints against the Catholicos and ask his explanation. The decision was communicated to the Patriarch on 5.3.1974.

### **Patriarchs' reply of 15.7. 1974**

The Patriarch replied after four months vide letter No. 196/74 dated July 15, 1974 that he did not mean to provide a reply as required in the letter of March 5, 1974 and raised further allegations. The fresh allegations on which elucidation was sought, were :

- (i) the contention that St. Thomas has a 'throne'.
- (ii) the contention that Catholicos is the 'Primate' of the Malankara Church and that the Patriarch has no place in the hierarchy of the Church, while it is accepted that the Patriarch is the Primate.
- (iii) The lessons taught in the Theological Seminary at Kottayam are contrary to the fundamental faith of the Church and, therefore, are heretical. e.g.
  - a) that the system of oral confession is not necessary
  - b) that baptism is for the remission of the original sin is wrong.
  - c) that there are only seven sacraments is wrong.

19. Paret Z.M. : Mar Ougen Baselios (1975) : Pp. 603-4.

(iv) The Theological Seminary has been affiliated to a Protestant oriented Serampore University.

(v) Despite advice, the powers and rights (of the Patriarch) in the affairs of the Malankara Church have been denied.

In the Synod meetings which considered the complaints against the Catholicos, neither the complainant (the Patriarch) nor the person against whom the complaints were made (the Catholicos) were invited. The Synod decided that neither the plaintiff nor the defendant could preside over the Synod that considered the dispute and so the Senior Metropolitan presided. The Synod gave final consideration to the charges against the Catholicos in its session on the 3rd August 1974. It was unanimously decided by the Synod that "all the charges made by the Patriarch against the Catholicos were without substance or basis. The Catholicos was completely exonerated".<sup>20</sup>

#### **Patriarch Suspends Catholicos January 1975**

In continuation of the charge-sheet, the Patriarch served a suspension order on the Catholicos on January 10, 1975. The order<sup>21</sup> is reproduced below :

SYRIAN PATRIARCHATE OF ANTIOCH AND THE EAST  
DAMASCUS—SYRIA

(EMBLEM)

By the Grace of God.

Ignatius Yakoub III, Patriarch of Antioch and all the East.

No. 15/75

10.1.1975

Apostolic Blessings to Mar Augen I, Catholicos of the East.

Whereas we are satisfied from records enclosed herewith that you, Mar Baselios Augen I, Catholicos, are making earnest attempts to introduce new concepts and practices contrary to the fundamental doctrines of faith, order and discipline of the ancient and revered Holy Church under the See of Antioch and All the East, and whereas we have convened a meeting of the Holy Synod of the Universal Syrian Orthodox Church to consider and decide upon the points referred to in the notice enclosed herewith. We are satisfied that in the interests of the Church and its members at

20. Dr. Paulos Mar Gregorios : The Indian Orthodox Church. P : 66

21. Ibid. p : 66

large, it is just and necessary that you should be restrained from exercising the powers in your capacity as the Catholicos.

We, the Patriarch of Antioch and All the East, therefore, in our capacity as the Supreme Spiritual and Ecclesiastical Head of the Universal Syrian Orthodox Church, do hereby *suspend and restrain you*, the Catholicos, from exercising any or all of the spiritual and ecclesiastical powers pertaining to the office of the Catholicos from the date of receipt of this order. You shall remain suspended until further orders.

May the Blessings of Our Lord Jesus Christ be with you,

(Sd/-)

His Excellency Mar Baselios Augen I.  
Catholicos of the East,  
Catholicate Aramana,  
Kottayam-4, Kerala, S.India.”

The Catholicos considered the Patriarch incompetent to impose any suspension and rejected the same. The Patriarch was informed accordingly vide letter No. 11/75 dated January 24, 1975 as follows:<sup>22</sup>

THE ORTHODOX SYRIAN CHURCH  
CATHOLICATE OF THE EAST

(EMBLEM)

No. 11/75.

His Holiness Ignatius Yakoub III, Patriarch of Antioch and All the East, Syrian Patriarchate, Damascus-Syria.

Catholicate Palace  
Kottayam-4.

24th January, 1975

Your Holiness.

We have received your letter No. 15/75 dated 10-1-1975.

The Constitution of the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church which determines the relationship of this Church with the Patriarchate does not grant your Holiness any authority to take any

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22 Ibid : Pp. 66-7

action or issue any order against Us as envisaged in Your Holiness's letter. Complaints Your Holiness raised against Us are being considered by the Holy Episcopal Synod of Malankara, the only competent authority to deal with such matters, as Your Holiness has been already informed.

Further, after the decision of the Holy Episcopal Synod of the 3rd August 1974, that Your Holiness has disenthitled yourself to and lost even all the prerogatives and privileges provided in the Constitution of the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church, communicated by the Secretary of the Synod on the 5th of August 1974, We are bound to reject the letter forthwith, and do so hereby.

Under the circumstances, We have to inform Your Holiness most courteously that no notice can be taken of your letter No. 15/1975 dated 10-1-1975.

Yours in the Lord,

Catholicos of the East  
and Malankara Metropolitan.

To recapitulate, Malankara Church declared Patriarch Yakoub III *Persona-non Grata* on August 3, 1974 and the Patriarch suspended Catholicos Mar Ougen in January, 1975. In this situation, the relation between the Churches of Malankara and Syria broke off. This has not been revived since.

#### 8. PATRIARCH SUSPENDS METROPOLITANS— RE-ALLOCATES DIOCESES APRIL 1975

The Patriarch, in continuation of his suspension of Catholicos, turned his eyes on the Metropolitans of the Malankara Church. Through his order dated April 9, 1975 addressed to all the ruling Metropolitans of the Malankara Church, the Patriarch suspended all of them, except two—Paulose Mar Philoxenos and Abraham Mar Clemis who had defected to his side. "The order also laid it down that all the ten dioceses, then existing, of the Malankara Orthodox Church, were to be administered by the two defecting bishops"<sup>23</sup>.

23 Ibid. P :45

### Synod Expells Mar Philoxenos-Mar Clemis is Out

The Synod proceeded to take action against the two bishops Mar Philoxenos and Mar Clemis, who had cooperated with the dissidents and disobeyed the decisions of the Synod. There was also a petition against Mar Philoxenos signed by hundreds of priests and people from his diocese, attesting that he had been a party to the uncanonical and seditious resolutions of the Ernakulam meeting. Charges were framed and sent; witnesses were examined. The case against both bishops was established. They were asked to state in writing that they would submit to the authority of the Synod. Mar Philoxenos stated in writing that he would not. The bishops placed these insolent letters from the Patriarch before the Holy Episcopal Synod. It was patent from these letters, that Mar Philoxenos and Mar Clemis had been asked by the Patriarch to take over the entire Malankara Church on behalf of the Syrian Patriarch. Neither Mar Philoxenos nor Mar Clemis had placed the matter before the Synod or attended the Synod meeting. This was clear evidence enough that they had violated the Constitution and Canons and left the Malankara Episcopal Synod by their own accord. The Synod in its meeting on 9th May 1975 decided to give the two bishops a last chance to say whether or not they continue to acknowledge the authority of the Synod. They were given time till 20th May 1975 to do so. They were also intimated that if they failed to acknowledge the authority of the Synod by the stipulated date, the Synod were to proceed on the basis that the defaulting Metropolitans had voluntarily separated themselves and would cease to be Metropolitans of the Malankara Church. They did not reply.

On 22-5-1975, the Synod met and “declared that the two defecting bishops (Paulose Mar Philoxenos and Abraham Mar Clemis) had by their own actions voluntarily separated themselves from the Synod and had ceased to be Metropolitans of the Malankara Church or members of its episcopal Synod. Mar Philoxenos, who had sent an insolent letter defying the authority of the Synod and the Constitution, was declared expelled from membership in the Malankara Church”<sup>24</sup> and prevented from entering any of its churches or institutions.

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24. *ibid* : P : 45

## 9. PATRIARCH EXCOMMUNICATES CATHOLICOS AT UNIVERSAL SYRIAN ORTHODOX SYNOD AT DAMASCUS JUNE, 1975.

The Patriarch moved from the initial step of serving charge-sheets to ordering suspension on the Catholicos Mar Ougen. Next, he proceeded to the logical conclusion of ex-communicating the Catholicos. To this end, the Patriarch convened a Synod at Damascus on June 16, 1975.

On 11.1.1975, the Patriarch had issued a letter no. 16/75 inviting the Bishops of the Malankara Church for a meeting of the 'Holy Synod of the Universal Syrian Orthodox Church' to be held on the 16th June, 1975 and setting forth six items for the agenda.

The Bishops placed this letter before the Malankara Episcopal Synod. The Synod considered these matters in their session on 4th February 1975, and took the following decisions:

- (a) Under the Constitution and Canons of the Church, the Patriarch of Antioch has no right or power to convene any forum for deciding matters of faith, order or discipline concerning the Malankara Church. That power is vested in the Malankara Episcopal Synod.
- (b) There is no recognized Church as 'the Universal Syrian Orthodox Church' or a Synod of such a Church. (The Patriarchate of Antioch has no universal jurisdiction. It is a provincial or regional Church).
- (c) No member of the Malankara Episcopal Synod has any right or duty to attend such a Synod even if invited to do so. The Synod decides that none of its members shall so attend.

These decisions were communicated to the Patriarch.

It is said that there was opposition from some of the Metropolitans of the Syrian Church to the move of Patriarch. The Patriarch was not confident of securing a majority in the Synod in order to pass the ex-communication proposal. In this regard Mar Gregorios says "He (Patriarch) had so much opposition from his own Syrian bishops that he was afraid that he may not have his way in the Synod. To ensure a majority support for himself in his own Synod, he decided to ordain three more Indian bishops. Fr. Kuriakos Mepral (Mar Kurilos), Fr. C. M. Thomas (Mar

Osthathios) Ramban Yakoub (Mar Julios). The number of illegally and uncanonically consecrated Indian bishops now came to six and with the support of two defecting bishops, the Patriarch was sure of the support of 8 Indian Bishops in his synod in addition to three or four Syrian bishops among his own bishops".<sup>25</sup>

The so-called Universal Synod was held from June 16 — 20, 1975, at the Patriarchate of Antioch at Damascus under the Presidentship of Patriarch Yakoub III. Eleven Metropolitans of the Church of Syria and five from Malankara attended the Synod.

The proceedings of the Synod as given by Dr. Alex Paul Urumpackal are reproduced below.<sup>26</sup>

*Proceedings of the Holy Episcopal Synod of the Universal Syrian Orthodox Church held on June 16, 1975 and continued on subsequent days in the Conference Hall of the Syrian Patriarchate, Damascus-Syria.*

The Universal Synod of the Syrian Orthodox Church in the World held a session on Monday morning, June 16, 1975, at 10 A.M. and continued on June 17, June 18, June 19, and June 20, at the Patriarchate of Antioch, Damascus, under the Presidency of His Holiness Mar Ignatius Yacoub III, Patriarch of Antioch and all the East and the Supreme Head of the Universal Syrian Orthodox Church, with the presence of their Graces the undernamed Metropolitans:

- Mar Osthathios Kuriakose, *Metropolitan of Jezireh & Euphrates.*
- Mar Dionysius Georges, *of Alleppo & Enviorns.*
- Mar Miletus Barnab, *of Homs, Hama & Enviorns.*
- Mar Kurilos Yacoub, *of Thr-Abdeen, Turkey.*
- Mar Dionysius Bahnam, *Patriarchal Visitor in Europe.*
- Mar Severius Zakka, *of Baghdad & Basra.*
- Mar Dioskores Luka, *Patriarchal Vicar in Jerusalem.*
- Mar Athanasius Aphrem, *of Beirut.*
- Mar Gregorios Slecba, *of Mosul & Enviorns.*
- Mar Severius Hawa, *General Patriarchal Vicar in Damascus.*
- Mar Thimothios Aphrem, *Apostolic Delegate of India.*
- Mar Clemis Abraham, *of the Knananites, India.*

25. *ibid* : P : 45

26. Dr. Alex Paul Urumpackal, *The Juridical status of the Catholicos of Malabar. Appendix II. pp. 141-45.*

Mar Athanasius Paulose, *Missionary Metropolitan of the Evangelistic Association.*

Mar Gregorios Geevarghese, *India.*

Mar Dionysius, Thomas, *India.*

Mar Coorilose Kuriakose, *India.*

The Holy Synod held its sessions after invoking the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. It carefully and attentively studied all papers and documents submitted to it, relating to the subjects for deliberation in the Synod as stated in the invitation no. 16/75 dated, 11-1-1975 sent by His Holiness the Patriarch to the Catholicose and to all the Metropolitans.

On the occasion of this meeting, the Synod records its gratitude for the sincere attempts made by His Holiness the Patriarch of Antioch for consolidating the bases for lasting peace in Our Church in India.

The documents which were submitted and fully discussed are the following:

1. Invitation addressed by His Holiness the Patriarch to His Eminence Augen I Catholicose of the East and his Metropolitans to attend this Synod.
2. A letter sent by His Holiness the Patriarch, no. 52/74 dated 31-1-1974 to the Catholicose asking him to give explanations for the charges against him.
3. A letter of the secretary of the so-called synod of the Catholicose to His Holiness enclosing the answer of the Catholicose No. 1/74 dated 5-3-1974.
4. A letter sent by the Catholicos to His Holiness the Patriarch dated 9-3-1974.
5. A letter sent by His Holiness the Patriarch to the Catholicose, No. 196/74 dated 15-7-1974, confirming his demand to the Catholicose to give the explanations required.
6. A letter sent by the Catholicose to His Holiness the Patriarch No. 210/74 dated 1-8-1974, declaring that the letter of His Holiness the Patriarch No. 196/74 was entrusted to the synod which shall answer thereto.

7. A letter to His Holiness stating the proceedings taken by the synod in India, dated 3-8-1974.
8. A letter No. 3/74 dated 5-8-1974 sent by the secretary of the synod of the Syrian Church in India to His Holiness the Patriarch.
9. A letter of His Holiness the Patriarch No. 16/75 dated 11-1-1975 embodying the questions in his letter addressed to the Catholicose, to be subject of discussion at the Synod.
10. A letter No. 15/75 dated 10-1-1975 sent by His Holiness the Patriarch to the Catholicose.
11. Answer sent by the Catholicose to His Holiness to the above referred letter No. 11/75 of 24-1-1975.
12. A letter sent by the Catholicose to His Holiness the Patriarch dated 7-8-1973.
13. A letter of the Catholicose addressed to all the Churches dated 8-3-1974 under No. 80/74 and another letter dated 15-10-1973.

The following points arise from these documents:

1. The Catholicose and Metropolitans following him were duly invited to this Synod, but they refused to attend it, alleging that His Holiness the Patriarch has no authority to interfere in the affairs of the Church in India.
2. The Catholicose claimed that he holds an Apostolic See founded by Apostle St Thomas.
3. The Catholicose has removed the name of the Patriarch from the Amologia.
4. The Catholicose has refused in his letter of 7-8-1973 the authority of the Patriarch and his status as Supreme Head of the Church in India.
5. The Catholicos has refused to accept the Metropolitans who were consecrated by the Patriarch for the Church in India.

The Synod was surprised by these points for the following reasons:

1. Because the Syrian Orthodox Church in India was dependent since the early Christian centuries on the authority of the Patriarch of Antioch and all the East, in all its spiritual affairs.
2. Because the Apostle St Thomas did not at all found an Apostolic See which would have been continually held by successors.
3. Because His Holiness the Patriarch when consecrating the above mentioned Augen I declared him as a Catholicos for the East, subordinate to the Apostolic See of Antioch.

Whereas the only Apostolic See of the Universal Syrian Orthodox Church is the See of Antioch of the Apostle St Peter on which the Patriarch of Antioch is seated.

Whereas the Syrian Orthodox Church in India was and still is an indivisible part of the Universal Syrian Orthodox Church and dependent on the authority of the Patriarch of Antioch and All the East in all its spiritual affairs.

Whereas the laws of the Church impose upon any one receiving ordination to acknowledge his submission and allegiance to the Patriarch of Antioch and All the East; and any one who would rebel thereafter shall be disqualified from his ecclesiastical grade; Whereas the said Catholicose removed the Patriarch's name from the Amologia contravening thus the laws of the Holy Church; Whereas the Catholicose has defied the authority of the Patriarch and his dignity as the Supreme Head of the Church in India.

Whereas any decision of this kind is considered according to Church laws as a deviation from the fundamental faith of the Church;

Whereas the Catholicos has rejected some Metropolitans consecrated by the Patriarch to the Syrian Orthodox Church in India, in response to the requests submitted by the people of the Church.

Be it known that the Patriarch has the right to consecrate Metropolitans to any diocese in any country in the World, in his capacity as the Supreme ecclesiastical and Spiritual Head of the Universal Syrian Orthodox Church, including the Syrian Orthodox Church in India.

Whereas any one refusing to admit the said rights and authority of the Patriarch shall be considered as apostatised from the Holy Syrian Orthodox Church.

Therefore, the Catholicos by committing all these infractions has separated himself from the body of the Holy Church. For these reasons, the Synod has reached a complete conviction that Catholicose Augen I is at fault and guilty against the faith and the laws of the Church and has forsaken the pledges he had made, of his free will, of allegiance to the Apostolic See of Antioch and to any one holding this See, on the occasion of his consecration as Catholicose of the East and his appointment as a Metropolitan of Malankara.

Therefore the Synod having considered him as apostatised from the faith and the laws of the Syrian Orthodox Church, declares that he has lost all his privileges, prerogatives and rights as Catholicos of the East and as Malankara Metropolitan and orders as follows :

1. Augen the first, Catholicos of the East, and Malankara Metropolitan, is hereby declared as having voluntarily separated himself from the communion of the Syrian Orthodox Church.
2. He is stripped of all his authorities, prerogatives and privileges that were given him at his consecration as Catholicos.
3. He is stripped of all his authorities as a Metropolitan of Malankara.
4. Any one who would participate with the said Catholicos in his rebellion against the authority of the Holy Apostolic See of Antioch or in his deviations from the fundamental faith shall be considered as separated from the communion of the Holy Church, whether he is clergy or layman.

5. The Holy Synod requests His Holiness the Patriarch to announce this decision to the whole Church and to all whom it may concern and to take necessary action.

### **Ex-communication**

Consequent on the decision of the Synod, the Patriarch issued the ex-communication order on the Catholicos as follows : <sup>27</sup>

No. 303/75

23-6-1975

Apostolic Blessings to Mar Augen I Catholicos of the East. The Holy Episcopal Synod of the Universal Syrian Orthodox Church for which invitations were sent to you and to all the Metropolitans was held on June 16, 1975 and it continued its deliberations on the subsequent days till 20th June 1975. The Holy Synod has come to unanimous conclusion on the points referred to it. A copy of the proceedings of the Holy Synod is enclosed herewith for your information.

Whereas the Holy Synod has authorised Us to take the necessary action and in view of the categorical and persistent stand taken by you against the fundamental faith of the church and in view of your rebellious conduct and behaviour against the Apostolic See of Antioch. We have come to the conclusion after the most anxious and prayerful consideration of all the circumstances that you have passed the limits which the church would overlook.

Therefore, as the Supreme Head of the Universal Syrian Orthodox Church of which the Malankara church is a part, We have to declare you and the Metropolitans who are accepting your deviations from the faith as apostates. However, We are giving you another opportunity and ask you to inform us within ten days of the receipt of this as to whether or not you agree and submit to the resolutions of the Holy Synod. In case you do not reply it will be presumed that you have nothing to reply. In that case or if you reply repudiating the decisions of the Synod you and the Metropolitans supporting you will be declared as apostates without further notice.

### **Yakoub III's Contribution to Malankara**

With the ex-communication, the Malankara Church virtually

27. *ibid* : Appendix, III p : 147

split. Thus the earlier warning from Yakoub III to Mar Ougen, "The church will split again", (Letter No. 203 of 27.6.1970) was fulfilled. This was his best and lasting contribution to the Malankara Church.

### **Objections of Malankara Episcopal Synod**

The main objection of the Malankara Synod and the Catholicos to the actions of Charge-sheets, suspension and ex-communication by the Patriarch were :

- (i) Under the Constitution of the Malankara Church, the Patriarch who was accepted subject to the provisions of the Constitution in 1958, has no authority to take any such disciplinary action. (letter No. 15/75 dated 10.1.75 from Catholicos to Patriarch). It is the Episcopal Synod which has the authority for deciding matters of faith, order or discipline. No such right is vested in the Patriarch under the Constitution.
- (ii) The so-called Universal Synod was illegally constituted of illegal member-metropolitans from Malankara. The forum for decision on matters of faith could be an Ecumenical Synod and not the 'Universal Synod.'
- (iii) The allegations did not identify sufficient evidence of any act or practice in regard to Faith which alone justify suspension or excommunication.

### **Suspension and Excommunication Uncanonical Unconstitutional**

The nefarious actions of the Patriarch brought into focus the relevance of two statutory provisions— One taken by the Persian Catholicate of Seleucia Ctesiphon at the Synod held in Markabta in 424 A.D. and the other, Article 118 of the Constitution adopted by the Malankara Church in 1934. As the actions of the Patriarch did not conform to these two directive provisions, they had no binding effect on the Malankara Church. They had a premature death. The Markabta Council of 424 A.D. decreed that "the Easterners shall not be permitted to carry complaints against their Patriarch before the Western Patriarchs (Patriarch of Antioch) and that every case which cannot be determined in the presence of the Patriarch shall be kept to the judgement of Christ. No one for any reason shall be allowed to think or say that the Catholicos of the East can be judged by those under him or by a Patriarch

like him. His own judgement is reserved for Christ who has chosen him, raised him up and placed him at the head of the Church.”<sup>28</sup> Obviously, the Patriarch of Antioch was not vested with any jurisdictional or juridical authority to take any disciplinary action on the Catholicos of Persian.

The Malankara Church Constitution vests the Synod with disciplinary powers over the complaints against the Catholicos. According to Article 118, “If the complaint is against the Catholicos, the Patriarch, if there is a Patriarch recognised by the Malankara Church shall also be invited and in the event of his arriving, he shall be the President of the Synod and if he does not arrive, the Synod shall pronounce the decision.” The Malankara Church Synod, therefore, is self-sufficient in dealing with disciplinary matters concerning its head. The Patriarch has certainly a role to play but then, as President of the Synod only-subject to the condition that he is one recognised by the Church.

In the case of Patriarch Mar Yakoub, by his earlier nefarious actions, he had lost the recognition of the Malankara Church. According to the Constitution, neither the Patriarch of the Syrian Orthodox Church nor its Synod has any right or is competent to deal with any complaint and take disciplinary action on the Catholicos of the Malankara Church. The action of the Patriarch was an unpardonable infringement on the autonomy of the Malankara Church and hence incompetent, uncanonical and unconstitutional.

#### 10. PATRIARCH RAISES RIVAL CATHOLICOS 1975

Patriarch Yakoub III still proceeded to complete the process of split in the Malankara Church. Forty-four days after the ex-communication order of 23rd June, 1975, the Patriarch found Paulose Mar Philoxenos, Metropolitan of Kandanad who was expelled from the Episcopal Synod on May 22, 1975) “worthy to become the new Catholicos of the East in the place of dethroned and dismembered Augen” and ‘consecrated him as Catholicos of East on September 7, 1975 in Damascus with authority under the Holy See of Antioch and all the East to administer the Holy Church

28. William G. Young. Handbook of Source Materials 393— Acts of the Syond of Dadishu p. 286.

there.” A text of the Staticon is given at Appendix XIV. He was titled, Catholicos of the Jacobite Church of Malabar.

In fact, the Jacobites had demanded a Catholicate under the Patriarchate. The demand was made by priests of Ankamali in a meeting held in May 1975 in the Bethel Suloko Church at Perumbavur, presided over by Paulose Mar Philoxenos. In this meeting they took a decision to request the Patriarch of Antioch to grant a Catholicate according to the Canons for the Jacobite Church under the Patriarchate and a Catholicos who will be loyal and bound to the Patriarch.<sup>29</sup>

It may be pointed out here that the Patriarch mentioned a few false, unhistorical, uncanonical and biased views in the staticon:

- (i) The throne of St. Thomas is fictitious.
- (ii) Catholicos Ougen and all his partisan Metropolitans and all those who follow them in their illegal and ill-advised stand of upholding the fictitious throne of St. Thomas are heretics and aliens to the Holy Syrian Orthodox Church.

### **PATRIARCHAL DAY CELEBRATIONS 1975**

#### **Declaration of Malankara Jacobite Syrian Church**

The dissidents celebrated Patriarchal Day on Februray 23, 1975 which was arranged as a solidarity day, at the Maharajas' College grounds at Ernakulam. The meeting was addressed by the Metropolitans Abraham Mar Clemis, Paulos Mar Philoxenos, Kadavil Mar Athanasius, Geevarghese Mar Gregorios (Perumpally), Thomas Mar Dionysius (Kothamangalam) and Kuriakos Mar Koorilos (Mepral). In the meeting Mar Gregorios announced formation of 'Malankara Jacobite Syrian Church' severing their relationship with the Malankara Orthodox Church and enacted a pledge of loyalty by thousands to the Patriarch of Antioch and Church of Syria. The pledge which was undertaken in the name of Trinity, St. Mary, St. Peter and St. Thomas, the Evangelist, and Patron Saint of India, specified the following :—

- (i) Loyalty to the Patriarch enthroned on the Apostolic throne of St. Peter of Antioch and Church of Syria.
- (ii) Loyalty to the Orthodox faith of the fathers.

29. Report : Church Weekly dated 11.5.1975.

- (iii) Denied any relationship with the Indian Orthodox Church.
- (iv) The community of Patriarchal followers will be called Malankara Jacobite Syrian Church.
- (v) The Catholicos and the Metropolitans excommunicated by the Patriarch are anathema to them also.
- (vi) They uphold the Coonen Kurish Sathyam of 1953.

A copy of the pledge is included as Appendix XVI.

### **The Jacobite Syrian Church**

With the Ernakulam Declaration, there came into being in the Christian ecclesiastical horizon of Kerala, another denomination by name the Malankara Jacobite Syrian Church, formally in 1975. The group of people who were dissidents in the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church, through the afore-said consistently uncanonical, illegal and unconstitutional actions of the Patriarch of Syria, came to have strength and position to claim the status of a Church—The Malankara Jacobite Syrian Church.

The term 'Jacobite' is derived from the name of the Metropolitan of the Syrian Orthodox Church of the 6th Century—Jacob Baradeus. The term came into usage following the II Nicene Synod of 787 in which those who did not accept the Chalcedonian Synod of 451 were called the followers of Jacob Baradeus or simply Jacobites. The term came to be accepted only as a synonym for the Orthodox people but not as the name of the Orthodox Church. In Kerala, in 1975, the new denomination has formally acclaimed the jestingly-used term 'Jacobite' to denote their Church, leaving 'Orthodox' specification and giving significance to Syrian character.

### **Paradox**

The Jacobite Catholicos is named Paulose II, which implies that he came in succession to Paulose I. Secondly, Catholicos Paulose I was recognised by and acceptable to Paulose II and Patriarch Yakoub III.

### **Who was Paulose I**

Paulose I was His Holiness Moran Mar Baselios Paulose, the first Catholicos on the Throne of St. Thomas of the East. who

was elevated to that dignity by Patriarch Abdul Messiah in 1912. Here the facts recognised by Yakoub III, by implication are :

- (i) the validity of the dignity of Patriarch Abdul Messiah
- (ii) the validity of consecration by Patriarch Abdul Messiah.
- (iii) the Catholicate re-established by Patriarch Abdul Messiah in 1912.
- (iv) the Catholicate adorned by the Catholicos Moran Mar Paulose I and his successors.
- (v) the throne of St. Thomas on which Paulose I was enthroned in 1912.

The elevation of Mar Philoxenos as Catholicos Paulose II by the Patriarch Yakoub and the implied recognitions as shown above are paradoxical to his infamous letter 203/70.

#### **Show of strength-Loyalty demonstrations**

With the arrival of the illegally elevated rival Catholicos Baselios Paulose in Malankara, the emotional pitch of both the supporting Jacobites and opposing Orthodox erupted and outbursted. Hereafter, we find receptions and meetings held by both Churches, to show their strength and loyalty of each, violations of law and order by the Jacobite Church members to impose their strength and take control of churches and organisations in utter disregard of the just decisions and orders of law courts and interventions of Chief Ministers to contain them, when these interactions threatened the peace, law and order in the State.

#### **Vandalism and Violence**

Not satisfied with their show of strength, the Jacobites proceeded to prove their strength by taking over parishes by resorting to violent means. In the words of Mar Gregorios, "There began a series of armed aggressions by the partisans of the Patriarch who began violently taking over parishes. Many of the parishes now in their possession were thus violently taken over....."

The automobile of H.G. Philipos Mar Theophilos, the Metropolitan of Malankara, was set fire to inside his garage at night, by vandals. Court judgements in favour of the Catholicos's side could not be implemented, due to vandalism and violence.

By the beginning of 1978, the law and order situation became very critical around Alwaye. An army of women and priests were

directed by the Patriarch's supporters to take over the Alwaye Seminary, the seat of Metropolitan Mar Theophilos. This was a violation of a government decree forbidding the assembly of more than 5 people in the area. On the second of January 1978, the women police of the State had to bodily remove 3591 women. The police had also to remove physically 94 priests (many of them recently ordained) who took part in the illegal violent aggression against the residence of a bishop and his chapel.

The Patriarch's supporters organised a Great March' to take over the Alwaye Seminary, but were stopped by the Police from doing so. There was also a violent attack on another church institution, a hospital and even the patients were attacked and injured, the vehicles of the police which tried to stop the aggressions were burned. Passenger buses were burned. There was an attempt to destroy an Orthodox Church in Parakkode by dynamite explosion."<sup>30</sup>

### **Chief Minister Calls For Peace**

The successive demonstrations by both the Churches drew the attention of the Chief Minister of Kerala. He appealed to them "to stop such expensive demonstrations and to engage in more constructive activities. Both sides formally welcomed the Chief Minister's appeal and the demonstrations subsided."<sup>31</sup>

When "the series of violent actions began to threaten the law and order situation in the State, on June 16, 1977, Kerala Chief Minister, A.K. Antony called both parties and tried for a peaceful settlement of property disputes. A Cabinet sub-Committee, including Chief Minister, Mr. C. H. Mohammad Koya, (Minister of Revenue) Mr. K. M. Mani, and Mr. P. K. Vasudevan Nair (Minister of Industry) was appointed for the purpose. But no agreement could be arrived at".<sup>32</sup> A Memorandum was also submitted to the Chief Minister by Mathews Mar Kurilos on 1.2.1978 (Appendix XIX).

### **Appeal by the Christian Churches**

The Christian Churches in Kerala reacted to the aggressions and their leaders made a joint appeal to the aggressors to cease from violence on January 10, 1978.<sup>33</sup>

30. Dr. Paulos Mar Gregorios: The Indian Orthodox Church : pp. 47-48

31. *ibid* p. 46

32. *ibid* p. 47

33. *ibid* 48

### **In the courts again — Catholicate versus Patriarchate 1976-80**

Vandalism and violence were followed by a spate of law suits in different courts of Kerala, between the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church and the Jacobite Syrian Church, regarding the status, rights and privileges of Patriarch over the Malankara Church and the consequent claim on Church/Parish properties. A few important suits which indicated the views of law courts were in respect of the Omallur, Perumbavoor (Sulokho Church) Kuruppumpadi, Palakuzha, Pothanikkad, Kadamattom, Mudavoor and Mulanthuruthy parish churches.

### **From Special Court to High Court 1976-80<sup>34</sup>**

As the number of civil suits grew beyond the number of 200, a special Court was set up by the Government on July. 9. 1976 to hear these Church cases".<sup>35</sup>

The Special Court was first headed by Justice N. Viswanatha Iyer and subsequently by Justice Anantha Subramanyam. During the course of the proceedings in the court, it became evident to the Catholicos Party that a just and impartial treatment and judgement may not be expected from the Judge. Hence, the Catholicos appealed to the High Court to change the trial Court. Here started a series of appeals and reviews in the Kerala High Court and Supreme Court of India. Finally the Supreme Court decreed that the case may be heard by the Kerala High Court. Accordingly the case was taken up in the Single Bench of Justice T. Chandrasekhara Menon.

### **In the High Court**

At the time when the special Court was formed, there were 336 cases before it. In view of the enormous number of cases, the Court took them in totality and adopted a procedure to try a few cases of representative character. Both the plaintiffs and the defendants agreed.

Eight suits were selected having representative character. Seven from among those filed by the Catholicos (Plaintiffs) party and one from the Jacobites (Defendants). Among the seven, one

34. The details of the suit are based on the report which appeared in the Malayala Manorama dated June 6, 1980.

35. Dr. Paulos Mar Gregorios. The Indian Orthodox Church. (1982). p 47

was named the leading suit. These eight suits are mentioned below:

1. Catholicos Mar Ougen and Catholicos-designate Mar Athanasius Versus Kadavil Paulos Mar Athanasius and 18 others—Suit filed in the Court at Kottayam in 1974.  
In this suit 1064 parish churches favouring the Catholicos were named. This suit was counted to be the leading suit.
2. Mathews Mar Ivanios (Metropolitian of Kottayam) *Vs.* Pampady Martha Mariam Patriarchal Church—Suit filed in the Sub-Court Kottayam.
3. Catholicos Versus Metropolitan Kuriakos Mar Kurilos—Suit filed in the sub-Court Alleppy.
4. Catholicos Mar Ougen and Metropolitan Thomas Mar Timotheos Versus Metropolitans Paulos Mar Athanasius, Thomas Mar Dionysius, Geevarghese Mar Gregorios—Suit filed in the Sub-Court, Kozhikkode.
5. Catholicos Baselios Mar Thoma Mathews I, Mathew Mar Ivanios, Daniel Mar Philoxenos, Mathews Mar Kurilos, Youhanon Mar Severios, Philippos Mar Theophilos, Thomas Mar Timotheos *Versus* Metropolitan Samuel Mar Philoxenos—Suit filed in Sub-Court, Kottayam.
6. Catholicos Mar Ougen, Metropolitans Mathews Mar Ivanios, Mathews Mar Athanasius *Versus* Metropolitan Paulos Mar Athanasios and Pourasthya Suvishesha Samajam—Suit filed in the Sub-Court, Kottayam.
7. C. Philip and P.V. Chacko (members of Kothamangalam Cheria Palli) *Versus* Vicars and Trustees of Kothamangalam Cheria Palli—Suit filed in the Munsif's Court, Moovattupuzha.  
**From the Jacobites.**
8. Kurien Philipos and Chandy Joseph *Versus* Baselios Ougen, Mathews Mar Athanasius, T.S. Abraham Cor-Episcopa, Kurien Abraham—Suit filed in the Sub-Court, Kottayam.

The hearings of these suits began in the Court of Justice Chandra Sekhara Menon on November 13, 1979 and ended on March 17, 1980. The judgement was pronounced on June 6, 1980.

The main arguments submitted by the Catholicos and Jacobites may be summarised as follows :—

### **Arguments of Catholicos**

- (i) It was St. Thomas, the Apostle, the disciple of Christ who founded the Church in Malankara. It was he who had established seven Churches (Parish-Churches) and laid the basic administrative structure for spiritual dispensation.
- (ii) The Nicene Synod of 325 A.D. decided that the headquarters of the Catholicate of the East will be in Persia.
- (iii) The Catholicos of the East continues to administer the Church enthroned on the Apostolic throne of St. Thomas.
- (iv) In order to continue the episcopacy uninterrupted, the Malankara Church had to depend on the Patriarchate of Antioch at different periods. But at no time the Malankara Church had admitted ecclesiastical or spiritual or temporal administrative authority to the Patriarch over Malankara Church.
- (v) In 1912 the Catholicate of the East in Tigris was re-established in Malankara and in succession thereof the Catholicoses continue to lead the Malankara Church from the Throne of St. Thomas.
- (vi) Parish Churches, whosoever or however constructed, become integral units of the Church once they are established and subjected to the authority and administration of the Malankara Metropolitan.
- (vii) Malankara Church is not a fellowship or federation of administratively independent organisations, but it is a cohesive one Church subject to the administrative jurisdiction of the Malankara Metropolitan.
- (viii) The administration of the Malankara Church is regulated according to the provisions of its Constitution which was adopted by the validly elected and authorised represen-

tatives to the Malankara Syrian Christian Association at its meeting held in 1934. The parish churches, the office bearers and the entire Church are bound to the Constitution.

- (ix) A candidate to become a Metropolitan should be elected by the Association for the Church and later accepted by the Synod. Metropolitans who have not come into position as per this procedure have no right to ordain deacons and priests for the Malankara Church.
- (xi) The Metropolitans who have been consecrated in contravention of the Constitution are not eligible to be the Metropolitans of the Church and the priests whom they have ordained are not priests of the Malankara Church.

### Arguments of Jacobites

- (i) Malankara Church is not an independent Church; it is a part of the Universal Church.
- (ii) The argument that the Church is episcopal is not correct. Although it can be admitted that in the matter of receiving spiritual gift of priesthood; the Church is episcopal, in structure and administration the Church is congregational.
- (iii) The Arguments that St. Thomas came and established a Church and that he established an apostolic throne sufficient to dispense spiritual gift of priesthood are not admissible vis-a-vis the fundamental faith of the Church.
- (iv) The Great Metropolitan of the East was accepted only as the deputy to the Patriarch of Antioch.
- (v) It is not justiciable to agree that the Catholicos is enthroned on the Apostolic throne of St. Thomas.
- (vi) It is wrong to allege that the Patriarch tried to secure temporal powers over the Malankara Church.
- (vii) The Patriarch was at all times the Supreme head, protector of faith and the supreme dispenser of spiritual authority of the Church.
- (viii) It is a false claim that the Catholicate of Tigris was re-established in Malankara in 1912 and that the Catholicos is the successor of St. Thomas.

- (ix) Each parish church is an independent Trust of the parish which established it.
- (x) The claims that the Jacobite Syrian Church is under the administrative jurisdiction of the Malankara Metropolitan and that the spiritual priestly and temporal authorities are vested in him are contrary to the facts and tradition of the Church.
- (xi) The Supreme Court in its judgement of 1958 did nowhere state that the re-establishment of the Catholicate in 1912 was right, the Church was subject to the provisions of the Constitution and that the adoption of the Constitution was valid.
- (xii) The Malankara Metropolitan is one of the three trustees only, elected to administer the Church properties.
- (xiii) Either the Catholicos or the Metropolitan or the priests who deny or disobey the Patriarch on the Apostolic throne of Antioch who is the supreme head of the Church, spiritual head and fountain head of the Apostolic gift, have no right to dispense any right attached to the office they are holding.
- (xiv) In 1964 Mar Ougen was installed as Catholicos by the Patriarch of Antioch as subordinate to the Patriarch and as representative of the Apostolic throne of Antioch.
- (xv) In 1972 a section of the Church under the leadership of the plaintiffs introduced a new claim that the Malankara Church was an independent Church, the Patriarch had no authority over Malankara Church and that the Supreme head of the Church was the Catholicos. This was the basis for the present litigation.
- (xvi) The decisions of the Universal Synod Convened by the Patriarch of Antioch who is the supreme head of the Church are binding on the Church. According to the decisions of this Synod, the plaintiffs of the suit and his co-Metropolitans were removed from the posts they were holding.

### Judgement 1980

The High Court of Kerala gave its verdict on the suit filed before it on June 6, 1980. The judgement of T. Chandra Sekhara

Menon, an admixture of favourable and unfavourable decisions for both the Catholicos and Jacobite parties alike, did not give any one group a clean justification of all its claims. This aspect will be observed from the following summary of points conceded to each party.<sup>36</sup>

### **Decrees on Claims of Catholicos Party**

The judgement upheld the following claims of Catholicos Party.

- (i) The election of Catholicos Mar Baselios Mar Thoma Mathews I was valid.
- (ii) The Apostolic Throne of St. Thomas was accepted.
- (iii) The Patriarch has no authority over the Malankara Orthodox Church headed by the Catholicos.
- (iv) The Church properties should be governed according to the Constitution of the Church.
- (v) The Orthodox Church has not deviated from the principles of faith of the Malankara Church.
- (vi) The decisions of the universal Synod convened by the Patriarch of Antioch which ex-communicated the Catholicos and other Metropolitans were invalid.
- (vii) The Cnanayite diocese is not an independent Church but a part of the Malankara Church.

### **Decrees which favour Jacobites**

- (i) The Malankara Church is episcopal in spiritual matters but in administration of temporalities it is congregational.
- (ii) The individual parish churches in so far as their administration is concerned, are independent institutions.
- (iii) The parish churches or institutions, unless they adopt the Constitution are not subject to the Constitution.
- (iv) The Patriarch and the Catholicos have powers to consecrate Metropolitans.
- (v) The Patriarch cannot insist on the people who wish to maintain a relationship with the Patriarch, to accept the Catholicos.

- (vi) Paulos Mar Athanasius and others who received consecration from the Patriarch are competent to conduct religious rites as admissible to the status he holds.
- (vii) The Diocesan Metropolitans have rights over the spiritual administration of the parish churches; but the administration of the parish churches will be according to the Constitution which they have adopted. The appointment of priest etc will be subject to the Constitution and decisions of the parish.
- (viii) The Patriarch has not lost his superintending rights consequent on the establishment of the Catholicate or the judgements of courts of law.

### **Patriarch Mar Ignatius Zakka in Malankara 1982**

Mar Ignatius Zakka succeeded Patriarch Mar Ignatius Yakoub III who had expired on 26.6.1980, as Patriarch of the Syrian Orthodox Church. He was elevated to the dignity of Patriarch on 14.9.1980 while he was Metropolitan Mar Zakka Ivas Severus of Baghdad.

The enthronement took place on September 14, 1980 at St. George Cathedral at Damascus. From the Malankara Jacobite Church, Catholicos Mar Paulose II Metropolitans Abraham Mar Clemis, Geevarghese Mar Gregorios, Kuriakos Mar Koorilos and Thomas Mar Theophilos had attended the ceremony apart from a crowd of laity.

The Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church was neither invited to nor informed of the enthronement of the Patriarch Mar Zakka. Hence, Mar Zakka is not recognised by the Church as provided under Article of the Constitution of the Church; nevertheless, messages of personal felicitations were sent to him by three Metropolitans-Dr. Philipos Mar Theophilos, Geevarghese Mar Osthathios and Dr. Paulos Mar Gregorios on the occasion of his enthronement”.

The Church, however, hoped to arrive at an understanding with the Patriarch through negotiations when it was known that he would be visiting Malankara in early 1982. With this intention Dr. Paulos Mar Gregorios and the Catholicos had written to the Patriarch. “Dr. Paulos Mar Gregorios sent him, Patriarch Zakka, a personal letter suggesting that he should take three positive

steps before coming to India. First, he should withdraw the illegal and unecumenical ex-communication of the Catholicos and Bishops in the Indian Church; Second, he should make a statement acknowledging that St. Thomas, one of the twelve was a full Apostle, with fullness of priesthood since his predecessor's denial of that was the root cause of all the trouble. Thirdly, he should formally inform the Catholicos and the Malankara Synod that he was coming to India and that he was anxious to effect a settlement of the dispute. There was no reply to this letter.

A cable was sent to him by H.H. the Catholicos Mar Thoma Mathews stating that a slight postponement of his visit would help in preparing the way for a settlement. To this also, there was no reply."<sup>37</sup>

Soon after his arrival in Kerala in February 1982, the Patriarch in the course of his speeches delivered at Ernakulam and Kottayam made two statements touching relations with the Orthodox Church. While the former was disappointing, in the latter statement made on February 20, 1982 at Kottayam, the Patriarch stated that he was prepared to forget and forgive.

In response to this statement, E.J. Joseph, Secretary of the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Christian Association, issued a press statement that Malankara Church was always ready for peace and listed many of the violations of the Constitution and canon law by the previous Patriarch that declarations by them selves were not enough to effect peace but had to be followed up by correction of previous errors and concrete steps for peace.<sup>38</sup>

There was no response to this from Patriarch or from any other quarters. It was also surmised that "vested interests kept the Patriarch well protected from meeting any of the responsible people on the Catholicos side"<sup>39</sup> In this inexplicable situation, Dr. Paulos Mar Gregorios addressed an open letter to the Patriarch on March 10, 1982 which was also released to the Press. The letter <sup>40</sup> is as follows :-

### **An Open Letter to the Syrian Patriarch dated 10-3-1982**

*Your Holiness,*

Even apart from our personal friendship, we should be able

37. Dr. Paulos Mar Gregorios : The Indian Orthodox Church (1982): P. 48

38. *ibid* P : 50

39. *ibid* P. 50

40. *ibid* Pp. 50-51.

to communicate with each other by means other than the columns of the public press. Only because direct communications have failed to elicit any response from your Holiness, I am resorting to this way of getting in touch.

I have no reason to believe that Your Holiness' purpose in planning this visit at this time was to help re-establish peace in the Indian Church. For had it been so, Your Holiness would have contacted us before announcing your visit and made some preliminary explorations as to the steps we could take together for peace in the Indian Church. As it is, we knew about your proposed visit only from the public press. We are now persuaded that you came mainly to consolidate your followers for a more concerted fight against the Malankara Orthodox Church.

Your Holiness has not repudiated or corrected any of the actions of your predecessor which led to all the present problems in the Indian Church. Your predecessor, in his letter no. 203 of 1970, made the incredible statement that St. Thomas was not a priest and that he had no apostolic throne. You did well in going to the tomb of St. Thomas in Mylapore to pay your respects to the holy Apostle and Patron Saint of India. But you did not make a clear statement about the Apostle's priesthood and throne.

Your predecessor tried to foist an "Apostolic Delegate" on our Church without consulting us and against the unanimous request of the Synod. You have not apologized to us for this uncanonical act which was an affront to our dignity as a Church, and have further insulted us by including the aforesaid "Apostolic Delegate" in your official delegation.

Your predecessor violated all canons and the constitution of the Church by consecrating a rival Catholicos and rival bishops here. You have not so much as expressed a word of regret in public about this, though you have often told me in person that this was a huge error on the part of the late Patriarch Ignatius Yaqub.

Your predecessor did not, however, do some of the uncanonical things you have done now. He did not enter the territory of the Catholicate except by unanimous invitation. He did not consecrate

Holy Mooron here. You seem to have thus outdone your predecessor in violating canons. I am prepared to believe that you were pressured into doing many of the things you have done. But that does not make Your Holiness less responsible for your actions, which have such long-term consequences.

You have not taken any initiative to contact us before your visit or during your visit. You have refused to reply to my messages and letter. Perhaps it is not too late yet for Your Holiness to make contact with our Church.

I want Your Holiness and our sister communities in India to know that the Malankara Orthodox Church has not violated any of the canons of the Church. We are anxious for peace. We want a just and legitimate settlement of all disputes. We need, however, more cooperation from Your Holiness and your followers, if peace is to come to the Orthodox Church in India. I, for one, sincerely hope that you will so cooperate, when left to your own counsel.

Your Holiness' brother in Christ

Sd/-

*Paulos Gregorios*

*Metropolitan of Delhi and the North.*

Dr. V.C. Samuel, a personal friend of Mar Zakka, had also issued a statement at this time. Both Mar Zakka and Dr. Samuel were members of the Standing Committee constituted by the Conference of the five Oriental Orthodox Churches of Armenia, Egypt, Ethiopia, India and Syria held at Addis Ababa in Junary 1965.

Beginning with a personal note, the statement strived to bring home to the Patriarch the independent status of both the Malankara Church and the Syrian Church; the criterion of one faith being the basis for any talk on unity among Churches, it reminded the Patriarch of his responsibility to find a solution to the tension between Malankara and Syrian Churches in that light. He wrote: "Antiochian Church is one of the Eastern Churches which opposed the Synod held at Chalcedon in 451. Mar Severius, Patriarch of Antioch who was the acclaimed father and Malpan of these Churches had indicated the criterion to be considered in the event of a reconciliation with those who accepted

that Synod, in the following words : The validity of priesthood depends not on the "throne" but on preserving the Orthodox faith. This writer believes that it is this principle that should be considered in regard to unity among Churches. In Kerala, a situation has come about where the activities of the Patriarch has ceased communal harmony and caused a dissention among the Malankara Church members who maintain the same faith, worship, tradition and character. I believe that Patriarch Ignatius Mar Zakka has a specific responsibility to find a solution to this situation".<sup>41</sup> A copy of the statement is placed at Appendix XVIII.

There has been no sign of any positive reaction from the side of Patriarch or anyone of the Jacobites to the efforts made from the Orthodox Church to work out a rapprochement between the two. There has been no further attempts in this regard. In the circumstances, the two Churches follow their own independent paths.

### **Patriarch versus Malankara Church**

In the context of Patriarch-Catholicos or Antioch-Malankara Church relations, the most important and primary fact which should be borne in mind is that the Malankara Church has a Constitution, which has set forth directive principles for exercising its administration, faith, order, discipline, spiritual and ecclesiastical conduct and ecclesiastical relationship with other Churches.

The Constitution was drawn, formulated, adopted and enacted by the Church as a whole. It reflects the will and conscience of the Orthodox community in Malankara. Any action by any person which has no relevance with reference to the provisions of the Constitution, any person, who is *persona non-grata* with reference to the provisions of the Constitution, has no binding on the Church or its members. An act or decision of a person gains validity only when it or the person is acceptable under the provisions of the Constitution. In this background a few comments are offered here keeping in view the declaration of the so called Universal Syrian Synod (USS).

The Constitution of the Malankara Church does not conceive a Universal or global Syrian Church, whereas it accepts the

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41 Samuel Dr. V.C.: Statement of Patriarch in the Press Conference—Supplement to Malankara Sabha Magazine-1982

Orthodox Syrian Church and its Primate, the Patriarch of Antioch. The Malankara Church is responsible to the Malankara Episcopal Synod and not to the Patriarch of Antioch though he be one accepted by the Church.

**Under the Provisions of the Constitution :**

- (i) The Patriarch has no prerogative to nominate or enthrone a Catholicos for Malankara. It vests with the Malankara Syrian Christian Association to elect a Catholicos designate. The election of a candidate as Catholicos designate and the acceptance of the candidate is subject to the ratification and approval of the Holy Episcopal Synod. The Patriarch has no right, either to recognise or reject the election of a Catholicos. He has no concern in the election.
- (ii) The Patriarch is not competent either to consecrate Metropolitans for Malankara or to allocate them dioceses in Malankara. The Constitution does not concede any such right of spiritual or temporal jurisdiction to the Patriarch.
- (iii) The Patriarch has no powers, although he be one approved and accepted by the Church to exercise any disciplinary action of suspension, ex-communication or dismissal either on the Catholicos or clergy or laity.
- (iv) It was with the assistance and cooperation of the Malankara Episcopal Synod that the Patriarch enthroned the Catholicos in 1964. This does not empower the Patriarch with any authority over the Catholicos, either to take any disciplinary action or ex-communicate or to instal a new Catholicos. It also does not mean that the Patriarch has been bestowed the Powers of the synod. The Synod upholds the freedom, independence and integrity of the Church which are enshrined in the Constitution.

**Catholicos Announces Status-position 1982**

The Church's status-position in relation to the Orthodox Church of Syria was made clear by His Holiness the Catholicos in his inaugural address delivered on the occasion of the Catholicate apthathi (70th year) Celebrations at Ernakulam Town Hall on

September 5, 1982. To quote :<sup>42</sup>

“I want to say a brief word about our relations with the Syrian Orthodox Church in the Middle East. Our experience in the past twelve years has been bitter. We have faced both Portuguese and British intrigue and treachery in the past—instances in which our ecumenical hospitality has been sinfully misused to disrupt our Church from within. What the late Syrian Orthodox Patriarch did to our Church was something worse. We pray that God may forgive him. We allowed him inside our Church in 1958 in good faith. Since 1970 he consistently betrayed that good faith and interfered in our internal affairs. His successor, the present Patriarch, came here recently, without even the courtesy informing us, and began entering our churches and misleading our people.

He did not take one step towards a settlement of our disputes beyond certain very offensive paternalistic declarations of self-righteous willingness to forgive those whom his predecessor had hurt. We had cabled him before his departure from Syria to delay his visit in order that we could prepare the stage for a settlement of our disputes. To this date he has not had the courtesy to respond to our telegram.

We want to make this clear. We are anxious for a settlement. We are prepared to ask our deputies to sit down and discuss such a settlement with duly authorised people. We shall, of course, not compromise the autocephaly and independence of our Church. Nor can we allow any other Church to interfere in the affairs of our Church. These are our two cherished values. We have sometimes compromised these values in the past for the sake of peace. We cannot do so in the future. We have learned our lesson

We have a long history of association with our sister Church of Antioch. We are grateful for their help on occasions in the past when we were harassed by the British and by the Portuguese. We want to restore our sisterly relationship with that Church. We will not uncanonically interfere in their affairs, nor should they interfere in ours. This is all we ask”.



Catholicos Mar Thoma Mathews I with Pope John Paul II  
at Kottayam, February 1986



## CHAPTER NINETEEN

# CATHOLICOS - PATRIARCH

### BASELIOS MAR THOMA MATHEWS I 1975

Mathews Mar Athanasius, Metropolitan of Outside Kerala Diocese was installed as Catholicos of the East on the Apostolic throne of St. Thomas on October 27, 1975 succeeding Baslios Mar Ougen. The Catholicos is 88th in succession and the fifth after the re-establishment of the Catholicate in India.

#### **Title Mar Thoma**

The title affixed to the Catholicos is Baslios Mar Thoma Mathews I. While 'Baslios' has been the traditional formal title of all Catholicoses, taken after the great scholar and theologian Mar Baslios of Cappadocia, 'Mar Thoma' has been suffixed for the first time when Mar Mathews became the Catholicos. The term 'Mar Thoma' has a historical significance. Following the Coonen Kurish Sathyam of 1653, the Malankara Metropolitans took the title 'Mar Thoma' signifying and following the St. Thomas tradition of the Church. Nine Malankara Metropolitans who ruled the Church from 1653 to 1816, bore the title Mar Thoma. This title, however, came to be dropped following the intervention of the Church of Syria from the times of Mar Thoma VI (1765). Mar Thoma VI accepted the title Mar Dionysius (I) in certain exigent situation of dependence on them. Mar Thoma VII, VIII and IX, however, had not used the title. But later on, traditional Greek names like Dionysius, Athanasius, which were commonly used in the Eastern Church including the Church in Syria came into regular use in the Malankara Church since the time of Metropolitan Pulikottil Mar Joseph Dionysius II (1816). Nevertheless, the Church recaptured the spirit of national independence and affixed the 'Mar Thoma' title to the Catholicos for the first time when Mar Mathews was installed as the Primate of the Church.

### CATHOLICOS—PATRIARCH

Catholicos—Patriarch as a singular title to the head of a Church who is already eulogised as Catholicos sounds apparently odd and superfluous. It is all the more thought not sensible in the light of the argument always held that the term Catholicos is synonymous with the term Patriarch in status, power, authority and devotion. The Church canon also gives equality to both prelates. However, one significant factor to be observed here is that when the Catholicos and Patriarch come together, the Patriarch will have precedence by protocol over the Catholicos. (Huddaye Canon).

Should the Malankara Church necessarily bear this precedence of Patriarch over her Catholicos vis-a-vis her autonomy, distinct Apostolic origin and tradition of the order of St. Thomas and self-declared self-governing Constitution? It, therefore, may be considered appropriate to raise the level of the head of the autonomous Malankara Church co-equal to Patriarch. The reference to Catholicos as Catholicos-Patriarch may be appraised in this light. It is all the more relevant when it is realised that the Patriarch of Antioch has denied priest-hood to St. Thomas, a disciple and Apostle of Christ, ex-communicated the Catholicos, advised the Metropolitans of the Church to revolt against the Catholicos and claimed powers of spiritual and temporal authority over the Malankara Orthodox Church. With these thoughts in mind, this Chapter has been entitled 'Catholicos—Patriarch'.

This problem has already been dealt with in Chapter sixteen.

#### Early Period

The Catholicos was born on March 27, 1907 to parents Fr. Kurien of Vattakunnel, Kottayam and Mariamma of Pulikkapparampil, Olassa. Fr. Kurien was Vicar of St. Mary's Orthodox Syrian Church at Manarcad. In his early days, the Catholicos was called V.K. Mathew and endearingly as Kuttachen. Mathew had his school education at M.D. Seminary High School, and Collegiate education in C.M.S. College, Kottayam and Maharaja's College Ernakulam. After obtaining B.A. Degree in Chemistry, Mathews opted for the ministry of God and joined the Bishop's College, Calcutta for B.D. course. In 1936, Mathew took B.D. and later in 1942 joined the teaching staff of the Theological Seminary, Kottayam.

### **Called to Priesthood**

On October 27, 1946, V.K. Mathew at the age of 40, received ordination of priesthood from Catholicos Mar Geevarghese II, at Old Seminary. The Theological Seminary was his main field of activity, and was appointed as its Acting Principal in 1948 and as its Principal in 1951, which position he retained till 1966.

### **Metropolitan 1953-75**

The Malankara Syrian Christian Association held in 1951, elected Fr. Mathews as Metropolitan-candidate and accordingly on May 15, 1953, the Catholicos Mar Geevarghese along with other Metropolitans of the Synod, consecrated him as Metropolitan Mar Athanasius at Mar Elia Chapel, Kottayam. In addition to the post of Principal of the Theological Seminary, the charge of the diocese of Outside Kerala was entrusted to him from 1960 onwards.

From 1960 to 1976 Mar Athanasius shepherded the Outside Kerala Diocese. During this period, the Diocese witnessed significant growth in the number of parishes formed inside and outside India, Churches that were built, and in the number of parish priests and educational institutions. The Metropolitan was thus able to give a thrust to widening the horizon of the diocese. In discharge of his responsibilities, the Metropolitan had undertaken tours to different parts of the diocese several times.

On December 31, 1970 Mar Athanasius was elected as successor to Mar Ougen as Catholicos and Malankara Metropolitan by the Malankara Association. Consequently, the Metropolitan was called upon to assist the Catholicos in the administration of the Church from 1972 onwards.

### **Malankara Metropolitan and Catholicos — 1975**

On September 24, 1975, Mar Athanasius assumed the charge of Malankara Metropolitan with the approval of the Synod, when Mar Ougen voluntarily relinquished charge of that office.

Mar Athanasius was installed by the Holy Synod as Catholicos Mar Thoma Mathews I on the Apostolic throne of St. Thomas of the East in a ceremonial function held on Monday, October 27, 1975 at the Old Seminary. He was 68. The Installation service was conducted by the Episcopal Synod. Daniel Mar Philoxenos, the Secretary to the Synod, was the chief celebrant of the service.

The most important parts of the service are (i) the reading of the gospel by the celebrant with the gospel placed on the head of Catholicos-candidate. (ii) the declaration of faith by the candidate-Amalogy (iii) the chanting of Kurielaison during the special prayers of investiture (iv) Announcing 'Oxios' and (v) Entrusting the 'staff' (Crosier).

### **Declaration of Faith — Amalogia<sup>1</sup>**

The Amologia, pronounced by Catholicos Mar Mathews, declared :

- (i) that he believed in one true God in three persons—the Father, The Son and the Holy Spirit;
- (ii) that the Father is the Creator (Generator), the Son is born from the father, the Holy Spirit is that which proceeds from the Father, that they are equal in honour, respect, power and authority;  
that they possess the same Nature, Will and Essence.
- (iii) that the Second Person in the Trinity took flesh from Virgin Mary by the Holy Spirit and incarnated by the Will of God the Father and the Holy Spirit for the salvation of mankind. Hence, His mother is Mother of God.
- (iii) that the divinity of the Son remained distinct from the human nature of Man, at the same time without admixture or union or absorption or confusion with the human nature either by Nature or by Personality.
- (iv) that he believed in the seven Sacraments of the Holy Church, in the intercession of the Saints, that he accepted the Two Testaments of the Bible, the Apostolic Tradition and the prayers for the departed souls.
- (v) that he accepted the decisions the Holy Fathers made in the three Universal Synods of Nicaea, Constantinople and Epheses.
- (iv) that he denounced all those heresies which the Church so far has denounced — he accepted all holy fathers — all Apostles especially St. Peter, the chief of Apostles, St. Thomas the Patron-Saint of India, the Evangelists, all the Malpans.

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1. As reported in the Malankara Sabha.

(vii) that he accepted all the Synods of the Church so far held and also that are to come and also the canonical relationship between the Catholicate and Antiochene Patriarchal Thrones —

that he pledged to maintain, protect and persevere the supervision and stewardship of the Church subject to the Traditions, canons and Constitution of the Church and above all subject to the wishes of Malankara Episcopal Synod.

The Catholicos received the staff made of gold handed down by Vattasseril Mar Geevarghese Dionysius (1908-34) and the diamond ring used by Pulikottil Joseph Mar Dionysius.<sup>2</sup>

### **Reception at Ernakulam 1976<sup>3</sup>**

The Catholicos was given a rousing and spectacular reception at Ernakulam on February 15, 1976. This was organised by the dioceses of North Kerala viz., Angamali, Cochin, Kandanad and Malabar to edify the strength, morale and faith of the members of the Church in St. Thomas, its founder and their allegiance to the Catholicate. The meeting was presided over by Arch Bishop Saffe Ajamian of the Armenian Orthodox Church at Jerusalem.

Delegates of the Orthodox Church of Rumania had also participated in the meeting and felicitated the Church and the Catholicos on the occasion. Besides Archbishop Ajamian, the Armenian Church was represented by Archbishop Tekoyan. The representatives of the Rumanian Church were Metropolitans Theoktistoss, Antonios and Adrian.

In reply to the felicitations and expressions of devotion to St. Thomas and the Catholicate, Catholicos Mar Mathews referred to the schismatic order of Patriarch Yakoub denying the priesthood of St. Thomas and also the un-alienable right of autonomy of the Malankara Church. In regard to the Patriarch's order, the Catholicos stated that the ancient Churches have condemned and ignored it and pointed out the views of Metropolitans Theoktistoss of the Rumanian Orthodox Church. The Metropolitan had said that the validity of the priesthood was being questioned either because of betrayal or ignorance. The Catholicos, in fact, made an

2. Paret Z. M : Malankara Nazranikal — Vol. VII.

3. Malankara Sabha Magazine March, 1976 : Pp. 91-99

equivocal and challenging declaration on the autonomy of the Malankara Orthodox Church. He declared : "St. Thomas established a Church here an independent Church, a national Church responsible to his Lord alone. The Church which he established was not one subject to the Patriarch of Antioch. In different periods, this Church had come into contact with other Churches. The Malankara Nazranikal (Christians) hail a tradition of those who successfully rejected them whenever they tried to exercise supremacy over them. Our most honourable fathers had entrusted to us a historical reality of having kept at bay the overtures of foreign domination. We are the descendants of those who through the Koonen Kurish Sathyam and the Mavelikara Padiyola demolished foreign domination and schism. The hoary historical past of the Malankara Nazranikal proudly proclaim that no foreign power or authority can subordinate this Church which grew up in this soil in the loving care of the great Hindu culture. I avail of this opportunity to strongly declare that this Church will flourish in the path of freedom for ever".

### **Consecration of Holy Mooron 1977**

The Catholicos consecrated Holy Mooron on April 1, 1977 at Old Seminary Chapel, Kottayam. The last occasion when the Holy sacrament was performed was in 1967 by the late Catholicos Mar Ougen.

The sacrament of Holy Mooron Consecration was first held in Malankara by Patriarch Peter III in 1876 at Mulanthuruthy Church. Later in 1910 Patriarch Mar Abdullah performed the sacrament at the same church. Following the re-establishment of the Catholicate in 1912, the Catholicos has the prerogative to officiate the sacrament of Holy Mooron. Patriarch Abdul Messiah had mentioned this privilege in his speech as well as in his order of 17.9.1972. The Constitution of the Church also sanctions this right to the Catholicos. (Article 100).

### **Baselios Mar Thoma Charities Fund 1977**

Often, the Church has to respond to the call of Christian conscience to provide financial assistance on humanitarian grounds which vary from individual to national and international levels. To meet this contingency, the Managing Committee as well as the Episcopal Synod decided to establish a Fund in 1977. It has been named Baselios Mar Thoma Charities Fund. A Committee with

the Catholicos as President has also been constituted to operate the Fund. The main objectives of the Fund are to provide :

- (i) for rehabilitation work during natural calamities, like flood, famine, earthquake etc.
- (ii) for the aid of the sick and disabled.
- (iii) for educational scholarship to the deserving.
- (iv) for the aid of those who rendered yeomen service to the Church but are in financial difficulties.
- (v) for marriage expenses of the deserving candidates.

### **Charter of Demands and Representative Meeting 1978**

The Jacobite Church members were creating considerable law and order problems in the state. They had resorted to forces of Satyagrah, forcible entries into Orthodox Churches, torturing of priests, filing suits in courts, denying either implementation or compliance of court orders and other illegal, violent and reprehensive measures to take possession of churches and church properties. Not only were the Govt. authorities inactive but favourable also to the Jacobite's nefarious actions.

#### **Charter of Demands**

In order to ensure safety to Metropolitans, priests, protection to churches and Church properties in places of disputes and disturbances and implementation of court orders, a Charter of Demands was submitted to the cabinet of Ministers of the Kerala Govt. on 1.2.1978 by Metropolitan Mar Koorilos on behalf of the Committee on Protection of Rights. (Avakasha Samrakshana Samiti). It is placed at Appendix XIX.

#### **Representative Meeting March 1978**

In view of the deteriorating situation in the conflict with Jacobite Church, the Catholicos convened a representative meeting of all the parishes of the Church including the Managing Committee members on Wednesday March 15, 1978 at 2.00 p.m. at M.D. Seminary, Kottayam to review the situation and to chalk out future strategy.

In the meeting which was chaired by the Catholicos, Metropolitan Mathews Mar Koorilos appraised the gathering about the Charter of Demands submitted to the Govt. seeking imple-

mentation of the decrees of the courts of law and pointing out Govt's failure to meet them. A political party leader K. C. Abraham expressed his deep disappointment at the failure of the Govt. to ensure compliance of the decrees of the courts; Fr. Joseph Vendrappally detailed the various instances of violences committed by the Jacobites on priests and churches and the inaction and inability to give protection by the Govt. headed by Chief Minister A.K. Antony; and M. Abraham, Advocate recorded a strong protest at the negative attitude of the Govt. towards the judgements of the courts of justice, failure of the Govt to appreciate truth and justice and deprecated their appreciation of the forces of violence. Finally, the meeting ended with passing a number of Resolutions as under:

1. A pledge of loyalty to the Apostolic throne of St. Thomas of the East, the Catholicos, the Synod and to protect the integrity of the Church at any cost.

2. Accepted the Charter of Demands and protested against the defying stand of the Govt, towards the Charter of Demands and appealed to the Govt. to reconsider and implement them.

3. Protested against

- (i) the Kerala Govt.'s failure to ensure implementation of the decisions of the courts.
- (ii) Non-observation of the assurances given by the Sub-Committee of the Cablnet on 16.6.1977 and by Ministers Baby John and Narayana Kurup representing the Kerala Govt. on 15.1.78.
- (iii) the restriction placed on Mar Theophilos from celebrating Holy Qurbana at Thrikunnath Seminary which is his headquarters.

4. Authorised the Malankara Orthodox Church Committee on Protection of Rights to adopt suitable measures in the political field and to put up candidates of the Church in the Legislative Constituencies and Panchayats in order to secure the rights of the Church.

5. Protested against the statement of certain sister Churches pleading for permitting the dissident group (which has no right), to conduct religious rites in the Thrikunnath Seminary.
6. Protested against the denial of rights to Fr. Geevarghese Thiruvathukkal to celebrate the religious rites at Mar Ougen Church, Manakunnom, where he has been the Vicar for 20 years and other priests in the churches at Pengamuk, Ooramana and Valampur, although courts of law have decreed their rights to conduct them there.
7. Requested the Catholicos to send a delegation consisting of K. C. Abraham, P. C. Cherian and C.M. Stephen to the Central Govt. to apprise them of the failure of the State Govt. to provide protection to the just and legal rights of the Malankara Church.
8. Requested all political parties, Newspapers and other Churches to study the realities of the present conflict in the Malankara Church and take a reasonable view.
9. Appreciated the leadership given by the Church to socio-cultural programmes and extended support and urged more meaningful and creative programmes.
10. Declared the programmes undertaken by the Malankara Church Committee on Protection of Rights, Defence Action Committee etc. and those to be taken in future as those of the Church for preserving the integrity of the Church.
11. Requested the Kerala Govt. to declare Maundy Thursday and St. Thomas Day as Public Holidays.

### **The Call of Andhra 1978-79**

On February 23, 1978 the Synod took a vital and unprecedented decision in response to the call of Christian charity, to provide help to thousands of people rendered homeless in Andhra Pradesh due to Cyclone in November 1977. It was decided to undertake a massive rehabilitative programme in selected villages, for which a Rs. 7 lakh fund was estimated. This was the first time the Church entered in national relief programme in a massive

way. The Catholicos directed two Metropolitans, Paulos Mar Gregorios and Geevarghese Mar Osthathios to visit the areas devastated by the cyclone and tidal waves. On their report, the Episcopal Synod formed a Committee with Metropolitan Mar Osthathios as President, Fr. Joseph Vendrappilly Executive Secretary and others to oversee the rehabilitation work. Two villages Chinna Ullingapalam near Masulipatnam and Krishnaraopeta were adopted for relief work.

A Project, "The Andhra Cyclone Relief and Rehabilitation Project" was registered under the Charitable Societies Act. Under this Project 38 new houses and a Community Hall were built and 14 houses repaired in the first village which was renamed as St. Thomas Nagar and handed over to Shri Janardana Reddy, Minister for Revenue, Govt. of Andhra Pradesh on October 15, 1979, for allocation to those in the village who were rendered homeless due to the cyclone. The Hall was opened by Governor K.C. Abraham. In the other village Krishnaraopeta 28 new houses were constructed and handed over to the State Govt. The village was christened as Christuraja Puram.

Each house costed Rs. 6000/-. The work was very ably supervised with a missionary zeal by Rev. Fr. K.I. Philip from St. Paul's Ashram, Puthuppadi. Babu Thomas of CASA also rendered immense self-less work.

### **Management of Parumala Complex**

Pulikottil Joseph Mar Dionysius had started a Seminary at Parumala to train clergy. The Seminary being the property of the Church, its management is vested with the Malankara Metropolitan. A Manager appointed by the Metropolitan used to look after the day to day administration of the Seminary. The Seminary holds the shrine of Saint Gregorios which is a pilgrimage centre.

As years passed, the management of the Seminary, especially its financial affairs, was subjected to severe criticism in the Managing Committee of the Church and outside. In the circumstances, the Synod drew up rules of administration for Parumala Seminary which the Malankara Metropolitan put into effect from 1.1.1979. According to this scheme, a Council<sup>3</sup> constituted with

the Malankara Metropolitan as President, two Metropolitan Vice Presidents, two nominees each of the Synod and Managing Committee, Seminary Manager and Secretary, Malankara Association, is responsible for the management of the administrative and financial matters of the Parumala Seminary. The Council was appointed on 6.10.1981 by the Malankara Metropolitan. The Seminary is accountable only to the Malankara Metropolitan and hence the Annual Report and Accounts are submitted to the Synod for its acceptance and submitted to the Managing Committee for its information. The income reported in 1984-85 was Rs. 34.36 lakhs, over the 1983-84 total of Rs. 25.34 lakhs.

The Parumala Seminary under its auspices runs the St. Gregorios Mission Hospital at Parumala. It also gives financial assistance to the St. Mary's Hospital at Eraviperoor. Lodging facilities are available to retreatants and other Pilgrims.

Construction of an invalid clergymen's home, as well as a Conferenc Hall-cum-Auditorium is also being planned.

### **Metropolitans.**

The Malankara Syrian Christian Association had elected five Metropolitan-candidates each on May 16, 1977 at Mavelikara and December 28, 1982 at Tiruvalla. The episcopal synod later approved their candidature also. Subsequently, they were made Rambans.—the 1977 batch on 13.8.1977 at Catholicate Chapel, Kottayam and the 1982 batch of candidates on May 14, 1983 at Parumala Seminary. They were later consecrated as Metropolitans by the Catholicos Baselios Mar Thoma Mathews as detailed below:

<i>S.No.</i>	<i>Candidate</i>	<i>Date and place of consecration</i>	<i>Title and diocese</i>
<b>1977 batch</b>			
<i>Rambans</i>			
1.	M.M. Jacob	15.5.1978 St. Mary's Orthodox Syrian Church, Pazhanji	Mar Polycarpus Cochin.
2.	C. Zacharia	—do—	Mar Dionysius Madras

3.	Youhanon	-do-	Mar Athanasius Kottayam.
4.	T.E. George	-do-	Mar Dioscoros Trivandrum
5.	K.K. Mathew	-do-	Mar Barnabas Idikki.

**1982 batch***Rambans*

6.	K.G. Geevarghese	15.5.1985	St. Mary's Orthodox Syrian Church, Mavelikara.	Mar Ivanios Kottayam
7.	Philipos Thomas	-do-		Mar Eusebius Thumpamon.
8.	K.T. Thomas	-do-		Mar Athanasius Chengannur
9.	K.I. Paul	-do-		Mar Militius Kunnamkulam
10.	K. Mathai	-do-		Mar Epiphanius Quilon.

The allocation of dioceses to the 1982 batch of Metropolitans was recommended to the Catholicos by the Managing Committee on June 20, 1985 and accepted by the Holy Synod at its session held on July 1 to 5 1985. Mar Eusebius and Mar Epiphanius are initially designated as Assistant Metropolitans. The Catholicos issued a formal appointment Order on July 11, 1985 giving effect from 1.8.1985.

**Obituries**

The church was left poorer with the passing away of a few venerable Metropolitans in 1980. They were :

<i>Metropolitans</i>	<i>Diocese</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Where buried</i>
Mathews Mar Ivanios	Kottayam	31.8.1980	Mar Kuriakos Dayara, Pampady
Youhanon Mar Athanasius	--do--	12.10.1980	Bethany, Perinad

*Lay Trustee*

Ooppoottil Kurien Abraham 12.12.1978

*Clergy Trustee*Fr. T. S. Abraham Cor-  
Episcopa 30.10.1984**Situation following Court Verdict of 1980**

Following the Court Verdict in 1980, the Church has been maintaining a status quo position. This approach is reflected in the decisions taken by the Episcopal Synod at its meeting held on 21-23 February 1983. The decisions were that the court verdicts to whichever parish they relate, should be honoured and observed; secondly, wherever a verdict is not given, the status quo should be maintained and thirdly, until the disputes were finally settled both parties may cooperate in fulfilling the spiritual needs of their members.

**Catholicate 70th year (Sapthathi) Celebrations 1982**

On September 12, 1912, the Catholicate of the East, once in poosition in Persia, was re-established in India (Malankara). The Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church celebrated the 70th Anniversary of this re-establishment of the Catholicate of the East during September 5-15, 1982 on an all-India basis in a wide and grandiose scale. Representatives from the Church of Rome, Eastern Orthodox Churches and Oriental Churches attended the celebrations. They included :

<i>S. No.</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Representative of:</i>
1.	Michael Doraswamy Bishop of Salem Vice-President All-India Catholic Bishop's Conference.	Pope John Paul II
2.	Pierre Duprey Deputy Secretary Christian Unity Secretariat, Vatican.	—do—
3.	Emilianos Metropolitan of Silibria	Ecumenical Patriarch Dimitris of Constantinople

4.	His Holiness Ilia II	Catholicos Patriarch	Orthodox Church of Georgia.
5.	Athanasius	Archbishop of Nodbe	—do—
6.	Ambrosios	Bishop of Nicors Mina Diocese	—do—
7.	Geevarghese Serai Dharian	Bishop of Dhilisi Diocese	Patriarch Vusken of Orthodox Church of Armenia.
8.	Aagambaliosian	—do—	
9.	Nathaniel	Metropolitan of Tigre	Patriarch of Ortho- dox Church of Ethiopia
10.	Vladimir	Metroplitan of Rostov and Noro Perkas	Patriarch Pimen of Orthodox Church of Russia.
11.	Arch priest Levmakno	New York	—do—
12.	Prof. Mistislav Voskrsensky	—	—do—
13.	Nester	Metropolitan of Criova & Ottania	Patriarch Justin of Orthodox Church of Rumania.
14.	Epiphani	Bishop of Bisavur	—do—
15.	Prof. Rusrimoos	—	—do—
16.	Joseph Velichki	Asstt. Bishop Sofia	Patriarch Maxim of Orthodox Church of Bulgaria.
17.	Ramban Ambroisier	Valamo Monastery	Archbishop of Orthodox Church of Finland

The celebrations were mainly aimed at strengthening the bonds of loyalty of the Church members to the Apostolic throne of St. Thomas, Orthodoxy and preservation of Catholicate. Keeping these objectives in view, public meetings were held through out the

length and breadth of Malankara and prominent Metropolitan cities of India in which the prelates of other Churches in India and abroad also took part.

On September 5, 1982, the celebrations began at Bombay with the address made by Catholicos-Patriarch Ilia II of the Orthodox Church of Georgia at a public function and were formally inaugurated at Ernakulam that day evening with the lighting of a brass lamp by Metropolitan Emilianos, representative of the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople. From then onwards, there was a procession of receptions and public meetings at Kolencherry, Niranam, Parumala, Mevelikara, Kanga-zha, Pathanamthitta and Kottayam. The function at Kottayam on September 12, was the most spectacular and historically significant of all. Catholicos-Patriarch Ilia II presided over the meeting. Distinguished representatives of other Churches were also present. About 400,000 people had gathered on this historic occasion. This emotionally inspiring and proud assembly of the Orthodox Church was inaugurated by Giani Zail Singh, President of India. In his inaugural address, the President said, "I am glad to be here this afternoon to associate myself with the celebrations to mark the 70th anniversary of the revival of the Catholicate of the Orthodox Church. Christianity came to India much earlier than in most countries and received warm welcome. It is known that St. Thomas, the Apostle of Christ, reached the coast of Malabar in 52 A.D.". Following the inauguration, the Catholicos bestowed the award of honour "Order of St. Thomas", on the President. In commemoration of the Saphthathi, the Church also envisaged gifting seventy houses to the deserving and needy without any distinction of caste or creed. In pursuance, the President presented the keys of the first house to a deserving Hindu family.

In his presidential address, His Holiness Ilia addressed Catholicos Mar Thoma Mathews as 'Catholicos-Patriarch' and said, "The Churches of Georgia and India are the oldest among the Churches of the East; both, they are Apostolic as the Georgian Church was founded by the Apostle Andrew the First., called Simon the Canaanite, and the enlighteners of the Indian Church were the Apostles Thomas and Thaddeus. These two have different traditions, but at the same time they both were and are today the National Churches . . . the relations between Georgia

and India began in the fifth century. The relations between Georgian and Indian nations were clearly depicted in the Georgian literature . . . With special feelings of love, I greet you on behalf of the Georgian people and our Apostolic Church, because the head of St. Thomas, the enlightener of your country, is preserved in Georgia, in the Sioni Patriarchal Cathedral". Following the address, His Holiness Ilia decorated Catholicos Mar Thoma Mathews with the 'Order of St. George, 'the highest order of honour of the Georgian Church. The citation is reproduced in page No. 445.

Speeches of President Zail Singh, Catholicos Patriarch Ilia II, and the felicitations from Pope John Paul II, Patriarch Pimen of Moscow and All Russia and His Holiness Dimitrios, Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople are given at Appendices XV-A to E.

In view of the extending horizons and growing dimensions of the Church and the need to meet the administrative as well as the developmental requirements of the Church, the Managing Committee and the Episcopal Synod reviewed the existing diocessional divisions in the Church from time to time. Consequent of this periodical reviews, reorganisation of the dioceses was effected in 1976, 1979 and 1982. New Metropolitans were also appointed. The changes made were as follows :

### **Reorganisation of 1976**

The diocessional changes made in 1976 were announced in the Catholicos's Order. No. 58/76 dated March 27 1976 and were approved earlier by the Managing Committee on May 12, 1975 and the Episcopal Synod on March 22, 1976. They were :

- (i) The Outside Kerala Diocese was divided into three namely, Bombay, Madras and Delhi dioceses.
- (ii) Malabar diocese was enlarged adding certain areas of Tamil Nadu.

The new Metropolitans were also assigned new dioceses, viz

- (i) Mar Osthathios was assigned Niranam diocese
- (ii) Mar Pachomios was appointed as Asstt. Metropolitan of Kottayam Diocese. He will also assist the Catholicos in the administration of Kandanad Diocese.

საქართველოს კათოლიკოს-პატრიარქის  
სამსახურის განცხადება



CATHOLICOS-PATRIARCH  
OF ALL GEORGIA

380005, თბილისი-5, სომხეთი 4, 902399 04-30 \* 4, 410001 STR TBILISI-5, USSR, 380005 TEL 99 99 0

Translation

N 60  
AUGUST 30, 1982.

His Holiness,  
BASILIOUS MAR THOMA MATHEWS I,  
Malankara Metropolitan,  
Catholicos-Patriarch of the East

His Holiness, BASILIOUS MAR THOMA MATHEWS I, Malankara Metro-  
politan, Catholicos-Patriarch of the East, be decorated by  
the Order of St. George of the First Degree, for promoting and  
strengthening the fraternal ties between Georgian and Indian  
Churches.



ILIA II  
Catholicos-Patriarch  
of All Georgia

The new dioceses, areas of jurisdiction and the Metropolitans in charge of them are given in the table below.

<i>Diocese</i>	<i>Area</i>	<i>Metropolitan</i>
Bombay	States of Gujarat, Maharashtra, Karnataka. Union Territory of Goa.	Thomas Mar Macarios.
	<i>Outside India</i> Arabian Gulf Area, Africa, America, Canada, Europe, England.	
Delhi	States of Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Punjab, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Parts of Madhya Pradesh, West of Rewa-Jabalpur Trunk Road. Union Territory of Delhi.	Paulos Mar Gregorios (in addition to his charge as Principal Theological Seminary, Kottayam)
Madras	States of Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Parts of Madhya Pradesh east of Rewa-Jabalpur Trunk Road, Tamil Nadu (excluding Coimbatore, Cunnoor, Gudallur, Sherwani, Vaalpara, Mettupalayam, Erode, Tirupathur) and West Bengal. Union Territory of Andaman & Nicobar Islands.	Stephanos Mar Theodosius
	<i>Outside India</i> Malaysia, Singapore.	
Malabar	Churches at Coimbatore, Cunnoor, Gudallur, Sherwani, Vaalpara, Mettupalayam, Erode and Tiruppathur in Tamil Nadu State were added to the existing Malabar Diocese.	Thomas Mar Timotheos

Following this order, the new Metropolitans took charge of their respective dioceses. The formal and official function of taking over as shepherd of the diocese, called Sunthroniso, of each

of the Metropolitans were held in their respective dioceses as follows :

<i>Metropolitan</i>	<i>Diocese</i>	<i>Where held</i>	<i>Date</i>
1. Geevarghese Mar Osthathios	Niranam	St. Mary's Church Niranam.	-5.1976
2. Stephanos Mar Theophilos	Madras	Old Seminary Chapel, Kottayam.	20.5.1976
3. Paulos Mar Gregorios	Delhi	St. Mary's Cathedral New Delhi.	11.7.1976
4. Thomas Mar Macarios	America	Episcopal Cathedral New York.	14.7.1979
5. Joseph Mar Pachomios	Kottayam	St. Thomas Dayara Vettickal, Mulanthuruthy.	25.7.1976

The new Metropolitans were issued a staticon from the Catholicos on May 30, 1976.

### **Reorganisation of 1979**

The Managing Committee at its meeting held on October 30, 1978 decided to reorganise further the three outside Kerala Dioceses of Bombay, Delhi and Madras into five in view of their extensive geographical area; and also the Quilon diocese. The Episcopal Synod also later approved the proposed reorganisation. The newly formed dioceses were America, Calcutta and Trivandrum. The areas under the jurisdiction of each diocese are as follows :—

1. Diocese of America : Canada, United States of America, South America.
2. Diocese of Bombay : India : States of Gujarat and Maharashtra and Union Territory of Goa.  
Foreign Countries : UAE: Bahrain, Doha and Saudi Arabia.
3. Diocese of Calcutta : India : States of Assam, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Orissa, Tripura and West Bengal. Union Territories of Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Arunachal Pradesh and Mizoram.  
Foreign Countries : UAE: Ahamadi, Kuwait, Muscat and Salahah,

4. Diocese of Delhi and the North : India : States of Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Punjab, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh. Union Territories of Delhi and Chandigarh.  
Foreign Countries : UAE: Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Africa, United Kingdom, W. Germany.
5. Diocese of Madras : India: States of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu.  
Foreign Countries : Australia, Malaysia and Singapore.
6. Trivandrum Diocese.

The diocese of Quilon was also decided to be divided into two viz. the dioceses of Quilon and Trivandrum. The Synod had earlier on July 4, 1978 approved such a division of the Quilon diocese. The areas south of Quilon-Shenkottah road came under Trivandrum diocese while those to the north of it under Quilon diocese. These changes came into effect from 1.1.1979 as per Order dated 8.12.1978.

With this reorganisation, the Malankara Church constituted 15 dioceses under the Catholicate.

### **Reorgannisation of 1982 Idikki-Diocese**

In 1982, a further reorganisation of dioceses took place; but it was limited to Kottayam diocese only. The parishes in the hilly high ranges of Idikki district spread in the Kottayam diocese demanded a separate diocese for them in order to expedite their development in a meeting held on April 13, 1981. The Managing Committee considered at its meeting held on January 8, 1982 a report on the division of Kottayam diocese and decided on the formation of two new dioceses and a centrally administered area as under.

1. Kottayam Central Diocese which will be directly administered by the Malankara Metropolitan.
2. Kottayam diocese, less the parishes given over to the Idikki diocese.
3. Idikki diocese made of 29 parishes carved out of the former Kottayam diocese.

he total number of dioceses was thus raised to 17.

### **Reorganisation of Thumpamon Diocese 1985—Chengannur Diocese**

The Managing Committee at its sitting on September 21, 1983 deliberated over a proposal to form a new diocese of Chengannur carved out of the existing diocese of Thumpamon, Niranam and Quilon and constituted a Committee headed by Metropolitan Mar Dioscoros to submit a report. The Episcopal Synod considered the report and decided to constitute the Diocese of Chengannur at its meeting held on July 24-28, 1984 at Sophia Centre, Kottayam. The new diocese was proposed to have 50 parishes, (with 35 parishes out of the 140 of Thumpamon diocese, 11 out of the 106 of Niranam diocese and 4 out of the 140 of the Quilon diocese) when formally established.

Its formation, however, was challenged in a Court of law which rejected it. The Synod, therefore, at its meeting held on February 18, 1985 reiterated its earlier decision on the formation of the Diocese. Accordingly, the Catholicos issued a formal order declaring its formation with effect from March 10, 1985.

### **Reorganisation of Cochin, Madras and Malabar Dioceses Kunnamkulam and Sultan Battery Dioceses 1985**

The Cochin, Madras and Malabar Dioceses were also reorganised to give appropriate consideration for their local developmental requirements. The Managing Committee at its meeting held on September 21, 1984 decided to reorganise these three dioceses into five. The two newly created dioceses were :

- (i) *Kunnamkulam Diocese* which have 40 parishes spread in Kunnamkulam and Pazhanji areas drawn from the Cochin diocese.

The formation of this diocese was approved by the Synod at its sitting on February 18, 1985. The Catholicos issued a formal order communicating its formation with effect from April 14, 1985. The new diocese was formally inaugurated in a public function held at St. Mary's Church, Arthaat, Kunnamkulam.

- (ii) *Sultan Battery Diocese* was proposed to comprise 55 parishes of the districts of Wayanad, Nilgris, South Canara, Kannur (Melakam area) and 2 parishes of the Madras diocese. Its formation was approved by the Managing Committee on 21.9.1984 and the Episcopal

Synod on 22.10.1985. It came into being on 23.10.1985 by an order from the Catholicos.

with the inclusion of these two new dioceses the Church constituted of 20 dioceses. A complete list of Dioceses and Metropolitans in charge is given in Chapter Twenty.

### **THE MALANKARA ASSOCIATION MEETINGS 1977, 1980, 1982 & 1985**

Following the ascension of Mar Thoma Mathews I to the throne of Catholicos, the Malankara Syrian Christian Association met in 1977, 1980, 1982 and 1985 to transact business as decided by the Managing Committee.

#### **Malankara Association Meeting 1977**

Consequent on the diocesimal reorganisations of 1976, it was found necessary to have Metropolitans for the newly formed dioceses. There was still the urgency for further reorganisation of the dioceses. Besides, there were aging Metropolitans who needed assistance in the administration of their dioceses. Keeping in view all these situations, the Managing Committee at its meeting held on December 23, 1976 decided to raise five Metropolitans and to hold a meeting of the Malankara Syrian Christian Association to elect the candidates, on May 16, 1977 at M.S.S. School, Mavelikara.

In the meeting which was duly held, five Metropolitan-candidates were elected. It also passed a resolution requesting the Catholicos to send a deputation to the Government in order to protest against the inaction of the Government to implement the orders of the courts of justice in the suits with Jacobites. An amount of Rs. 30,001/- was also offered for the establishment of a Catholicate Centre at Ankamali.

The Metropolitan candidates elected were :

<i>S. No.</i>	<i>Candidate</i>	
1.	Very. Rev. C. Zacharia Ramban BAPT	Mulamoottil, Kundara.
2.	Fr. K. K. Mathews, M. Sc., B.D.	Kallarakaparampil Vengola, Perumbavur
3.	Fr. Youhanon, B. A.	Chakalaparampil Puthenan- gadi, Kottayam.
4.	Fr. T. E. George, B. A.	Thevervelil, Kozhencherry.
5.	Fr. M. M. Jacob, B.A.B.T.	Mazhuvancherry Ayyambally.

The Episcopal Synod also accepted the candidates at its sitting on July 4, 1977.

### Malankara Association Meeting 1980

The Managing Committee which met on October 19, 1979, decided to convene the Malankara Syrian Christian Association on May 1, 1980 at M. D. Seminary, Kottayam to meet the constitutional requirements of electing a lay trustee in place of Uppoottil Kurien Abraham who had expired on 12.12.1978 and a new Managing Committee members. It was also decided to elect a successor to the present Catholicos and Malankara Metropolitan. The Malankara Metropolitan-Catholicos issued the notice on January 2, 1980. Accordingly, the Association met at M. D. Seminary, on May 1, 1980. It elected the following:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| i. Catholicos and Malankara Metropolitan designate | : Mathews Mar Kurilos, Metropolitan, Quilon Diocese |
| ii. Lay Trustee                                    | : P.C. Abraham, Padinjarekara.                      |
| iii. Managing Committee Members                    | : 86 members proposed by the 14 dioceses.           |

The Association also decided to raise the total number of members of the Managing Committee from 86 to 114 consisting 38 priests and 76 lay members.

### Mathews Mar Koorilos

At the age of 65, Metropolitan Mathews Mar Koorilos of Quilon diocese was elected as successor to the Catholicos. On January 30, 1915 he was born to parents Idiculla and Annama of Venakkil, Perinad, Quilon.

Following High School education, the young Mathews was ordained as deacon on May 17, 1938 and as priest on 1941 by Catholicos Geeverghese II. Thereafter Fr. Mathews joined Bishop's College Calcutta for B. D. Course.

In 1943, Fr. Mathews became the superior of the Dayara at Marara, in which office he continued till he became Metropolitan in 1951. While Metropolitan, Mar Mathews took up a course of

theological studies in the New York General Theological Seminary in 1965. He was assigned the Charge of Quilon diocese in 1953.

### **Malankara Association Meeting 1982**

Since the last meeting of the Association in May 1980, two Metropolitans passed away and the dioceses of Kottayam and Idikki were newly formed. In the circumstances, the Managing Committee on April 14, 1982 decided to raise five Metropolitans and to hold the Malankara Association on December 28, 1982 to elect them. Other items for the consideration of the Association included review of the strength of Managing Committee in view of the increase in the number of dioceses and election of a clergy trustee in place of Rt. Rev. T.S. Abraham Cor. Episcopa because of his ill-health. The Catholicos-Malankara Metropolitan accordingly issued the notice on September 4, 1982 convening the Association meeting on Monday December 28, 1982 at M.G.M. High School, Tiruvalla.

The Association accordingly met on December 28, 1982 and elected the following :-

#### **Metropolitan Candidates**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1. Ramban K. G. Geevarghese,<br>M. A. M. M. Th.   | Keeyath, Othara.                                  |
| 2. Fr. Philipos Thomas,<br>B.Sc (Oxon) M. Th.     | Puthenparampil Naranganam,<br>Kozhencherry.       |
| 3. Fr. K. T. Thomas,<br>B.Sc., M. Ed. B. D.       | Kizhakkethalagal, Puthencav.<br>Mangat Kollanoor, |
| 4. Fr. K. I. Paul, M. A. B. D.                    | Kunnamkulam.                                      |
| 5. Fr. K. Mathai, B.Sc., B. Ed.<br>Clergy Trustee | Koottazhikath, Chenkulam.<br>Konat Abraham Malpan |

The Holy Episcopal Synod gave its approval of the candidates elected at its sitting on February 21-25, 1983.

The candidates were made Rambans on May 14, 1983 at Parumala.

### **Malankara Association Meeting 1985**

The tenure of a Managing Committee under the Constitution is four years. On the expiry of the tenure of the Committee constituted in 1980, the Managing Committee decided that the Malankara Syrian Christian Association may meet on October 23, 1985

to elect the next Managing Committee members. In view of the four newly constituted dioceses, the strength of the Committee was also reviewed. It was concluded that the new Committee will have 90 elected and 18 nominated members. In pursuance of this decision, the Catholicos issued a notice on July 10, 1985 convening the Malankara Association at M. D. Seminary campus on October 23, 1985. Notices of intimation were sent to 1127 parishes. The agenda was as follows :

- (i) Election of 90 members to the Managing Committee as decided by the Association at its meeting held on May 1, 1980.
- (ii) To raise the strength of the Managing Committee in the context of the newly constituted dioceses — elected and nominated.

The Association met accordingly on October 23, 1985 at M. D. Seminary. It elected 90 members — 30 clergy and 60 laity to the Managing Committee from 19 dioceses for the years 1985-89. 8 clergy and 16 laity members were nominated. The total strength of the new Managing Committee was thus fixed as 114.

In response to the second agenda item, the strength of the next Managing Committee was raised to 138. The composition arrived at was as under :-

<i>Elected</i>			<i>Nominated</i>			<i>Total</i>		
Clergy	Laity	Total	Clergy	Laity	Total	Clergy	Laity	Total
36	72	= 108	10	20	= 30	46	92	= 138

### **Church Secretary**

The newly constituted Managing Committee met on December 27, 1985 at Old Seminary. The issue before it was the election of Secretary of the Church in place of E. J. Joseph. The Committee elected Paul Mathai Chempakasseril, Mavelikara.

### **DELEGATIONS ABROAD**

The Church has been maintaining cordial relationship with the Eastern Orthodox Churches. It used to send delegations consisting of Metropolitans and leading clergy and laity to them on different occasions since 1976 on good will mission and also, on invitations to attend specific functions. These tours and deputations are enumerated below:

### **Delegation to Russia 1976**

The Russian Orthodox Church celebrated on July 18, 1976, the blessed memory of the internment of the relics of the Saint Sergius in the Sagosk Monastery Academy in 1422. On invitation to participate in the celebrations, a delegation consisting of Metropolitans Philipos Mar Theophilos, Geevarghese Mar Osthathios, Stephanos Mar Theodosius from the Church proceeded to Moscow on July 13, 1976 and attended the celebrations.

### **Catholicos to Russia, Rumania, Bulgaria, Armenia. 1976**

In September 1976, another delegation from the Church visited the Churches in Russia, Rumania, Bulgaria and Armenia. This delegation was led by the Catholicos. The other members were Metropolitans Mathews Mar Koorilos, Paulos Mar Gregorios and Joseph Mar Pachomios, Ramban C. Zacharia, Fr. Joseph Vendrapalli, Dr. George Koshy, P. C. Abraham and Pothen Philip. They left on September 19, 1976, and returned on October 23, 1976.

### **Award to Catholicos**

While in Russia (21-23 September), Patriarch Pimen conferred the award, "The Order of St. Vladimir", the highest award of honour in the Russian Orthodox Church, on the Catholicos at the reception held in the Cathedral in Moscow on September 23, 1976.

The delegation visited the Armenian Church during the days 24-27 September. The Catholicos was also awarded the honour of "Fellow of the Leningrad Academy" at Echmiadzin. On September 26, the Catholicos together with the Catholicos Vuscan of the Armenian Church consecrated Holy Mooron, in the Cathedral at Echmiadzin. The other prelates who participated in the conduct of the holy sacrament included Armenian Patriarchs Dardirian of Jerusalem and Schinork Gloster of Constantinople.

The delegation also took part in the 20th Anniversary celebrations of the enthronement of Catholicos Vasken, held on September 27.

### **At Bucharest and Sofia October 1976**

Leaving Echmiadzin, the Catholicos and party arrived at Bucharest on On 2nd October at the invitation of the His Beatitude Patriarch Justin of Rumanian Orthodox Church and later Sofia

at the invitation of the Orthodox Church of Bulgaria. The Patriarch His Beatitude Maxim welcomed the Catholicos and other delegates and accompanied them to the feast and 1100th birthday celebrations of Saint Youhanon of Rila.

### **To America, Canada, London 1979**

In July 1979, the Catholicos took an extensive tour of the United States of America and Canada. During the period 12-31 July, he visited the parishes of New York, Queens, Staten Island, Manhattan, Detroit, Chicago, Dallas, Brooklyn, Buffalo, Washington, Los Angeles, Florida, Philadelphia, New Jersey etc. The visit was remembered for the solemn service of Sunthroniso of Metropolitan Thomas Mar Maccarios held by the Catholicos on July 14, 1979 at the St. John Divine Cathedral at New York of the Episcopal Church. The Metropolitans Paulos Mar Gregorios and Thomas Mar Timotheos had also participated in the holy service. Other dignitaries who attended the function included Bishop Antinos of the Greek Orthodox Church, Bishop Wetmore of the Episcopal Church, Arch Bishop Manoogiyan of the Armenian Church, bishop Benjamin Moss and Shri. K. Srinivasan, Indian Consul General. At Chicago, the Mayor had declared July 21, 22 and 23 as Catholicate days and as days of celebration in honour of the Catholicos. A public reception with Mayoral participation was also held on July 21.

In Canada the Catholicos visited the parishes of Toronto, Edmonton and other places. On August 15, 1979 the Catholicos proceeded to London.

At London, the Catholicos stayed from 16 to 21 July. Oxford Cathedral, Cowley Fathers' Centre, St. Andrews Church were among those which the Catholicos visited. Greek, Russian, Armenian and Anglican members had also attended the reception to the Catholicos, arranged by the London parish.

Leaving London on July 21 the Catholicos returned to Kottayam on July 24, 1979.

### **Mar Koorilos at Sofia 1983**

The Church deputed the Catholicos-designate Metropolitan Mathews Mar Koorilos to Sophia, Bulgaria, to represent the Church in the celebrations connected with the re-establishment of

the Patriarchate of the Orthodox Church of Bulgaria, held from June 20 to 30, 1983.

### Visits to Diaspora Churches

There is a vast diaspora of Orthodox members in other States in India beyond Kerala boundaries and in Middle East countries. The Catholicos had undertaken tours to these parishes in the diaspora, on many occasions during the course of his stewardship. The outstanding among them are mentioned below :

DELHI	1968 May 14	Consecrated St. Mary's Orthodox Church at Hauz Khaz.
	1976 July 11	Performed the 'Sunthroniso' of Metropolitan Paulos Mar Gregorios.
	October 22	Laid the foundation stone of Mar Gregorios Orthodox Church at Janakpuri.
	1984 November 24-25	Consecrated the Delhi Orthodox Centre at Tughlakabad.
BOMBAY	1978	Goodwill visit.
	November 4-14	
BHILLAI	December 24	Inaugurated St. Thomas Mission Centre.
BHOPAL	1982 November	Consecrated St. Mary's Orthodox Church at Raipur.
RAIPUR		

### Middle East Parishes

In 1979 (April) the Catholicos undertook a good will visit to the parishes of Abu Dhabi Bahrein, Dubai Sharja, Muscat and Doha. A Second time also, the Catholicos had visited Abu Dhabi on May 26-27, 1983 when he Consecrated St. George Church there. Parishes of Dubai, Sharja, Ras-al-khaima were also visited on 28-30 May and later Kuwait and Ahmadi on June 4.

### Russian Orthodox Church Delegation 1977

His Holiness Patriarch Pimen of Moscow and All Russia arrived with a delegation on a good-will visit to India in January-February 1977. The delegation was in Kerala from January 29, 1977 till February 2, 1977. The Catholicos-Patriarch meet at

Kottayam strengthened the bond of friendship and solidarity of both the Churches.

### **Mr. Alexi Harkonen 1980**

Mr. Alexi Harkonen, General Secretary of the Youth Department of World Council of Churches called on the Catholicos on May 28, 1980. He had addressed the Annual Conference of the Youth Movement held at Tiruvalla on the theme "The Orthodox Churches and the Modern World."

## **CATHOLICOS—POPE MEETINGS**

### **(i) At Vatican, 1983**

In 1983, the Catholicos made history when he paid a formal visit to the pontiff, Pope John Paul II of the Roman Catholic Church at his headquarters at Vatican. It was a memorable journey of good-will to foster fraternal relations with the Roman Catholic Church and the first ever occasion in the history of the Malankara Church when its head made such a journey. The Catholicos's delegation consisted of Catholicos-designate Mathews Mar Koorilos, Metropolitan Dr. Paulos Mar Gregorios and P.C. Abraham. The delegation stayed at Vatican during the days 1-4 May 1983.

On this historical occasion, the speeches of the heads of the Churches showed a concern for the need to understand each other and foster unity among the Churches. A copy each of the speeches of the leaders is placed at Appendices XIX and XX.

### **(ii) At Kottayam, 1986**

His Holiness Pope John Paul II visited India on invitation of the Government of India in February 1-10, 1986. Meeting with the Catholicos of Malankara Orthodox Church was one of the important itineraries of the prelate's visit to Kerala.

On February 8, the Church arranged a reception to His Holiness at Mar Elia Cathedral, Kottayam. Both leaders of the Churches exchanged felicitations and emphasised the call for peace, fraternity and unity among the Churches. The Catholicos recalled the Consultations held between the Churches at the auspices of the Pro Oriente Foundation at Vienna, towards bringing unity between the Churches. In his speech the Pope made a point to

be noted, when he said, "Your Holiness, I am the Pope of Rome, You are the Pope of Kottayam."

#### **Other Distinguished Visitors, 1986**

Among other distinguished visitors of the Malankara Church included Dr. Robert Runcie, Archbishop of Canterbury of the Church of England and Dr. Emilie Castro, Genral Secretary of the World Council of Churches. They had called on the Catholicos on February 1986.



His Holiness the Pope being received at the Elias Chapel, Kottayam, by His Grace Mar Coorilose (Second from left), the Catholicos-designate



## CHAPTER TWENTY

### THE EXPANDING CHURCH

With the spread of education, spear-headed by Pulikottil Joseph Mar Dionysius II, the Syrian Christians forged ahead. Education induced them to aspire for higher learning, to raise their level of culture and to put them on the path of development and progress in the fields of education, science, commerce, banking, journalism and politics. Materially too, they grew in stature. The smack of affluence, however, never made any dent in their loyalty to the Orthodox Church. They have had helped the Church to reach the masses and instill in them affection to and faith in the Church. In short, they added strength to the Church, enhanced its prestige and proved very helpful to its ecclesiastical leaders in times of crisis.

Today, the Malankara Orthodox Church is the premier indigenous national Church in India. The Church has a following of about 15,00,000. His Holiness Moran Mar Baselios Mar Thoma Mathews I is the present head of the Church. The Malankara See is divided into twenty dioceses each administered by a Metropolitan with the help of a Diocesan Council. The Metropolitans now (1986) in position vis-a-vis the Dioceses they are in charge, are :—

<i>S. No.</i>	<i>Diocese</i>	<i>Metropolitan</i>	<i>Headquarters</i>
1.	America (1979)	1. Thomas Mar Macarios	Episcopal Diocesan House, 1114 Delaware Avenue Buffalo, N. Y. 14209.
2.	Ankamali	2. Dr. Philipos Mar Theophilos	Thrikunnath Seminary Post Box 61, Alwaye-683 101.
3.	Bombay (1976)	—do—	C/2, Bright Haven, Sion, Chembur, Trombay Road, Bombay-400 071.

- |                             |   |   |
|-----------------------------|---|---|
| 4. Calcutta (1979)          | 3. Stephenos Mar Theodosius   | P. B. 24, St. Thomas Ashram, Bhillai, Madhya Pradesh.                                     |
| 5. Chengannur (1985)        | 4. Thomas Mar Athanasius  | Bethel, Chengannur.   |
| 6. Cochin                   | 5. Youhanon Mar Severios<br>6. Yakoub Mar Polycarpos<br><i>Asstt. Metropolitan</i>  | Zion Seminary, Koretty, Chalakudy-680308.   |
| 7. Delhi (1976)             | 7. Dr. Paulos Mar Gregorios   | The Delhi Orthodox Centre<br>2 Institutional Area,<br>Tughlakabad,<br>New Delhi-110 062 . |
| 8. Idikki (1982)            | 8. Mathews Mar Barnabas   | Gethsemon Aramana<br>Chakku pallom, Kumily.   |
| 9. Kandanad                 | 9. Joseph Mar Pachomios   | St. Thomas Dayara<br>Vettikkal, Mulanthuruthy.  |
| 10. Kottayam                | 10. Geevarghese Mar Ivanios   | Mar Kuriakose Dayara<br>Pothenpuram, Pampady.   |
| 11. Kottayam Central (1982) | Malankara Metropolitan  | Devalokam Kottayam- 686 038   |
| 12. Kunnamkulam (1985)      | 11. Paulos Mar Militius   | St. Mary's Orthodox Church,<br>Arthat, Kunnamkulam,<br>Trichur-680 521, Kerala.           |
| 13. Madras (1976)           | 12. Zacharias Mar Dionysius   | J-21 Anna Nagar<br>Madras-600 102.  |
| 14. Malabar                 | 13. Thomas Mar Timotheos  | Mt. Hermon Aramana<br>R E College, P.O. 6736001<br>Calicut.                               |
| 15. Niranam                 | 14. Geevarghese Mar Osthathios  | Bethany Aramana<br>Tiruvalla-689 101  |
| 16. Quilon                  | 15. Mathews Mar Kurilos<br><i>Assistant :</i><br>16. Mathews Mar Epiphanius         | Bishop's House,<br>Cross Junction,<br>Quilon-691 001.                                     |
| 17. Sultan Batteri (1985)   | Malankara Metropolitan  |   |
| 18. Thumpamon               | 17. Daniel Mar Philoxenos<br><i>Assistant :</i><br>18. Philipos Mar Eusebius        | Basil Dayara, Pathanamthitta.   |
| 19. Trivandrum (1979)       | 19. Geevarghese Mar Dioscoros   | 24 Tagore Gardens Medical<br>College P.O.<br>Trivandrum-695 011.                          |
| 20. Cnanaya                 | Malankara Metropolitan<br>(Vicar General Very<br>Rev. N.K. Abraham<br>Cor Episcopa) |   |

The strength of each diocese with reference to the number of priests and parishes and population is indicated below:—

<i>Diocese</i>	<i>Parishes</i>	<i>Chapels</i>	<i>Catholicate Centres [CC] Congregations (C) Worshipping Centres (WC)</i>	<i>Priests</i>	<i>Population</i>
1. Ankamaly	96	10	C.C. 10	115	160,000
2. Chengannur	50	4	—	51	50,000
3. Cochin	86	20	—	67	125,000
4. Idukki	27	—	C.C. 1	15	10,000
5. Kandanad	86	11	C.C. 6	99	150,000
6. Knanaya	50	—	—	38	85,000
7. Kottayam Central	10	—	—	11	20,000
8. Kottayam	70	5	—	69	100,000
9. Kunnampulam	32	8	—	24	35,000
10. Malabar	88	8	—	65	150,000
11. Niranam	91	5	—	82	160,000
12. Quilon	133	13	—	110	120,000
13. Thumpamon	105	5	—	108	120,000
14. Sultan Bateri	57	—	—	—	—
15. Trivandrum	97	—	—	51	75,000
<b>Dioceses outside Kerala</b>					
16. America	25	—	10 (WC)	43	—
17. Bombay	35	—	—	27	60,000
18. Calcutta	26	—	36 C	26	45,000
19. Delhi	34	—	6 C	16	45,000
20. Madras	35	8	9 C	38	50,000
	1233	97	C.C. 17 C. 51 W.C. 10	1055	1,560,000

### **Brahmawar (Parish (St. Mary's Orthodox Syrian Church)<sup>1</sup>**

The Brahmawar Parish is a unique one in the Orthodox Church. In 1888, a strong Roman Catholic parish at Brahmawar, near Mangalapuram in South Karnataka (Mysore), embraced Orthodox Church under its parish priest Fr. Xavier Alwares. Malankara Metropolitan Pulikottil Joseph Mar Dionysius II had admitted the parishioners in to the Church and consecrated Fr. Alwares as Metropolitan Mar Julios.

Following Mar Julio's death in 1923, the parish was under

<sup>1</sup> P. C. Mathew-St. Mary's College Malankara Deepam (January 5, 1984).

the care of Vicars Fr. Noronha (1889-1936) Fr. P. G. Koshy (1936-53) and Fr. K. K. Kuriakose (1953-1980). The parish church is St. Mary's Church with several other smaller parishes/chapels under its superintendence. The parish has about 520 families with a total strength over 3200.

St. Mary's parishioners speak Kongan language and follow Holy Qurbana in Latin and in Latin form of worship. Perhaps this is the only parish within the Orthodox Church using a language other than Malayalam for worship.

The Parishioners are apparently active in educational field. They have formed an educational society namely Orthodox Syrian Christian Education Society which manages a College known as St. Mary's Syrian College and a number of schools. The College which was established in 1980, is affiliated to the Mangalore University.

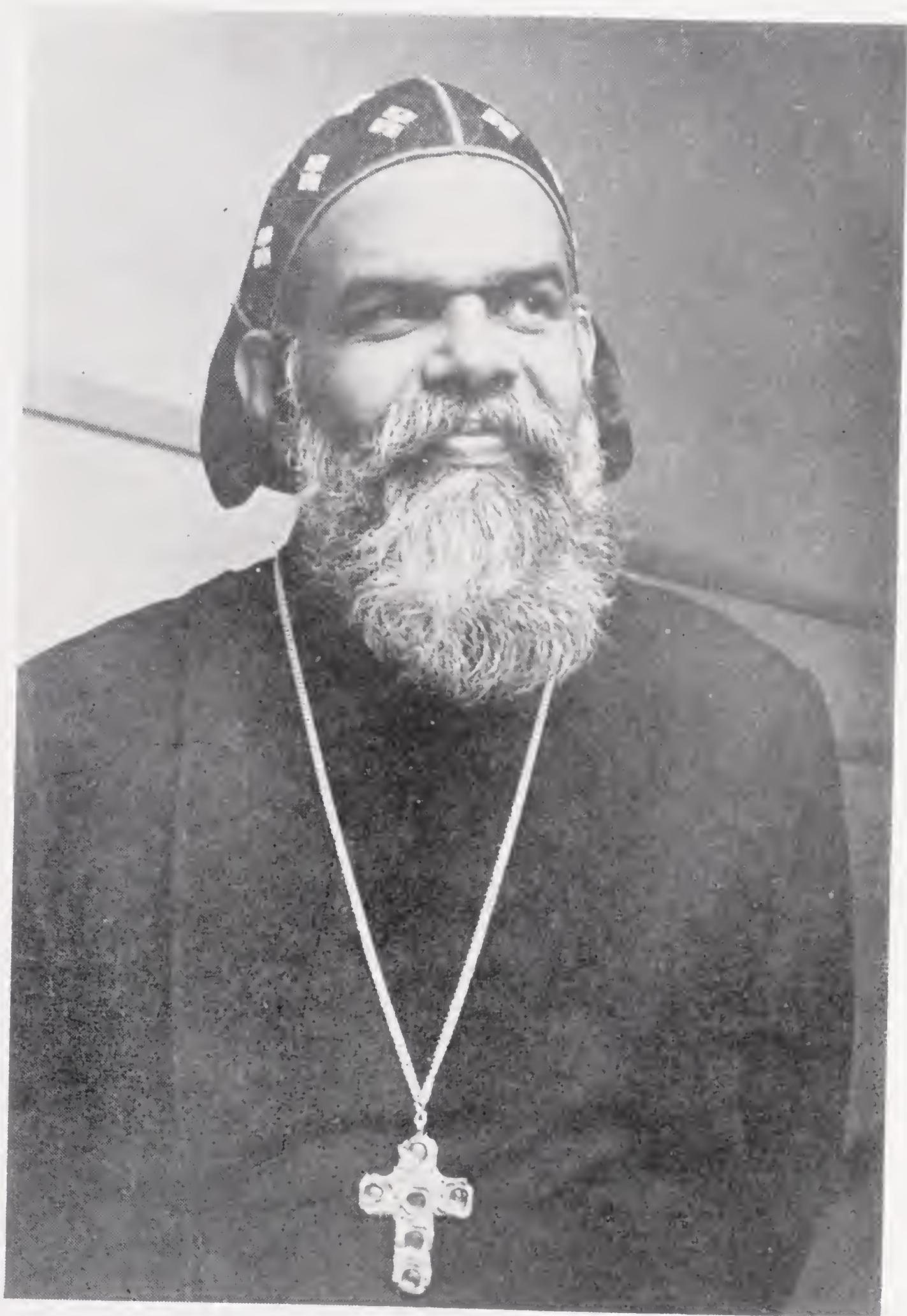
Mount Tabor Dayara at Pathanapuram has opened its branch at Brahmawar with prospects of starting a Balbhawan.

### OUTSIDE KERALA DIASPORA

The Outside Kerala diaspora is in fact a new phenomenon of the expanding Malankara Church and hence deserves special treatment.

It corresponds to the spreading out of the Jews of the early Christians from Jerusalem to other parts of Asia and Europe. Sons and daughters of the Malankara Church left their hearth and homes in Kerala in pursuit of their vocation and gainful employment elsewhere. Today, they are found in varying degrees of collective strength abroad in different parts of Canada, U. S. A., Britain, Europe, Africa, Middle East, Malaysia, not to speak of well developed parishes in scores of cities and towns in the different States of India. Taking into account the potentiality of these centres in India in the spread of the Gospel, the Church constituted 'The Indian Orthodox Church Mission' at Madras in 1947 under the presidentship of Alexios Mar Theodosius. The parishes functioned as individual units under the Metropolitan till they were formed into an 'Outside Kerala Diocese' in 1960. Mathews Mar Athanasius took charge of the diocese on 23.9.1960. The headquarters of the diocese was at Kottayam.

The diaspora outside Kerala and abroad has more than 200



His Grace Dr. Paulos Mar Gregorios  
Metropolitan of the Diocese of Delhi & the North



worshipping centres, spread under five dioceses of America, Bombay, Calcutta, Delhi and Madras. A number of these centres have their own churches. There is a continuous growth of parishes in various parts of the country. Many of them look forward to be self-sufficient in near future.

### **Reorganisation of the Diocese 1976 and 1978**

During the shepherdship of Mathews Mar Athanasius, the present Catholicos, the Outside Kerala Diocese witnessed phenomenal growth in size and stature so much so the Diocese was reorganised in 1976 into three and later in 1978 into five dioceses, each under a Metropolitan. The five dioceses, their Metropolitans and the areas under their jurisdiction have already been given elsewhere. (Pp. 447-8)

The dioceses have established diocesan headquarters, residences for Metropolitans and Cathedrals. Many parishes have their own churches, many are under construction and still many others in the process of planning. There is a continuous growth of parishes in all the dioceses. Many of them look forward to be self-sufficient in near future economically. Coupled with the growth of parishes is the demand for priests. It is a sad commentary that the Church is not able to meet the growing demand for priests, corresponding to the growing number of parishes.

However, signs of concern in this regard have been observed in these dioceses recently. Candidates from these dioceses have volunteered for theological studies and ordination. In 1985-86, 17 students from these dioceses were undergoing training for B D course in the Theological Seminary at Kottayam. (Bombay 1, Calcutta 6, Delhi 4 and Madras 6) out of a total of 85 students

### **The Orthodox Centre**

The Delhi Diocese has raised a unique institution in the capital Metropolis of Delhi—The Delhi Orthodox Centre. It blends the Eastern Church architecture with the twentieth century vision. The objectives of the Centre are :—

- to explore in depth the cultural, religious and spiritual legacy of the people of India;
- to promote dialogue for mutual renewal between the major religions of India—Jainism, Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Sikhism and Christianity;

- to assist in developing the means of the full emancipation and cultural creativity of the Indian people, in relation to their socio-economic, political and other problems;
- to deepen and communicate the heritage of the Orthodox Christians of India, for enriching the national life and advancing the ecumenical movement.

To fulfil these objectives, the Centre has the following wings :

(i) The Sarva Dharma Nilaya, (ii) Dhyan Mandir, (iii) Niti-Santi Kendra (iv) Training Centre, (v) Ecumenical Centre and (vi) Sophia Society.

Many of the parishes have forged ahead in the national scene by way of establishing educational institutions and medical units. Questions are often aired as to the advisability or utility of such institutions being started at the Church level, while manifold similar institutions are run and being started by Government. The answer, however, may be sought in the role of Christian responsibility and charity towards the community as a whole and Christian participation in the national life of the country.

### Diocesimal Data

The following statement will reveal the progress made by each diocese.

<i>Sl. No.</i>	<i>Diocese</i>	<i>Parishes Chapels Congregation (cg)</i>	<i>Priests</i>	<i>Schools</i>	<i>Colleges</i>	<i>Hospitals Dispensary</i>	<i>Mission Centre</i>	<i>Child Welfare Centre</i>	<i>Estimated Population</i>
1.	America	35	43	—	—	—	—	—	—
2.	Bombay	35	27	8	1	1	—	—	60,000
3.	Calcutta	26 36 cg	26	6	1	—	1	1	45,000
4.	Delhi	34 6 cg	16	5	—	—	—	—	45,000
5.	Madras	35 9 cg 8 ch	38	8	1	6	1	2	50,000

With the base established in these dioceses there is evidently scope and hope for advancing the mission of the Church in India as a whole. It should, however, be noted that a generation is in the process of settling themselves in hitherto unknown surroundings. Another generation is growing up in the new environments. In such circumstances, traditional Syrian Christian values are getting devalued or even lost and new emphasises are gaining strength. The pattern of social life is also fast changing. Issues, which the Church limited to Kerala and in a traditionally Christian set-up had never visualised, are raising their heads throwing a challenge to the Church.

Apart from the shifting values of society, the Church is facing another problem. To the new generation, Kerala is a mere memory. Malayalam, the mother-tongue of the Malayalees and the medium of the liturgy and worship of the Church is reduced to a spoken language. They are, therefore, gradually losing the Kerala Christian heritage. On the other hand, this young generation which will soon attain maturity of thought and disposition, is growing in an environment, a society, where ethical values and Christian principles are put to severe test, technological advances are encouraging a fast life and where traditional ideas and bonds of a family life are belittled to give importance to individual liberty of thought, expression and permissiveness. Being handicapped with a loss of heritage on one side and caught up in the whirl winds of a new society, which do not bother to recognise ulterior values of life, on the other, the next generation will naturally frown on the Church and its hierarchy. A gap between the generations is, therefore, slowly and unconsciously being built up. As a result, emphasis on Orthodoxy will lose ground and a majority of the members will develop a passive indifferent attitude.

Looking to the future, two contradictions emerge. On one side the outside Kerala Dioceses serve as a potential bases and springboard for missionary activities; on the other side, there is a tendency of deteriorating cohesion within the Church. The changes in the social structure of the Christians are very real. In these circumstances, the responsibilities of the Church in future will increase in great measure and will be heavy.

Accepting the situation that “our Church is moving out and in its dispersion, it will meet with all sorts of problems and changing situations,” Metropolitan Theophilos wrote, “we should be prepared to show wisdom and imagination as our Fathers showed in the past. We must learn lessons from history. When new events take place or new situations arise let us not say “no” immediately, but let us give them the attention that is due. Let us be wise, imaginative and understanding. Otherwise, we will be forgetting history.”<sup>2</sup>

### THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH

The expansion of a Church depends upon the realisation of its fundamental apostolic vocation to proclaim the Gospel to the world, which is the mission of the Church. In this regard Geevarghese Mar Osthathios reflects :

“The Missiological prospects for the Indian Orthodox Church are good if we see the signs of the times and launch into the deep according to the Word of the Master. India’s Mission must be kenotic in its incarnational pattern and cosmic in outlook. The Nazareth Manifesto with the fivefold aim of preaching good news of spiritual salvation to the poor, proclamation of release from the captivity of superstition and fear, giving intellectual sight to the blind, liberation from economic oppression and proclamation of the eschatological jubilee of the final resurrection at the parousia, must be our aim also. The practical working out of this mission will have the following elements :—

1. Training Centres—The Three Centres—  
St. Paul’s Gospel Hall (Mission Training Centre) Mavelikara, C.S. Ashram Tadagam and St. Thomas Mission Centre, Bhillai have to be developed into three first-rate primary training centres for mission.
2. Mission through monastic communities. The trainees in these Centres should be primarily from the existing and new monastic communities of the Church. Each monastery must start a branch outside Kerala and provide its own personnel.

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2. Philipos Mar Theophilos : The Orthodox Syrian Church Delhi Souvenir 1964.

3. Diocesan Mission Centres. Each of the twelve dioceses of the Church must start at least one mission centre in a needy place in India.
4. Mission Sunday, which is now observed only in the diocese outside Kerala must be observed in every diocese of the Church.
5. Mission Board to encourage each of the missionary agencies and help them start new projects.
6. Social Development projects. The mission will express the radiating love of Christ in home mission also. Projects like the Sick Aid Foundation, Marriage Aid Foundation, House Building Aid Fund, Education Loan Fund, Social Development Fund, so on.
7. Industrial Mission. Missionary activity in the new industrial cities of India, but also the starting of industries for the innumerable unemployed people of the nation.
8. Agricultural mission.
9. Mission through literature.
10. Audio-Visual evangelism.
11. Ecumenical dialogue.

These are only some of the hopes and aspirations for the future of the Indian Orthodox Church".<sup>3</sup>

### **THE MALANKARA ORTHODOX SYRIAN CHURCH MISSION SOCIETY**

The Holy Episcopal Synod of the Church, keeping in view its missionary responsibilities, constituted and adopted the Constitution of Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church Mission Society on 23.2.1978 and registered it under the Travancore Cochin Literary Scientific and Charitable Societies Act.

The primary object of the Society is "to co-ordinate all existing Mission bodies, activities, institutions and projects in the

3. Geevarghese Mar Osthathios. The Indian Orthodox Church (Article, in Martyra Mission-The Witness of the Orthodox Churches today. Ed : Ion Bria) p : 200.

Church and to establish new ones and to help them for better performance of this work". Among the other objectives included are: training of personnel through regular courses in training centre, establishment and conduct of educational and training institutions, conducting of Bible Schools, Correspondence Courses, Radio and Television Broadcasts, etc., founding homes for the destitute, the handicapped, the aged and the infirm, provision of assistance and relief to all in distress caused by natural calamities and other causes.

The Catholicos is the President of the Society with one or two Vice-President Metropolitans appointed by the Holy Synod. The Society has a Governing Board and an Executive Committee for the administration of the affairs of the Mission Society. The Board was formally inaugurated by the Catholicos on June 14, 1980.

Metropolitan Geevarghese Mar Osthathios is the President of this Board. All Mission bodies, Associations and Movements, Monasteries (including Ashrams, Dayaras) Nunneries (including Mandirams) Seminaries, Orphanages, Poor Homes etc. are envisaged as members of the Mission Society. Such of these organisations as are existing today, which list may not be exhaustive, are enumerated in the following pages.

## I. MISSIONARY AND THEOLOGICAL TRAINING CENTRES

### 1. The Orthodox Theological Seminary, Kottayam

The Church administers a theological college of high standard at Kottayam. Known as Old Seminary, the Orthodox Theological Seminary was instituted as early as 1815 by the late Malankara Metropolitan Pulikkottil Joseph Mar Dionysius I. This was two years before the Serampore College was started and the oldest non-Roman Theological Seminary in India.

#### **Kandanad Representative Assembly Decision 1809**

The idea to establish a theological school was mooted as early as 1809. That year, the representatives of the Church had assembled at Kandanad to observe the 40th day feast of Mar Thoma VII. This representative assembly took an important decision to set up a Seminary each in the north and south of Malankara Church to

educate and train clergy trainees especially in Syriac. The other complementary decisions were :-

- (i) Malpans (Professor in Syriac) should be appointed and paid by the Church.
- (ii) The expenses of clergy trainees should also be met by the Church.
- (iii) Funds for meeting these expenses should be raised by collection from parishes.
- (iv) Ramban Philipose of Kayamkulam and Ramban Pulikkottil Ittoop of Kunnamkulam were authorised to take necessary steps to set-up the Seminaries.

Subsequently, Ittoop Ramban, within two years 1813 to 1815 managed to construct a three storied structure for the Seminary, in a 16 acre plot allocated by the Regent Rani Laxmibai on 19.11.1813 and with the assistance offered by the State Govt. (Ref : Chapter Nine).

### **The Pioneer English School**

The Seminary was encouraged and supported by the State Govt. as well as the Church Missionary Society (CMS) as an educational institution. The first school in Kerala which started education in English language was the Seminary. Incidentally, it is the School started in the Seminary that has grown into the CMS College of Kottayam today.

### **CMS Missionaries**

CMS Missionaries had played a vital role in the development of the Seminary in theological studies as well as education in English. Rev. Norton, Rev. Joseph Fenn, Rev. Benjamin Baily, Rev. Henry Baker, Rev. Peet-were all teachers in the Seminary. Rev. Fen was the Principal of the Seminary for sometime. Following the Cochin Award of 1840, the Seminary was wholly managed by the Church.

### **Academic Programme**

In 1965, the Seminary was upgraded as B.D., College through affiliation with the Serampore University. Its programmes are :

- (i) The Seminary offers G.S.T. (Diploma), B.D. M. Th and D. Th degree courses. The yearly intake of candidates for the four-year B.D. course is 20 to 25.

- (ii) In 1977, the Seminary entered into a joint venture in conjunction with the Marthoma Seminary Kottayam and the United Theological Seminary, Trivandrum called the federated Faculty for Research in Religion and Culture.
- (iii) A two year and four year theological training programme for the laity titled 'Divya Bodhanam' has also been launched by the Seminary. This programme envisages a two-fold approach.
  1. Study units in local parishes under the supervision of Seminary graduated priests.
  2. Correspondence Course for those who do not have local units.

In August 1984, the Catholicos inaugurated this project of the Seminary. Rev. Fr. T.J. Joshua, Faculty Member of the Seminary, is its Director.

- (iv) The Seminary staff is also actively involved in the training programme for evangelists at the St. Paul's Mission Training Centre, Mavelikara.

#### **Archives**

An additional attraction offered by the Seminary is the Mar Geevarghese Dionysius Memorial Archives which is a museum of articles of historical importance related to persons and events in the life of the Church. This Archives was inaugurated on February 23, 1979 by the Catholicos in memory of the late Mar Geevarghese Dionysius.

#### **Publication**

Two quarterly periodicals are published from the Sofia Centre, namely, 'Star of the East' (English) and 'Purohitan' (Malayalam). The 'Star of the East' is an ecumenical journal upholding thoughts and traditions of Oriental and Eastern Orthodox Churches. The 'Purohitan' is a journal for the priests.

#### **150th year 1965**

The Seminary celebrated its 150th anniversary in 1965. Distinguished guests for Orthodox Churches of Greece, Russia, Egypt, Ethiopia and Armania had attended this spectacular function.

#### **Additional Buildings**

The Seminary further improved its image with the addition of

new buildings started in 1960. On January 7, 1969, Patriarch Justin of the Orthodox Church of Rumania opened a new block and in 1977, another block, by Patriarch Pimen of the Russian Orthodox Church. The Sofia Centre constructed in the Seminary campus is a special wing which provides facilities for conferences, retreats, study programmes and the training of the lay people. Substantial assistance has also been received from the World Council of Churches for the expansion programme,

The present Principal of the Seminary is Metropolitan Dr. Paulos Mar Gregorios. He had taken over on January 3, 1967. The post was earlier held by : Fr. K. David (1942-43), Fr. C.J. Skaria Malpan (1943-47), Ougen Mar Timotheos (1947-48), Mathews Mar Athanasius (1948-65) and Philipos Mar Theophilos (1965-66).

#### Seminarian Metropolitans

In the course of last 32 years, the Seminary proved to be a source of qualified personnel to adorn Metropolitanship in the Church. From 1953 to 1985, it has presented 8 scholarly and leading metropolitans from its faculties. To mention :

Fr. V.K. Mathew	1953	—	His Holiness Baselios Mar Thoma Mathews I
Fr. K. Philipos	1965	—	Mar Theophilos
Fr. M.V. George	1975	—	Mar Osthathios
Fr. Paul Varghese	-do-	—	Mar Gregorios
Fr. Youhanon	1978	—	Mar Severios
Fr. K.K. Mathews	-do-	—	Mar Barnabas.
Fr. K.G. Geevarghese	1985	—	Mar Ivanios
Fr. Philipos Thomas	-do-	—	Mar Eusebius

#### Finance

The Seminary is financed by income from different sources—mainly from grant from the Church (Catholicate fund) (1984-85-Rs. 85,000), Seminary Day Collection (1984-85-Rs. 2,15,527) Interest from Endowments (1984-85-Rs. 98,645). The Budget Estimates (Expenditure) for 1985-86 was Rs. 4, 99,000.00.

#### St. Paul's Mission Training Centre, Mavelikara

The St. Paul's Mission Training Centre (MTC) at Mavelikara has been established to train personnel for evangelisation work in missionary and social welfare fields.

The MTC offers a three-year training course which was inaugurated with the admission of the first batch of trainees on August 15, 1979. 15 candidates are admitted each year to this course. Those graduating out of the MTC are sent out to man existing missionary field centres and also others being opened. The MTC is thus developing a cadre of evangelists to fulfil a long felt need of dedicated personnel to undertake missionary activities in India.

The MTC has a Governing Board for its administration and functioning. His Holiness the Catholicos is the President of this Board and Metropolitan Geevarghese Mar Osthathios is its Vice-President and Director.

The MTC is housed in a complex of buildings developed by Mar Osthathios step by step since 1954. That year Mar Osthathios known as Fr. M.V. George, started a Summer Vacation Bible School in St. Paul's Wyoming Gospel Hall. This Gospel Hall was constructed in 1953-54 on a 16 cent plot with the financial assistance provided by a lady philanthropist of Wyoming County, USA and others. This small beginning in 1953 was enlarged in the next 30 years with the acquisition of 33 cents of land and addition of Hanton Hall, a Chapel, a Press, a Book Depot and a three-storey building. The latter building now accommodates the MTC. Mention may be made of the generous financial assistance received from the Westphalia Evangelical Church of West Germany and the Orthodox Church, Kuwait.

The Metropolitan transferred the entire land and buildings to the Malankara Episcopal Synod on September 1, 1977.

## II. MISSIONARY ORGANISATIONS

### 1. **Abded Sleebo (The Servants of the Cross)**

Abded Sleebo or the Society of the Servant of the Cross is the earliest missionary organisation in the Church. It came into being on September 14, 1924.

Metropolitan Mookenchery Patros Mar Osthathios was the one-man founder of this illustrious missionary society. Its sole aim has been to 'improve the religious and social welfare of the depressed classes'. The Metropolitan in his early years of life as a priest, travelled the length and breadth of Kerala, preached to and worked among the socially backward classes winning thousands

of souls to the redeeming grace of Christ. Since inception till 1985 the Society has brought nearly 22600 souls to Christianity.

The Society has absorbed into its cadre scores of dedicated and devoted young men. These selfless 'Servants of the Cross' reside mostly in parish-church premises and move out for their missionary work. The success of the Society is mainly due to its rules of conduct and discipline for its workers. 13 workers and other helpers are working in more than 100 centres.

Mar Osthathios expired in 1968 and the Society is now functioning under the Presidentship of Metropolitan Geevarghese Mar Osthathios. The Central Office of the Society is located at Carmel Dayara, Tiruvankulam, Kandanad.

## 2. The Society of the Missionaries of Christ

The Society of the Missionaries of Christ is an evangelically-oriented organisation formed out of the St. Paul's Missionary Brotherhood started by Fr. M.V. George, (the present Metropolitan Geevarghese Mar Osthathios) at St. Paul's Wyoming Gospel Hall, Mavelikara. The Gospel Hall had started functioning in 1954.

The Episcopal Synod of the Church raised the Brotherhood to the stature of the Society of the Missionaries of Christ (SMC) in February 1983 in appreciation and recognition of the selfless missionary service being rendered by its members. The object of the Society is focused on the evangelisation of India. The members of the Society observe the vows of Celibacy, Obedience, Poverty, Ecumenism and Missionary zeal. They are also pledged to adhere to Orthodox faith and tradition.

The Society has its headquarters at St. Paul's Ashram, Puthuppadi, Calicut. Fr. P.M. Thomas serves as the Superior of the Ashram as well as the Society.

### Mission Fields

The Church has opened a few mission centres in and outside Kerala with potentialities for expansion. They are :

1. Christu Sishya Ashram, Thadagam, Coimbatore (1936)
2. St. Thomas Mission Centre-Bhilai M.P. (1972)
3. Mission Centre, Palavilla, Kanyakumari (1970)
4. St. Thomas Mission Centre, Haripad (1978)

5. Vattasseril Mar Dionysius Church Centre, Ayur.
6. St. Paul's Suviseshalayam, Payyappadi, Kottayam (1980)

### III. MONASTIC MOVEMENT

The Eastern Churches in general owe much of their glorious scholastic, spiritual and religious nourishment to their learned monks of dedicated life. Names of ascetics like St. Antony, St. Ephraim, St. Simeon the Stylite, St. Chrysostom, the Cappadocian fathers stand prominent in this field. When Muslim, Mongolian and Turkish invasions and later Communism devoured Christian Churches and the Christian population of the Middle East and European countries, it were the monasteries that helped the Churches to survive. Monasteries, therefore, played a definite role in preserving the faith of the Churches and their very existence.

Although the Malankara Orthodox Church has lived through twenty centuries, it has not yet given any significant contribution to the development of this much needed movement.

#### 1. Society of the Order of the Imitation of Christ Perunad-Ranny

In 1918, Fr. P.T. Geevarghese Panicker (late Mar Ivanios) and Fr. M.M. Alexios (late Mar Theodosios) established a unique monastery at Perunad, (Ranny). The monastic institution was named Bethany. The monastic order developed at Bethany was named Society of the Order of Imitation of Christ. A convent was also introduced later.

The members undertake three vows of discipline, celibacy and poverty and wear saffron robes which is a unique form in the Orthodox Church.

Fr. Alexios became Bethany's Superior in 1930 following Mar Ivanios' exit and continued even after he became Metropolitan till his death in 1965.

The Bethany monastery and the convent offer a distinct service to the Church and provide a unique opportunity to young aspirants for an austere spiritual life. The brothers and nuns of Bethany serve in schools also.

Bethany gave rise to two Metropolitans also since Mar Theodosios, namely, Thomas Mar Maccarios (Diocese of America) and later Mar Youhanon Athanasius (d-1980). Rev. Fr. Alexandraos O.I.C. is its Superior.

## 2. The Society of the Order of the Sacred Transfiguration

A brotherhood of disciplined and devoted ascetics was organised by the late Metropolitan Thoma Mar Dionysius at his newly found locale at Pathanapuram in early 1930s. This brotherhood has been gradually developed in course of time to full monastic order of the name, the Society of the Order of the Sacred Transfiguration. The Society has both the Monastery and Convent for men and women, under its Order—Mt. Tabor Dayara and Mt. Tabor Convent.

Apart from their monastic requirements, the members—novices as well as trained—both priests and nuns, serve in missionary projects, in schools, colleges and hospitals according to their accomplishments.

The Society has produced two Metropolitans of outstanding qualities—Thomas Mar Timotheos of Malabar Diocese and Zacharias Mar Dionysius of Madras Diocese. Dr. N.J. Thomas Ramban is another remarkable monk of the Society. Metropolitan Thomas Mar Timotheos is the Superior of the Society.

The Monasteries in Malankara Church are called either Dayara in Syriac or Ashram in Malayalam. They are 15 in number as follows :—

S. No.	Dayara/Ashram	Location	Founded by	Order
<b>Monasteries with Monastic Order</b>				
1.	Bethany Ashram	Perunad, Ranni Branches : i. Kunnamkulam ii. Kuzhimattom	Rev. Fr. P.T. Geevarghese (Mar Ivanios) and Rev. Fr. Alexios (Mar Theodosius), 1918	Society of the Order of Imitation of Christ.
2.	Mount Tabor Dayara	Pathanapuram	Thoma Mar Dionysius, 1930	Society of the Order of the Sacred Transfiguration
3.	St. Paul's Ashram	Puthuppadi	Rev. Fr. M.V. George (Mar Osthathios) 1958	Society of the Missionaries of Christ (1983).
4.	Holy Trinity Ashram	Angadi, Ranni	Geevarghese Mar Dioscoros, 1970	Society of the Missionary Community of St. Thomas.

## II. Residential Ashrams

5. St. Thomas Dayara	Vettickal	Chathuruthy Mar Gregorios	—
6. Parumala Seminary	Parumala	Pulikottil Mar Dionysius II	—
7. Mar Kuriakose Seminary	Kundara	—	—
8. St. George Dayara	Othara, Thiruvalla	Rev. Fr. E. Mathews (Mar Koorilos) 1940	—
9. Bethlehem Ashram	Chengamanad Branches : i. Bethel Ashram, Kuttikonam ii. St. Gregorios Ashram, Kottarakara	Mathews Mar Koorilos, 1960	—
10. Mt. Carmel Ashram	East Kallada Quilon	—	—
11. Mount Calvary Ashram	Pattazhi, Kottarakkara	—	—
12. St. George Mount Ashram	Chayalode, Adoor	—	—
13. St. Thomas Ashram	Sooranad, Adoor	—	—
14. M.G.D. Ashram	Karunagiri, Karukachal	—	—
15. Mar Kuriakose Ashram	North Kumbazha Mylapra	Ramban P.I. Mathew	—

The Bethany Ashram, Mount Tabor Dayara, St. Paul's Ashram and Holy Trinity Ashram have a definite ascetic order and a training programme for celibates for monastic life. The other institutions provide a monastery for celibate priests and laity without a definite monastic order.

**Convents**

Convents for nuns have also been established in various places, where they live a dedicated life of service and worship. To name, they are :

<i>S. No.</i>	<i>Convent</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Founded by</i>	<i>Order</i>
1.	Bethany Convent	Perunad, Ranny Branches : i. Kunnamkulam ii. Kottayam	Rev. Fr. P.T. Geevarghese (Mar Ivanios) and Rev. Fr. Alexios (Mar Theodosius) 1920	Sisterhood of the Imitation of Christ.

2. Mount Tabor Convent	Pathanapuram	Thoma Mar Dionysius 1925	Order of the Sacred Transfiguration.
3. St. Mary's Convent	Othara, Thiruvalla	Smt. K.M. Annamma (Mother Hannah) 1933	—
4. Bethlehem St. Mary's Convent	Kizhakkambalam Alwaye Branches : Kolencherry Kalyan (Bombay)	1937	Order of St. Mary (OSM).
5. St. Mary Convent Magdalene	Adupputty	Baselius Geevarghese II 1960	—
6. Nazareth Convent	Kadambanad South, Adoor	Sister Elizabeth 1965	Community of the Love of God (CLG)
7. Beslel Convent	Sooranad Adoor	Ramban Berskeepa 1967	—
8. St. Mary's Convent (Martha Mariam Mandiram)	Adoor	Mathews Mar Koorilos 1973	—
9. St. Paul's Convent Mount Pisgah	Puthuppadi Calicut	Geevarghese Mar Osthathios 1976	St. Paul's Sisterhood
10. Holy Cross Convent	Kumarapuram Trivandrum	Geevarghese Mar Dioscoros 1980	—
11. St. Thomas Convent	Bhillai	Stephanos Mar Theodosius	—

### Bethany Ashram — Perunad Ranny

The Bethany Ashram is a monastic institution established by Fr. P.T. Geevarghese Panicker and Fr. M.M. Alexios in 1918. It is located in what was called Mundanmala, a hilly forest area at Perunad (Ranny) in a 100 acre plot donated by E.J. John Elanjikkal, Niranam.

In 1930, its Superior Mar Ivanios (Fr. Panicker) defected to Roman Catholicism taking with him a number of inmates of Bethany. Fr. Alexios, however, rose to the occasion and led Bethany to success.

**Bethany Convent**

On June 29, 1940, Mar Theodosius (consecrated as Metropolitan in 1938) started a convent. In establishing the convent, the Metropolitan availed of the help of the Margaret sisters of Ceylon. The first batch of nuns consisted of T.K. Thankamma (Thekkethayyil, Thevalakara) C.Z. Annamma (churulukuzhiyil, Vennikkulam) and K.A. Dinamma (Kurudamannil, Ayroor) who had received their training in Ceylon.

Today, Bethany has a complex of institutions under its canopy. They are :

	<i>Monastery</i>	<i>Convent</i>
1. Branches at	(1) Kuzhimattom (2) Kunnamkulam	(1) Kunnamkulam (2) Kottayam
2.	St. John's English High at Kunnamkulam (1971). The School has residential facilities.	
3.	Mar Theodosius Memorial Hospital, (1967) Perunad, Ranny.	
4.	Bethany Home Science College, Kunnamkulam (1980).	

**Mount Tabor Dayara, Pathanapuram**

Mount Tabor Dayara is an Ashram of an orderly cadre of devoted ascetics started by the late Metropolitan Thoma Mar Dionysius in 1930s. It now encompasses a complex of educational and monastic institutions under its roof. Started with an Upper Primary School, it has now grown into a monumental edifice providing an image of prestige to the Church as a whole.

The Metropolitan, while a deacon but an accomplished and efficient headmaster of the MGD High School at Kundara, had bought an English medium Upper Primary School at Pathanapuram from its Manager K. A. Abraham in 1926. Named St. Stephen's School, Mar Dionysius raised it to a High School in 1936 with the assistance of the British Resident Col. Garstin. Another High School in Malayalam medium was also established in the same year.

**Mount Tabor Convent**

Along with the School was established the Mount Tabor Convent. The nucleus for the Convent was laid in Kundara when Mar Dionysius was the headmaster of the MGD High

School there. He had organised a Women's Prayer Group at Kundara which gradually developed into a Convent. "A few senior members of the Kundara Convent was sent to an Anglican Convent in Bombay for "The Religious Training" and as they returned, the Convent was shifted to its present venue at Pathanapuram, by which time he had laid down his office as Head Master at Kundara.

In later years a few remarkable institutions which brought him fame as an educationist were added. They are:

- (i) Ponnaiah High School, Thiruchirapally 1947. (The school was purchased from W. Ponnaiah Pilla.)
- (ii) St. Stephen's Training College 1960.
- (iii) Mt Tabor Girls High School. 1962
- (iv) St. Stephen's College 1964.

Today, there are four High Schools (up to X Standard), 1 upper Primary School and 4 Lower Primary Schools.

#### **St. Paul's Ashram Puthuppadi<sup>5</sup>, Calicut-(673573)**

The St. Paul's Ashram at Puthuppadi is a missionary institution launched by Metropolitan Geevarghese Mar Osthathios, when he was a priest (Fr. M. V. George) on November 2, 1959. Located at Puthuppadi in Thamarasserri Panchayat of Kozhikkode Taluk in the Malabar area of Kerala State, it is 36 km distant from Kozhikkode, the Malabar Diocesan headquarters, on the Wayanad road. A 25 acre-plot was donated by the late M.C. Pothan of Manamel family to Fr. George in 1957 to fulfil his dream of starting a centre for missionary activities. Since then, more land has been acquired by the Ashram. As on 1984, the Ashram encompassed 47 acres. It has also been registered as a charitable institution under the Societies Registration Act 1860. The St. Paul's Ashram has the following institutions under its care:

- (i) The Society of the Missionaries of Christ.
- (ii) The Bal Bhawan
- (iii) St. Paul's Convent.
- (iv) The Balika Bhawan.
- (v) Old Age Home for women
- (vi) Industrial Training Centre.

<sup>5</sup>. St. Paul's Ashram and Children's Home Puthuppadi Silver Jubilee (1984) Souvenir : Pages 1-8 and other Annual Reports

(Superior and President: Fr. P.M. Thomas. Manager and Secretary: Fr. K. I. Philip).

The following table shows the marvellous growth of the Ashram and the Bal Bhawan during the 25 year period from 1959 to 1984.

	1959	1964	1969	1974	1979	1984
No. of children in Bal Bhawan	3	12	24	40	58	64
Donations (Rs in lakhs)	0.22	0.07	0.26	0.59	1.13	1.92
Land area in acres	25	30	30	42	43	46.06
Income from land (Rs. in lakhs)	—	0.01	0.20	0.44	0.67	0.93

#### **Bethlehem St. Mary's Convent, Kishakkambalam, Alwaye**

Among the Convents, the Bethlehem St. Mary's Convent at Kishakkambalam stands prominent. It has established its own sisterhood with the title of the Order of St. Mary (OSM). The present strength of the convent is 15 members with 12 other inmates. A few of them serve as Hospital staff and teachers.

The Convent has spread its activities in the fields of education medical and child Care. Under its care, the following institutions are functioning.

- (i) St. Mary's Girls High School.
- (ii) Nursery School
- (iii) Balika mandiram.
- (iv) Medical Clinic.

With the patronage of Metropolitan Dr. Philipos Mar Theophilos, the Convent has opened two branches at Kolenchery and Kalyan (Bombay).

#### **IV. LAITY ORGANISATIONS**

##### **1. Mar Gregorios Orthodox Christian Student Movement of India**

###### **The Beginning**

The Mar Gregorios Orthodox Christian Student Movement of India which is the student organisation of the Malankara Orthodox Church, originated as an Annual Syrian Student's Conference in 1908.

The pioneer organisers of the Syrian Student's Conference like the late K.C. Chacko, A.A. Paul, E.J. Philipose and other

residents of Madras, planned a Conference for the students of the Orthodox Christian community during the Christmas holidays of 1907 "with a view to deepening their spiritual lives and creating in them a livelier sense of fellowship". The Metropolitan Mar Dionysius Pulikkottil favoured it promising his patronage.

The idea took shape and a Committee consisting of K.C. Chacko, C.O. Oommen (Puthencav), Dr. Cheeran Varghese (Kunnamkulam), A.A. Paul (Parur), T.T. Mathew (Thumpamon), P.A. Abraham (Karackal), K.J. Jacob and E.J. Philipose, was soon formed. Mar Dionysius was the President of the Conference. The Committee organised the first conference on January 1—3, 1908 at Baalikamadhom Girls High School, Thirumulapuram, Thiruvalla.

The aims of the Conference according to its Constitution are:

- (i) to deepen the spiritual life of the students;
- (ii) to lead them to be loyal members of the Church; and
- (iii) to influence them to dedicate themselves for the work of extending the Kingdom of God.

Over 300 delegates including students and senior friends attended it. The leaders for the Conference were drawn from the ranks of the members of the Church which included the Revd. Fr. V.J. Geevarghese Ramban (later Metropolitan Mar Dionysius Vattasseril), Dn. P.T. Geevarghese (later Mar Ivanios), Engineer K.K. Kuruvilla, K.C. Mammen Mappilai and others.

From the third Conference onwards, Anglican SMPG Missionaries, Fathers of the Cowley, Oxford and Cambridge Brotherhoods in India were invited as speakers and leaders. Their leadership in the Conferences were mutually beneficial and added an ecumenical dimension.

#### **A Significant Landmark**

Under the presidency of Metropolitan Daniel Mar Philoxenos (1953-67), the Syrian Student Conference was reorganised by its General Secretary Fr. Paul Varghese, into the Orthodox Christian Student Movement of India at its 48th Annual Conference held at Old Seminary at Kottayam in April 1956, having local units at various educational centres in and outside Kerala with specific programme of activities in accordance with the motto of the Movement viz. **WORSHIP—STUDY—SERVICE.**

In general, the activities of MGOCSM include Bible study, lecture classes, debates, symposiums, retreats, one-day conferences, pilgrimages, social service projects and so on. Blood donation, visiting and helping orphanages and poor homes for the sick and the old, helping the poor to build their houses, Parish missions, Teaching missions and Work camps are also conducted bringing together students and senior friends belonging to different disciplines and thus promoting the cause of Christian mission and fellowship. Various wings and auxiliaries were also started at different levels—the High School Wing, Arts and Science College Wing, Medical Auxiliary, Technical Auxiliary, University Teachers Orthodox Christian Association, School Teacher Orthodox Christian Association, Missionary Forum and Literary and Cultural Forum. The Medical Auxiliary catered to medical and paramedical personnel and the Technical Auxiliary to engineering students and senior friends.

Also, the Women's Student Conference started in 1922 as a separate organisation, having its own annual programme, merged later with the Student Movement as its Women's wing.

Yet another important event was the amalgamation of the Orthodox Christian Student Movement of India and the Mar Gregorios Student Association during the period 1959-60 to form the Mar Gregorios Orthodox Christian Student Movement of India. Mar Gregorios Student Association was the former student organisation of the Patriarchal party.

#### **Contribution to the Church**

The most significant contribution that the Movement has made to the life of the Church is that it prepared and provided able and outstanding leaders from time to time, at both the clergy and laity levels. The late Pathrose Mar Osthathios Metropolitan who had served the Movement as its General Secretary for several years, was convinced that it was the Student Conference and the inspiring messages of the annual sessions which stimulated his thinking to start "the Servants of the Cross," the missionary society, in 1924 to work among the depressed classes. According to him, the society was a legitimate child of the Student Conference. Similarly, K. C. Varghese, the Acharya of Christa Sishya Ashram, Tedagam, Coimbatore, the first foreign mission centre of the Church, was a

former General Secretary of the Conference. He was with Bishop Pakenham Walsh when the mission centre was opened in 1936.

### **Platinum Jubilee**

The MGOCSM celebrated its Platinum Jubilee in December 1983. Delegations from sister Churches from within India and abroad participated in the celebrations held at the Orthodox Theological College, Kottayam during December 25, 1983 to January 1, 1984.

Besides the regular activities, MGOCSM manages the following projects also.

- (i) Students Centres with hostel facilities at Trivandrum (1977) and at Kottayam (1973).
- (ii) Publication of a monthly Magazine, the Orthodox Youth, in association with the Orthodox Christian Youth Movement, the non-student organisation.
- (iii) Book shop and Publishing House at Kottayam.
- (iv) Mar Gregorios Blind Rehabilitation Centre, Trivandrum.

The Medical and Technical Auxiliaries of MGOCSM, Trivandrum region has established a Blind Rehabilitation Centre for providing economic rehabilitation and medical assistance to blind people.

Metropolitan Dr. Philipos Mar Theophilos is the President of MGOCSM and Fr. George Kurien its General Secretary. The Movement covers a 40,000 strong student population of Orthodox Community registered in 165 units at important educational centres all over Kerala and India. Perhaps it is the largest and oldest of its kind in Asia.

## **2. The Orthodox Christian Youth Movement of the East**

Besides the MGOCSM, there is a full fledged youth organisation the Orthodox Christian Youth Movement of the East, which cater to the larger group of non-student youth of the Church, not reached by the MGOCSM. Organised at the parish levels, the Youth Movement is engaged in spiritual and socio-economic activities in the Church. The MGOCSM and the Youth Movement work in close cooperation.

The activities of the Youth Movement include holding of retreats, Bible study classes, Seminars, Leadership training progra-

mmes, providing scholarships to deserving students, medical-financial assistance to the needy, the disabled, the sick, especially those in the Leprosy Hospital, Nuranad, helping in the house-construction of the poor, helping the Sunday School and other religious movements in the Church.

Metropolitan Geevarghese Mar Osthathios holds the Presidency of the Youth Movement while Fr. O. A. Thomas, the Secretaryship.

### 3. Martha Mariam Samajam

Martha Mariam Samajam (St. Mary's Association) is the forum of women in the Church. Initially, the influence of some deeply interested priests and laity, succeeded in forming prayer groups for women in parishes. Thus towards 1920 there were similar prayer groups scattered all over Malankara. These groups led to the formation of an all-Malankara Women's organisation, called the 'Martha Mariam Samajam', (Martha is the feminine form of Mar (Saint) in Syriac.

Fr. N. G. Kuriakose (Nadavallil, Mavelikara) was the pioneer in establishing the Samajam. He along with his relative K. M. Annamma put the Samajam in a sound footing. A building, the Martha Maria Mandiram and a 13½ acre plot were secured at Vallamkulam (Tiruvalla). A Committee with Metropolitan Alexios Mar Theodosios (President) M. C. Kuriakose Ramban (Vice-President), K. M. Annamma (General Secretary), Fr. Kuriakose (Secretary) and other members was formed for the programme activities of the Samajam<sup>6</sup>. The headquarters of the Samajam is now located at Kanjikuzhy, Kottayam.

The Samajam mainly aims at the spiritual progress of women. It is engaged not only in strengthening Christian homes but also calling out the latent powers and possibilities in women for work in Christian Welfare Programme. Its activities include running of Sunday Schools, Nursery and Kintergarten classes, Social Welfare and humanitarian centres.

The branches of Samajam are functioning in all parishes in varying degrees of strength. They are under the guidance of the Vicar in the parish level. At the Diocesan level, the Metropolitan

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9. Ninan N. G : The late Rev. Fr. N. G. Kuriakose (1969) : pp : 29-30

is the President. Each diocesan Samajam has a Secretary. Metropolitan Mathews Mar Barnabas is the President. Miss Alice Mani serves as General Secretary.

#### 4. **The Orthodox Syrian Sunday School Association of the East**

The Church has been giving due attention to the spiritual growth of its members from their tender age, for decades. Necessary instructions were being imparted to them through Sunday Schools, organised by each parish. The Sunday Schools took a definite shape with the formation of the Orthodox Syrian Sunday School Association of the East in 1933. They were functioning under two organisations in the erstwhile divisions of the Church before the Reconciliation of 1958. Thereafter, the two organisations merged in 1964.

The Association conducts two organised religious educational programmes, the Sunday Schools and the Vacation Bible School.

##### **The Sunday School**

The Sunday School aims at offering a proper medium for imparting necessary instructions to the spiritual development of the young and adolescent. With this object in view, it has drawn a ten-year course of study, beginning from the age of five. The curriculum gives priority to the study of the Holy Bible and the Doctrine and History of the Church. Students who complete the tenth standard are awarded 'Sunday School Leaving Certificate'.

The Association is governed by a Constitution sanctioned by the Holy Episcopal Synod of the Church. The Catholicos is its Patron. It has a Metropolitan President, followed by a Director General. Each diocese has a Director to supervise the Sunday Schools. The Academic and the administrative works are co-ordinated by the Director General. A Publication Officer looks after the publications, text Books etc. The Association has an Executive Committee to guide its functions.

The statistics concerning the Association, as reported in 1982 are as follows :

No: of Sunday Schools	750
No: of students	75,000
No: of teachers	9,500
No: of District Inspectors	80
No: of Diocesan Directors	15

Metropolitan Mathews Mar Coorilos is the President and very Rev. C.V. George Cor-Episopa Director General of the Association.

### 5. **The Orthodox Vacation Bible School (OVBS)**

The OVBS envisages a daily Bible education programme for school students of the age-group 6-18 during their school vacation period, extending for about two weeks. This programme was initially started in 1959 by Fr. P.T. Cherian and later developed and brought under the Orthodox Syrian Sunday School Association in 1977 by Order No. 138/77 from the Catholicos. The Episcopal Synod had earlier accorded its approval.

The OVBS programme differs from the regular Sunday School education in that it draws a distinct theme for each session aimed at bringing the children into a personal involvement in the spiritual upliftment.

### 6. **Indian Orthodox Congress 1984**

In the peculiar socio-economic and politico-religious milieu of Kerala, the Church leadership and laity were often at a loss to find the erosion of Orthodox presence in the social, cultural and political levels in the State. There have been forces at work to discredit the Church or its candidates, so much so, legitimate interests and claims of the Church were being ignored by default. This situation quivered the laity as well as the ecclesiastical leaders to form a non-religious socio-political body called the Indian Orthodox Congress in a meeting of the interested laity and prelates held at Parumala Seminary on November 15, 1984. This Congress is founded on three major considerations namely (i) to bring together Orthodox members in the political fields to a common forum with a view to promote/safeguard the interests of the Church (ii) to project the entity of the Orthodox Church as one strong community (iii) to ensure and project the just and right claims and privileges of the Church and its members.

The Congress is spreading its roots.

## V. **EDUCATION, MEDICAL CARE AND SOCIAL WELFARE MISSION**

### 1. **Educational Activities**

The Orthodox Church has been a pioneer in the field of education in Kerala. Learning of English language was introduced

as early as 1816 by Pulikottil Joseph Mar Dionysius in the Old Seminary School, Kottayam. The missionaries of the Church Missionary Society were very helpful in this regard. Today, scores of educational institutions—schools, colleges, industrial training institutions etc. either managed by the Church or otherwise—are serving the cause of spreading literacy and education in the country.

It is also of interest to observe the importance given to education by the Mulanthuruthy Synod, which was a representative assembly of the Church, in 1876. The Synod went to the extent of creating a common fund for the Church which, *inter alia*, was envisaged to provide for education also. Spread of education was included as one of the objectives of the Syrian Christian Association created by the Synod. The provision under the Seventh Canon of the Synod proceedings reads as follows: "It has been found absolutely necessary to raise the aforesaid common fund and to provide education and the benefits ensuing from it to be extended to the common good of our community.

The fund should be generated from the community without any coercion on the people. For this cause there shall be an association for the community, as a whole, called the Syrian Christian Association . ”.

## I. SCHOOL EDUCATION

### (i). Catholicate and M.D. Schools

To-day, all the schools functioning under the auspices of the Church at different levels-Primary, Upper Primary and High Schools - have been brought under a Corporate Management known as the Catholicate and Mar Dionysius Schools Corporate Management with its headquarters at M.D. Seminary, Kottayam. As on January 1984, 12 High Schools, 12 Upper Primary Schools 35 Lower Primary Schools and one Teachers Training School, totalling 60, are being managed by this body.

Besides the Schools under the Corporate Management, scores of educational institutions are run by individuals, autonomous organisations, dioceses etc independently.

### Teachers Training Schools

To strengthen the cadre of teachers, a number of Teachers

Training Schools are also established at various places. These Schools are :

- (i) Rajarshi Memorial Training School, Vadavucode
- (ii) St. John's Training School, Koothattukulam
- (iii) St. Peter's Training School, Chowallur
- (iv) St. Peter,s Training School, Kolenchery
- (v) St. Geroge's Training School, Chowallur

## II. COLLEGIATE EDUCATION

### College Governing Board

The Managing Committee and the Episcopal Synod (July 1979) decided to have a Corporate Management for colleges run by the Church and adopted its Constitution. A Governing Board for the Corporate Management was also constituted.

### I. COLLEGES

At present there are 15 colleges run under two categories.

#### (a) *Colleges managed by the Corporate Management*

1. The Catholicate College, Pathanamthitta (1952).
2. Mar Baselius College, Kottayam (1964).
3. St. Mary's College, Sultan Battery (1965).
4. Kuriakos Gregorios College, Pampady (1981).
5. Mar Dionysius College, Pazhanji (1983).
6. St. Cyril's College, Adoor (1981).

#### (b) *Colleges under the Management of Dioceses/Metropolitans*

<i>Sl. No</i>	<i>College</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Management</i>
7.	M.G.M Junior College	Bhilai	Calcutta Diocese
8.	St. Thomas College	Ranni	Cnanaya Diocese
9.	St Stephen's College (1964)	Pathanapuram	Mt.Tabor Dayara, Pathanapuram
10.	Mount Tabor Training College (1960)	Pathanapuram	-do-
11.	St. Gregorios College (1964)	Kottarakkara	Bethlehem Ashram, Chenga- manad.

(c) *Colleges under the Management of Associations, Society, Trust Convent*

12.	Mar Athanasius College	Kotha-mangalam	Mar Athanasius College Association
13.	Mar Athanasius College of Engineering	Kotha-mangalam	-do-
14.	Bethany Home Science College (1980)	Kunnamkulam	Bethany Convent Kunnamkulam
15.	St. Peters College	Kolencherry	St. Peter's College Turst.
16.	St. Mary's Syrian College (1980)	Brahmawar Karnataka	Orthodox Syrian Christian Educational Society.

Further, the Orthodox Church is also a partner in the management of the Union Christian College at Alwaye. This is a unique institution of its kind in the sense that three Christian denominations viz. the CSI, Mar Thoma Church and the Orthodox Church jointly run the college.

(iii) **Industrial Training Centres**

Apart from the Arts and Science Colleges, Industrial Training Centres (ITC) which provide employment-oriented technical courses are also run by the Church, Dioceses and other organisations. They are:

<i>Sl. No.</i>	<i>I.T.C</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Management</i>
1.	Mar Baselios ITC	Kallumala, Mavelikara	St. Mary's Church, Puthiyacav, Mavelikara.
2.	Mar Philoxenos ITC	Mylapra, Pathanamthitta	Metropolitan Daniel Mar Philoxenos.
3.	St. Mary's ITC	Niranam	St. Mary's Church Niranam.
4.	Mar Philoxenos Memorial ITC (1976)	Chengamanadu	Bethlehem Ashram, Chengamanad.
5.	Mt. Carmel Ashram ITC (1977)	East Kallada, Quilon.	Metropolitan Mathews Mar Koorilos.

6.	Mar Gregorios ITC (1979)	Thalacode, Mulanthruthy	Parimala Mar Gregorios Memorial Charitable Trust.
7.	St. Mary's ITC	Kunnamkulam	—
8.	St. Mary's ITC	Manarcadu, Kottayam.	—
9.	St. George ITC	Kadamattom, Kolencherry	—
10.	Mathews Mar Ivanios ITC (1979)	Pothenpuram Pampady	Kottayam Diocese
11.	St. John's ITC (1981)	Pathichira, Mavelikara	St. John's Church, Pathichira

Besides the ITCs, an Industrial Complex has also been started at Puthuppady in November 1984. This is being managed by the St. Paul's Ashram.

## 2. Medical Mission

The Church, though not affluently placed, has been throwing its mite in extending medical assistance to the sick and the ailing. A number of medical institutions have been functioning under the Church auspices. Keeping in view the proper management of hospitals under the control of the Church, an apex body called Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church Medical Mission was registered in 1977. Later, a Medical Mission Board and a Constitution for it were adopted by the Managing Committee of the Church and approved by the Episcopal Synod in February 1981. The medical institutions may be categorised under two classes namely

(i) Hospitals run directly by the Malankara Medical Mission Board Church.

(ii) Hospitals/Dispensaries run by Dioceses and parishes.

Hospitals under the Medical Mission Board Church are :—

1. Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church Medical Mission Hospital, Kolencherry (1970)
2. Mar Geevarghese Dionysius Memorial Hospital, Devagiri, Kangazha, Kanjirapara (1964).\*

\*Note : The hospital was established by the philanthropist P. Geevarghese in 1964 and offered to the Church.

3. St. Gregorios Mission Hospital, Parumala, Mannar (1975)
4. St. Mary's Hospital, Eraviperoor (1952).
5. Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church Medical Mission Hospital, Kunnamkulam (1981).
6. Paret Mar Ivanios Hospital, Puthuppally.

The Board is accountable to the Managing Committee and its annual report and accounts are submitted to it. It is reflected in the annual budget of the Church also.

(iii) Hospitals run by Dioceses and other agencies.

<i>S.No.</i>	<i>Hospitals</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Management</i>
<b>ANKAMALI DIOCESE</b>			
1.	St. Mary's Hospital (1973)	Pothanikkad	Ankamali.
2.	Mar Baselius Medical Mission Hospital (1975)	Kothamangalam	Mar Thoma Cheriapalli. Kothamangalam.
<b>BOMBAY DIOCESE</b>			
3.	St. Mary's Medical Centre (1977)	Ahmedabad	St. Mary's Orthodox Church Ahmedabad.
<b>CALCUTTA DIOCESE</b>			
4.	St. Thomas Charitable Dispensary (1963)	Calcutta	St. Thomas Church, Calcutta.
<b>CHENGANNUR DIOCESE</b>			
5.	St. Andrews Hospital	Puthencav	St. Mary's Church Puthencav.
<b>KOTTAYAM DIOCESE</b>			
6.	Cheria Palli Hospital (1976)	Kottayam	Cheria Palli, Kottayam.
7.	M.G.M. Abhaya Bhavan Dispensary (1967)	Pothenpura m Pampady	M.G.M. Abhaya Bhavan.



**Mar Geevarghese Dionysius Memorial Hospital, Kangazha**

The Mar Geevarghese Dionysius Memorial Hospital at Kangazha came to the possession of the Church in 1975 when its founder, late P. Geevarghese (1915-83), made an unconditional gift of the 225 bed hospital (1984 : 300 bed) with its entire assets to the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church. The relevant documents were executed between His Holiness Moran Mar Baselios Augen I, Catholicos of the East, and Shri P. Geevarghese, the Managing Trustee on behalf of the Manohar Hill Charitable Trust".<sup>7</sup>

The Hospital is managed by a Board of Trustees headed by Catholicos Baselios Mar Thoma Mathews. Shri Varghese Paul is its Managing Trustee.

**The Orthotic and Technical Centre, Kottayam**

This Centre renders yeoman service in the field of welfare of the physically disabled. Here Orthotic and Prosthetic aids and other contraptions are manufactured which ensures mobility to the disabled. This is the only institution of its kind within the Church. Varghese Paul manages the Centre on behalf of the Manohar Hill Charitable Trust.

**3. SOCIAL WELFARE**

The objective of caring and providing "unto one of the least" (St. Mathew 25/40) in the society has been a guiding maxim taken up by many a well-wishing people and organisations, known and unknown, in the Church for a long time. They also either remained static or died or flourished depending upon the personality of the individuals running them and the generosity of the public. Promotion and sponsoring at the Church-level was not a tradition.

**Committee on Social Welfare, 1976<sup>8</sup>**

The apathic attitude significantly changed into a dynamic force since, to be precise, from 1976 onwards. Official recognition to the need for a concerted attempt in the fields of socio-economic problems and unemployment of educated youth, came through a resolution adopted by the Managing Committee on

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7. Dr. S. Joseph M.D.—Sh. P. Geevarghese—A Reminiscence—P. Geevarghese Souvenir 1984.
8. Rony T. Daniel: Social Development Committee Report published in Church Weekly May 8, 1977.

31.5.1976, which was put forward by Thomas Cherian of Ernakulam. This was followed by setting up a Committee on Social Development vide Order 100/76 from the Catholicos/Malankara Metropolitan Mar Thoma Mathews I.

### **Recommendations**

The Report presented by the Committee on Social Welfare created an awakening and an awareness of the Social problems. The recommendations were mainly :

#### **I. EMPLOYMENT**

- (i) Introduction of an Apprentices Programme in cooperation with selected industrial firms.
- (ii) Introduction of a financial assistance programme for self-employment.
- (iii) Conducting short-term job-oriented courses.
- (iv) Establishment of employment oriented training centres.

#### **II. OTHER SOCIAL WELFARE PROGRAMMES**

All dioceses should establish/arrange :

- (i) Marriage Assistance Foundation
- (ii) Sick-aid Foundation
- (iii) Assistance for land for land-less.
- (iv) Assistance for houses to home-less.

The Committee consisted of : Metropolitan Geevarghese Mar Osthathios (President) and Members : Fr. Joseph Vindrappally, Thomas Cherian; P.J. Joseph, M.T. Paul, Rony T. Daniel (Convener).

Since then the Church has taken certain measures to promote social welfare activities and projects in this direction. These are detailed in succeeding pages.

#### **(i) CHILD WELFARE BOARD AND PROJECTS**

In the field of Child Welfare a few institutions in the Church, either at the parish/diocesan level or at the level of independent social organisations have been doing silent but admirable service within their financial constraints. The Holy Episcopal Synod which deliberated over the problem at its meeting held on February 24, 1979 decided to initiate at Church level measures aimed at providing care and protection to children who are handicapped/

disabled, orphaned and destitute. Consequently, a Child Welfare Board with Metropolitan Geevarghese Mar Osthathios as President was constituted on July 7, 1979. The Synod and also decided that financial assistance may be sanctioned from the Child Welfare Fund to dioceses to buy land and construct buildings to start child welfare centres namely Balbhawans. The Balbhawans may be established either at the Church or diocese or parish level.

Four Balbhawans have since been established under the auspices of the Church, one each in Trivandrum, Panayampala and Bhilai. The one at Trivandrum is the Holy Trinity Disabled Childrens Home. On 22.2.1981 was opened the Karunagiri Mar Geevarghese Dionysius Balbhawan in an eight acre plot at Panayampala, Karukachal. The St. Thomas Childrens Home at Bhilai has been functioning for some time. Another Balbhawan is also being opened at Bhopal.

The Child Welfare Centres run by the Church etc are enumerated below :—

<i>Sl. No.</i>	<i>Child Welfare Centre</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Diocese</i>	<i>Management</i>
<b>I. ORTHODOX CHURCH CHILD WELFARE BOARD</b>				
1.	Mar Geevarghese Dionysius Balbhawan- (Karunagiri)	Panayampali Karukachaal	Kottayam	Child Welfare Board.
2.	Holy Trinity Disabled Children's Home	Trivandrum	Trivandrum	—do—
3.	St. Thomas Bala Bhawan	Bhillai, M. P.	Calcutta	Metropolitan Stephanos Mar Theophilos
4.	St. Gregorios Balagram (December 1985)	Yacharam Ibrahim Patanam R. R. Distt. Andhra Pradesh 501509	Madras	—do—
5.	Balbhawan	Bhopal	Calcutta	—do—
<b>II. MANAGED BY METROPOLITANS, TRUSTS, SOCIETIES, MONASTERIES CONVENTS</b>				
6.	Mount Tabor Poor Home	Brahmavar Karnataka	Madras	Mount Tabor Monastery, Pathanapuram.

7. Mar Basselius Children's Home	Mannapara Palghat	Malabar	Society - President, Joseph Mar Pachomios
8. St. Mary's Boy's Home	Thalakode Mulanthuruty	Ankamali	Parumala Mar Gregorios Memorial Charitable Trust.
9. St. Mary's Balika Mandiram	Kizhakkam- balam, Alwaye	--do--	Bethlehem St. Mary's Convent, Alwaye.
10. St. Mary's Balagram	Valayan Chir- angara	--do--	Metropolitan Philipos Mar Theophilos
11. M. G. M. Balbhawan	Pampady	Kottayam	Diocese of Kottayam.
12. St. Paul's Balabhawan and Balika Bhawan	Puthuppadi Calicut	Malabar	St. Paul's Ashram Puthuppadi 673573
13. Beslel Girl's Home	Sooranad Adoor	Quilon	Beslal Convent Sooranad
14. St. George Balabhawan	Othara	--do--	St. George Dayara
15. St. Thomas Children's Home	Thiruvitham- code, Kanya- kumari	Trivandrum	Rev. K. C. Geevar- ghese Ramban
16. St. Thomas Home for Children	Sasthamkotta	Quilon	Quilon Diocese

*Mar Geevarghese Dionysius Ashram and Balbhawan-Karunagiri,  
Panayambala, Karukachal<sup>9</sup>*

The Mar Geevarghese Dionysius (MGD) Ashram and Balbhawan began functioning at Karukachal on February 22, 1981 when the Catholicos Mar Thoma Mathews I inaugurated the Balbhawan by admitting four destitute children.

The Balbhawan is situated in a 7.86 acre plot at Karukachal (Kottayam Distt) bought in March 1980 at a cost of Rs. 1,93,311/-. The decision to establish the MGD complex was taken by the representatives of 39 parishes of the Niranam Diocese in a meeting held on October 2, 1979 at St. George Orthodox Church, Chengaroor. The assets of Balbhawan are rendered to the Catholicate.

Administratively the Balbhawan is directly under the Episcopal Synod with the Catholicos as its Patron. Metropolitan

9. Report. 1979-81

Geevarghese Mar Osthathios of the Diocese of Niranam is its President. He is assisted by a Managing Committee and Executive Committee. Members of St. Paul's Ashram and Balbhawan Puthuppady and St. Paul's Mission Training Centre, Mavelikara also work in this Balbhawan and provide necessary managerial assistance and man power.

### *St. Gregorios Balagram, Yacharam*

The Child Welfare Board has taken up a very ambitious programme of welfare and development of children in Andhra Pradesh. The prime aim of this project is to accommodate and educate the children of lepers who are not affected by the disease, orphans, children of handicapped and disabled parents etc. irrespective of caste or creed.

This project was earlier approved by the Episcopal Synod at its sitting in February 1983. A 24 acre plot has been acquired in Andhra Pradesh on July 15, 1985 and another 5½ acres in April-May 1986 for the project which is taking shape. It is located at Yacharam, Ibrahim Patanam in Ranga Reddy District, 56 km away from Hyderabad.

The Board has appointed Fr. K.I. Philip of St. Paul's Ashram, Puthuppadi, as its Director.

### (ii) OLD AGE HOMES

A number of people in every strata of society in their old age find themselves lonely with none to care them. This has become a social problem as well as a neglected field of social welfare. Recognising the need to offer care and protection to such deserving people, a few organisations have come forward and established Old Age Homes in a limited scale. These are :—

<i>S. No.</i>	<i>Institution</i>	<i>Location</i>		<i>Management</i>
1.	Old Age Home	Adoor	Quilon	St. Mary's Convent.
2.	M.G.M. Abhaya Bhawan	Pampadi	Kottayam	Diocese of Kottayam.
3.	Patros Mar Osthathios Memorial St. Simeon's Bhawan	Mulanthuruthi	Kandanad	Servants of the Cross.

4.	Samadhan Bhawan (Home of Peace)	Gandhinagar Kottayam	Kottayam	Peace Corner Associates Arunapuram, Palai. President : Joseph Mar Pachomios (Regd. Society).
5.	Old Age Home	Vadavukode	Cochin	Bethany, Perinad.
6.	St. Paul' Old Age Home	Puthuppadi	Malabar	St. Paul's Ashram.

A diocesan-wise statement of educational, medical and social welfare institutions is given below :—

<i>Diocese</i>	<i>College</i>	<i>ITC</i>	<i>Hospitals Dispensary</i>	<i>Old Age Homes</i>	<i>Child Welfare Centres</i>
Ankamali	3	—	3	—	3
Chengannur	—	—	1	—	—
Cochin	—	2	—	1	—
Idukki	—	—	—	—	—
Kandanad	—	1	—	1	—
Kanaya	1	—	1	—	—
Kottayam Central	—	—	—	—	—
Kottayam	2	1	5	2	2
Kunnakkulam	2	1	1	—	—
Malabar	1	—	3	1	2
Niranam	—	1	3	—	—
Quilon	2	4	1	1	3
Thumpamon	3	1	3	—	—
Trivandrum	—	—	—	—	2
<b>Diocese Outside Kerala</b>					
America	—	—	—	—	—
Bombay	1	—	1	—	—
Calcutta	1	—	1	—	2
Delhi	—	—	—	—	—
Madras	2	—	3	—	2
	18	11	26	6	16

The above list may not be exhaustive but is based on information available from various sources, as in 1985.

## (iii) SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROGRAMMES

Socio-economic programmes which generate employment opportunities and ensure economic rehabilitation of the educated unemployed, especially among women, contribute a great deal to the progress and development of the society, in particular the economically weak lower middle class strata. The concept is distinct from the educational, technological training and child welfare programmes which have been the spheres of activities of the Church as well as a number of organisations akin to it. However, a few noteworthy organisations in the Church engaged in this field of employment-oriented socio-economic programmes have already made an impact in the society.

1. *PEACE CORNER ASSOCIATES, ARUNAPURAM, PALAI*

Peace Corner Associates is a society which began in 1976 and registered with the State Government in May 1978 as K/182 of 1978, under the Charitable Societies Registration Act. The architect of the Society is Fr. P.V. Varghese who functions as its Secretary. Metropolitan Joseph Mar Pachomios of Kandanad Diocese is its President.

The programmes which the Society has undertaken are :

1. *Kindergarten Teachers Training-1979.*

One-year diploma course in Kindergarten teaching for girls is conducted at the St. Mary's Kindergarten Teachers Training School, established in 1979.

2. *Tailors' Training.*

The Society started St. Mary's Tailoring School (for girls) in 1980 which provided self-employment opportunities to the trainees after the course in the school. The successful candidates are also helped to purchase sewing machine.

3. *Type-writing Training is provided at St. Mary's Typing Centre.*4. *Day-Care Centres for Children (Creches) initiated in 1983 are at Pampady, Thonakkad and Palai.*5. *Old Age Home (Retirement Home Project)*

Peace Corner has ventured into the neglected social welfare field of gerontology promising a home for the aged at Kottayam.

6. *Housing*

The Peace Corner Associates have taken up a programme of sponsoring applicants of economically weaker sections of society

for houses under the Kerala Govt's Scheme for providing houses. Till 1985, the Society had sponsored 127 applicants.

7. *Hostel for girl trainees.*

The annual statement of account of the Society for the year ending 1984 shows an expenditure of Rs. 2.40 lakhs on its various activities.

2. *THE WOMEN'S WELFARE SOCIETY PRODUCTION CENTRE, THALACODE, MULANTHURUTHY 682314*

This is a unique Centre providing employment to educated women, in a sophisticated technological field. The women employed at the Centre undertake assembling of Keltron radio sets. The monthly average production ranges from 500 to 600 sets.

The Centre is managed by the Parimala Mar Gregorios Memorial Charitable Trust, presided over by Metropolitan Dr. Paulos Mar Gregorios.

3. *MAR GREGORIOS REHABILITATION CENTRE FOR THE BLIND, TRIVANDRUM*

The Rehabilitation Centre for the Blind was established on March 14, 1983 and registered as a society in May, 1983, under the auspices of Mar Gregorios Orthodox Christian Student Movement (Medical and Technical Auxiliary).

The objectives of the Centre include imparting of training to blind people in mobility and in vocational trades and providing economic rehabilitation. Besides orientation in mobility, a six-month Training Course is at present offered in vocational trades like mat-making, carpet-making and assembling of umbrellas, which are employment oriented. The in-take of trainees is 10 for each course. A Production Wing is also functioning at the Centre. (Secretary : Mr. K.M. Philip. Project Officer : Fr. Jacob George).

(iv) **HOUSING PROJECTS**

A welfare measure and a programme taken up by the Church as well as dioceses and community-welfare organisation in the Church is the housing programme. The Programme has the objectives of providing or assisting a person to acquire, a house to the members of economically weaker sections of the society without the consideration of religion or caste or creed. Mention may be made of the following projects.

**CHURCH-LEVEL<sup>10</sup>**

A project to gift houses to deserving persons, who have no shelter and are economically unable to provide one themselves, was started in 1982. In the context of the Catholicate Saphthathi Celebrations, the Church undertook a housing programme, aiming to construct 70 houses for deserving people of economically weaker strata of society irrespective of caste or creed. The project was inaugurated on September 12, 1982 by the President of India, Giani Zail Singh, with handing over the keys of a house to a Brahmin family on the occasion of the Saphthathi inaugural meeting. The key of a second house was given to a widow by Catholicos Patriarch Illia II.

**The Orthodox Services Christian Colony, Sembium, Madras**

This is a novel housing project coupled with socio-economic programmes in Madras. A few members of the Church in Madras formed a registered society under the name The Orthodox Service Centre, Madras in 1966 and established a housing colony at Sembium, near Basin Bridge Madras.

**Sponsorship Programme**

The State Government has a programme of financially assisting individuals in the economically weaker sections of society who have a few cents of land to construct houses of their own, provided they are sponsored by organisations, trusts etc.

Dioceses and voluntary organisations of the Church have sponsored individuals with financial assistance.

**(v) Social Relief Programmes**

Two social relief programmes which have been recognised by the Church Managing Committee are (i) the Marriage Assistance Foundation and (ii) the Sick Aid Foundation, operating from Trivandrum. Metropolitan Geevarghese Mar Osthathios presides over these two bodies. T. J. Alexander is the Secretary and Treasurer for them.

**VI. CHURCH PERIODICALS AND PUBLISHING HOUSES**

The Church under its auspices publishes a few periodicals on

<sup>10</sup>Malankara Sabha January 1983; pp. 9-10.

matters concerning faith, history, ecumenism and others of importance for the education and information of its members.

<i>S. No.</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Periodicity</i>	<i>Editor</i>	<i>Published from</i>
1.	Malankara Sabha	Monthly	Ramban Dr. N. J. Thomas	Catholicate Office Devalokam Kottayam 686 038
2.	Orthodox Herald	Weekly	Dr. Samuel Chandanappally	—do—
3.	Star of the East	Quarterly	Metropolitan Dr. Poulos Mar Gregorios	Sophia Centre Orthodox Theological Seminary Kottayam 686 001
4.	Purohitan		—do—	—do—
5.	Malankara Deepam.	Weekly	Fr. P. V. Varghese	M. D. Seminary Kottayam 686 001
6.	Orthodox Youth  Non-Church Periodical	Monthly	Rev. Dr. K. M. George	St. Paul's Mission Training Centre, Mavelikara 690 103
7.	Church Weekly	Weekly	K. V. Mammen	Fellowship House, Alwaye

The Church Weekly is an independent publication initially started by N. M. Abraham and K. C. Chacko. It is now owned by the Alwaye Fellowship House, Alwaye.

### **Publishing Houses**

A few publishing houses are in operation under the auspices of the Church. They are :

1. The Orthodox Church Publishing House, Kottayam.
2. MGOCSM Publishing House, Kottayam.
3. St. Paul's Book Depot, Mavelikara.
4. Sophia Centre, Old Seminary, Kottayam.

### **Malankara Orthodox Church Education and Social Service Society**

The management and financial resources of the entire complex of institutions under the auspices of the Church — Schools, Colleges, hospitals, technical institutions, social welfare projects,

socio-economic programmes, real estates — were reviewed by the Managing Committee. It recommended formation of an apex body to streamline the administrative management and to raise financial resources for the running of the projects and programmes. under the Travancore-Cochin Literary Scientific and Charitable Societies Act 1955, by the title Malankara Orthodox Church Education and Social Services Society. The Episcopal Synod has also approved the registration of the Society.

The Society is envisaged to have a Patron and a Committee with a Metropolitan nominated by the Patron for its management. The Catholicos-cum-Malankara Metropolitan will be the Patron. The Society will have a General Body comprised of two kinds of membership — individuals and institutions of the Church — and a Society Committee. The Composition of this Committee will be made up of the President and 14 members. The members are: (i) Clergy Trustee, (ii) Lay Trustee, (iii) Association Secretary [(i) to (iii) are ex-officio members] (iv) to (ix) 6 members elected by the General Body and (x) to (xiv) 5 members nominated by the Patron including a priest and lay man from the Managing Committee. There will be a Secretary and Treasurer elected by the Society Committee, from within.

The final Constitution of the Society was presented to the Managing Committee on April 18, 1986. The process of constituting the Society is on.<sup>11</sup>

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11. Malankara Sabha Magazine, May 1986; P : 25

## IN THE COMMONWEALTH OF CHURCHES

Since the beginning of twentieth century, an appreciation gained ground among world Churches about the Malankara Church's ancient apostolic origin and her perserving efforts against odds to maintain its pristine apostolic faith and tradition of the undivided Church. By virtue of these unique features, the Malankara Church enjoys a place of distinction, friendship and cordiality in the commonwealth of Churches and in inter-Church forums like World Council of Churches, East Asian Christian Conference, Pro Oriente Foundation, and, especially among the Greater Orthodox Churches.

The Church has been utilising these forums to present her status position in regard to theological issues, vis-a-vis other Churches, tradition, historical development, mission, cooperation with other Churches, ecumenism and the like. In this endeavour, she has been extending a hand of friendship and cordiality with all Churches. Her association with these organisations and Churches are detailed in the next pages.

### **Malankara Church and World Council of Churches (WCC)**

The association of Malankara Church with WCC started with the Conference on Faith and Order held in Edinburgh from August 3-9, 1937. The Conference was attended by a delegation headed by the Catholicos Geevarghese II. Fr. C.M. Thoma, Fr. Alexios, Deacon K. Philipose and Elanjikkal E. John Philipos were the members of the delegation. In the next assembly held at Amsterdam in 1948, the Church took membership of the WCC under the title, "The Syrian Orthodox Church of the East".

Since the Edinburgh Conference, the Church has been actively participating in the programmes of the WCC and its Committees—the Central Committee and the Executive

Committee. Delegates from the Church were invariably sent to the General Assembly held every seven years.

The role of WCC and the commitment of member Churches have been expressed by C.I. Itty in the following words<sup>1</sup> :

“The World Council of Churches is meant to serve the member churches in their concerns for mission, service and renewal. At the same time, it is also a privileged instrument of the ecumenical movement. Its purpose is to promote and manifest Christian unity at local, national and world levels. The Council’s various efforts are geared to this fundamental objective of the ecumenical movement. Membership of a Church in the WCC is an act of commitment on the part of that Church to promote and manifest the unity, holiness, universality and apostolicity of the Church of Christ.

The Malankara Orthodox Church, through its membership in the WCC from its very inception, shares this commitment. Such commitment has tremendous implication for the lives of individuals, parishes and the Church as a whole”.

The General Assemblies and the delegations from the Church, which attended them are detailed below.

<i>Year</i>	<i>Venue</i>	<i>Delegates</i>
1937 Aug. 3-19	Edinburgh	Catholicos Mar Geevarghese II Fr. Mattackal Alexios, Fr.C.M. Thoma Deacon K. Philipose and Elenjikkal E. John Philipose.
1948 1954	Amsterdam Evanston	Metropolitan Alexios Mar Theodosius Rev. Dr. C.T. Eapen Rev. Dr. K. Philipos
1961 November 18- December 6	New Delhi	Metropolitan Thoma Mar Dionysius Metropolitan Abraham Mar Clemis Rev. Dr V.C. Samuel Rev. Dr. K. Philipos Sh. A.M. Thomas, Dy. Minister, Govt. of India. Sh. K. M. Cherian, Chief Editor, Malayala Manorama.

<sup>1</sup> Itty, C.I. Article : World Council of Churches: published in Church Weekly November 23 & 30, 1975.

1968 July 4-20	Upsala Sweden	Metropolitans Paulos Mar Philoxenos, Mathews Mar Koorilos and Philipos Mar Theophilos; Fr. Paul Varghese Fr. V.C. Samuel Fr. Philipos Thomas Dr. J. Alexander
1975 December	Nairobi Kenya	Metropolitans : Dr. Philipos Mar Theophilos, Dr. Paulos Mar Gregorios and Geevarghese Mar Osthathios Dr. K.M. George, P.C. Abraham, Ms. Omana Abraham and Ms. Sara Philip.
1983 July 24-Aug. 10	Vancouver	Metropolitan Dr. Paulos Mar Gregorios Dr. George Kurien (MGOCSM) M/s. Titus Varkey (Principal, M.K. College) Thomas Varghese, Prof. K.M. Tharakan and Ms. Annie David (Hyderabad).

Church members, at the episcopal as well as laity level, have been holding different responsible offices in WCC. To mention a few : Miss. Sara Chako, a member of the Church, had the distinction of being the first woman President of the WCC. Metropolitans Alexios Mar Theodosius, Dr. Philipos Mar Theophilos, Geevarghese Mar Osthathios and Dr. Paulos Mar Gregorios have been members of its various committees. Mar Gregorios as Fr. Paul Varghese, had served as the Associate General Secretary of the WCC for five years (1962-1967). The 1983 Assembly held at Vancouver elected Mar Gregorios as one of the seven Presidents of WCC.

Fr. K.C. Joseph had earlier held the office of Secretary of the scholarship wing of the WCC. Another member Mr. C.I. Itty is holding high responsibilities in the WCC headquarters at Geneva. He was the Chairman of the staff Committee at the Nairobi Assembly.

## ORTHODOX-ROMAN CATHOLIC CONSULTATION

### Pro Oriente Foundation

In the divided Christendom, at certain points of time, unannounced and unintroduced, certain personalities and movements

appear in the horizon advocating peace and oneness echoing "The voice of one crying in the wilderness". (St. Luke 3:4). One of them is His Eminence Franciscus Cardinal Koenig, Metropolitan of Vienna and his forum Pro-Oriente Foundation. He began this unofficial ecumenical forum to bring together the divided Churches, especially the Roman Catholic Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches, with the aim to understand each others' historical and theological points of view which separate them and hold bilateral dialogues from an ecumenical point of view. This forum—the Pro Oriente Foundation at Vienna—came into being on November 4, 1964.

The first 'Consultation' between the two blocks—the Roman Catholic Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches—took place in September 1971. In all, four Consultations were held. The second 'Consultation' was convened in September 1973, the third on September 1976 and the fourth in September 1978. Metropolitan Dr. Paulos Mar Gregorios in 1971, 1973, 1976 and 1978, Metropolitan Geevarghese Mar Osthathios in 1971, 1973 and 1976 and Dr. V.C. Samuel in 1971, 1973 and 1978 had represented the Church in these Consultations.

Rev. Dr. V.C. Samuel reviewed the Consultations held till 1978 and published a brief summary of the proceedings in the January 1979 issue of the Star of the East. This is reproduced in the following pages :

### **'The Issues Discussed**

Some of the theologians of these two Churches met in Vienna in order to look into the issues that divide their Churches. The two most important points of disagreement between them had reference, on the one hand, to the doctrine of the Person of Jesus Christ which the Council of Chalcedon had sought to define, and on the other, to the question of Primacy in the Church. The latter also had relevance to the Council of Chalcedon in an indirect and implicit way.

#### **a) Christology**

Oriental Orthodoxy does not accept the Council of Chalcedon. This is on account as much of the way the Council was conducted, as of the doctrinal standpoint which it adopted. As regards the latter, the Council offered a definition of the faith, affir-

ming that Jesus Christ is *one Person* acknowledged in *two Natures*, without either division or separation or change or confusion. The expression "in two natures", though it was derived from the doctrinal letter, the *Tome*, of Pope Leo of Rome, was unacceptable to many in the East. On this account, as also on the ground that the Council was not conducted in keeping with the already established norms in the Church, they opposed it. Neither persuasion nor force and persecution would make them give up their opposition. The result was a division in the Church, not only between the Roman Catholic Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches, but also between the latter and the Eastern Orthodox Churches.

The first three Vienna Consultations discussed this subject from various angles. The procedural anomalies attributable to the Council were seen to be well-founded. As for the doctrinal emphases, the participants concentrated on three points.

One : *a correct understanding of each other's position.*

The teaching of the Oriental Orthodox Churches, for instance, that Jesus Christ is not to be confessed as existing "in two natures" but only that "from two natures" he is "one incarnate nature of God the Word,"\* had once been taken by Roman Catholic theologians in general as sufficient ground for regarding these Churches as holding to the monophysite heresy. Is not, they would argue, the one nature the nature of God the Word who became incarnate in Jesus Christ? What then about the human nature which signifies the other? Does this not imply a denial of Christ's humanity? The plausibility of the question may be granted. But the fact is that the Oriental Orthodox Churches have never understood the "one nature" formula in this way; they employ it on the other hand to affirm the indissoluble unity of Christ without reservation. Jesus Christ is, for these Churches, one Son and Lord, the same being composed of the two natures of Godhead and manhood, and therefore, perfect God and perfect man. He who is consubstantial with the Father in eternity has become unchangeably and indivisibly consubstantial with us in the incarnation. As for the human nature, it is conserved by the word "incarnate." The "one nature"

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\* This is a phrase which St. Cyril of Alexandria had made central in his theological interpretation with reference to the person of Jesus Christ in the fifth century, which the Oriental Orthodox Churches consider very basic.

for instance, is the incarnate nature of God the Word. Jesus Christ is God, the Son or God, the Word, in his incarnate state, so that the fulness of the humanity is affirmed without any denial or reduction whatsoever.

Similarly, the "in two natures" of the Council of Chalcedon, which the Roman Catholic Church adopts as basic, is looked upon by the Oriental Orthodox Churches as an attempt to bring in through the backdoor, as it were, the "Nestorian" division which the Council of Ephesus had excluded in 431. Here also, the discussion showed that the Roman Catholic Church understands the phrase differently. This Church, for instance, sees in it the emphasis that Jesus Christ is perfect God and perfect man. The unity of Christ is conserved by the Roman Catholic Church by the affirmation of his double consubstantiality and the unity of his person. The two Church traditions, then, conserve the doctrinal heritage of the pre-Chalcedonian Church unreservedly by means of their respective terminologies.

Accordingly, the participants stated in their agreed communique the "one incarnate nature of God the Word...does not deny but rather express the full and perfect humanity of Christ," and that the definition of the Council of Chalcedon, rightly understood today, affirms the unity of person and the indissoluble union of Godhead and Manhood in Christ despite the phrase "in two natures."

Two : *the need for further clarifying ancient formulations.*

The participants were in agreement that the Christological formulations offered in ancient times are not sufficiently clear in terms of meaning and that the mystery of Christ has to be interpreted in relation to contemporary life and its problems. In this respect the meaning of Greek terms like *hypostasis* and *physis*, usually translated as person and nature, in the Trinitarian and Christological formulations, needs to be clarified. Again, the question remains whether it is simply human nature that Christ as man holds, and if it is, can he have lived a concrete human life in our world? As regards the second point, the Consultations did further express the concern that our faith in Jesus Christ should be reinterpreted together "in relation to problems that confront man today; the disunity of mankind, the presence of poverty and injus-

tice, attitudes towards people of other religions, races and cultures towards unbelievers and despisers of the Church, and towards all those for whom it has become increasingly difficult to enter into the world of faith.”

Three : *the question of ecclesiastical condemnations.*

The division of the Church following the Council of Chalcedon resulted in each side condemning the other as heretical. The leading personalities on either side also came thus to be anathematized by the other, not only in formal declarations of faith, but also in liturgical celebrations. The participants were agreed that this habit should change, and that the Churches should be requested to take official action in this matter. They expressed the opinion that without insisting on an acceptance by either side as fathers and teachers those whom it has formally condemned, or on a formal lifting of the anathemas, the Churches should simply “drop from the liturgical corpus anathemas of saints and teachers of the other side, as some Churches have already begun to do.”

In this way, the first three Vienna Consultations succeeded in arriving at agreed recommendations, unofficial though they still remain, that are very definitely positive and contemporary on a doctrinal issue that has separated the Churches for over fifteen long centuries.

### (b) **Primacy in the Church**

The second major issue that has led to the separation of the Roman Catholic Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches is the insistence by the former on the special place of the Bishop of Rome, on the ground that he occupies the Petrine office. Though the doctrine of the universal jurisdiction of the Bishop of Rome and Papal infallibility have been officially adopted by the Roman Catholic Church only in 1870 following the I Vatican Council, its history can be traced back to pre-Chalcedonian times. At Chalcedon itself Rome’s point of view in this regard was consistently pressed by the legates of the Bishop of Rome. In fact, some of the anti-Chalcedonian polemical writings that have come down to us from ancient times show a clear awareness of this story about the Council on the part of their authors.

The fourth Vienna Consultation held from 10 to 18 September 1978 took up this subject as its main theme. As a related issue

the Consultation did also discuss the question of the Oriental rite Catholic Churches. Though at one time the Roman Catholic Church could, in the light of its universalist claims, justify the formation and continued existence of these Churches, with the new approach to the historic Churches of the East which it adopted since the II Vatican Council, the situation has now changed. The Vienna Consultation thought it fitting that this subject, therefore, be included in its agenda.

On the question of primacy, as it concerns the Roman Catholic Church, the central issue is the Petrine office which is declared to be vested in the Bishop of Rome. The doctrines of papal infallibility and the universal jurisdiction of the Pope are derived from it. The Oriental Orthodox Churches do not maintain any of these positions in the same way as the Roman Catholic Church does. In its official Communique, the Vienna Consultation showed that "primacy, conciliarity and the consensus of the believing community" are the three elements "integrally related to each other" in the Church. The relative importance of these elements has, however, been "differently understood in different situations." Regarding the primacy of the Bishop of Rome, two positions clarified by the Roman Catholic participants deserve mentioning here. Professor Dr. Wilhelm de Vries, S. J., of the Pontifical Oriental Institute, Rome, observed that very few Roman Catholic scholars, if at all, today believe that the Apostle Peter was the first Pope. Before the fourth century, there was in fact no concept of *ius divinum* with reference to Peter as Pope. Primacy can be seen developing from the fourth century; and Leo I in the fifth century stated it categorically. However, he added, the development in this way had the guidance of the Holy Spirit, so that it cannot be dismissed or ignored. Another important emphasis made by the Roman Catholic participants was to the effect that the Pope should not be viewed as occupying a position *sui generis* above and beyond the episcopate and the believing community. It is not that he, remaining above, guides the Church, and that all others occupy only a passive role of being guided by him. The same point was admitted by all participants with reference to the episcopate as well. The guiding work of the Church does not rest exclusively with the bishops either individually or collectively. On the other hand, it was acknowledged that every member of the

believing community is a living stone, filled with and guided by the Holy Spirit and being built up in the divine Temple of God's Church. The primate and the bishops in cooperation with the priests are in the one Church, in which no member is unimportant or negligible.

As for infallibility, which really means dependable teaching authority, the participants affirmed that it is to the whole Church, "as the Body of Christ and abode of the Holy Spirit," that it belongs. None of the different organs in the Church is without its own dynamic role to play in expressing it. There was, however, no complete agreement as to their relative importance in fulfilling this great task.

The Consultation noted that primacy is practiced in one form or another both by the Roman Catholic Church and by the Oriental Orthodox Churches. The difference between them lies in the fact that the former regards the "primacy of the Bishop of Rome, as of universal scope", but in the Oriental Orthodox Churches there was only regional primacy. In course of time, however, these have "exercised and continue to exercise primatial jurisdiction also over a national diaspora widespread in many continents of the world." The fact that each of these traditions believes that it has been and is being guided by the Holy Spirit was admitted by the participants in unison. Primacy, as such, is not, therefore, a matter of dispute between the Roman Catholic Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches. The point of disagreement between them consists in the former's basing of it in the Petrine office and the latter's reservation regarding it. However, it was agreed that "in the light of the newly emerging global perspectives and pluralistic tendencies in the world community," the Churches should "undertake afresh a common theological reflection on primacy with a new vision of our future unity."

With reference to the Oriental Rite Catholic Churches, the Consultation recalled "the principles of Vatican II and subsequent statements of the See of Rome" that these should not be used as "a device for bringing Oriental Orthodox Churches inside the Roman Communion." They should, on the other hand, help in the restoration of "eucharistic communion among the sister Churches."

### **Concluding Observations**

The Vienna Consultations have taken the first step in bringing

the Roman Catholic Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches to seek their lost unity within the context of the ecumenical movement. The two major issues that have led these Churches to maintain separate existence in the past were discussed frankly by some of the competent persons on either side on the basis of scholarly papers presented by them. They did, in fact, take up the subjects for treatment not merely in their past historical perspective, but did seek to relate them to contemporary life and problems, leaving sufficient room for facing the future by the Churches together.”<sup>2</sup>

At the end of each Consultation, common communiques were issued outlining the conclusions drawn by both sides. These were summarily reported by *Rev. Dr. K. M. George* in the Quarterly Journal ‘Star of the East’ (July-September 1982 Pp 22-26) published from Sofia Centre, Kottayam. Excerpts from the article on agreements arrived in the Consultations are given below.

#### **Christology :**

Both sides agreed upon an exceptionally valuable statement of their common faith in Christ :

We believe that our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ is God the Son Incarnate; perfect in his divinity and perfect in his humanity. His divinity was not separated from his humanity for a single moment, not for the twinkling of an eye. His humanity is one with his divinity without comixtion’ without confusion, without division, without separation. We in our common faith in the one Lord Jesus Christ, regard his mystery inexhaustible and ineffable and for the human mind never fully comprehensible or expressible.”

#### **The Three Councils**

Another important achievement of the consultation was that it recognized the pre-eminence of the first three Ecumenical Councils (Nicea 325, Constantinople 381 and Ephesus 431) and their dogmatic statements as distinguished from Councils of later centuries, including Chalcedon, which are called ‘ecumenical’ by the Greek and Latin churches. The common communique of the first consultation says :

2. Rev. Dr. V. C. Samuel. The Vienna Consultations — Published in the Star of the East (Kottayam) Vol. I No. I January 1979. Pages 5-11.

“We find our common basis in the same Apostolic tradition, particularly as affirmed in the Nicene-Constantinopolitan creed. We all confess the dogmatic decisions and teachings of Nicea, Constantinople and Ephesus”.

The communique of the second consultation states :

“We agree that the first three Ecumenical Councils had, because of their more general acceptance in the church, a greater degree of fullness, which the later councils do not have”.

### **Anathema, Infallibility, Ministry of Peter**

The second consultation considered the questions of anathemata and infallibility and the ministry of Peter. At the time of the Chalcedonian conflict, both sides had formally condemned several of the teachers and leaders on the opposite side. The Vienna consultation expressed its opinion that it was not necessary to insist on the acceptance of these teachers and fathers by those who condemned them. Even a formal lifting of anathemata may not be necessary. The churches can simply drop from the liturgical corpus anathemata of saints and teachers of the other side.

As regards infallibility, the Oriental Orthodox maintained that the term as such did not belong to the universal tradition of the Church. The Orthodox do not speak of the infallibility of either the Patriarch or of the ecumenical councils. One can, however, speak of a certain indefectibility of the church on the basis of Christ's teaching that the Holy Spirit leads the Church to all truth. The common communique of the fourth consultation stated :

“There was agreement that infallibility, or, as the Oriental Orthodox prefer to say, dependable teaching authority, pertains to the Church as a whole, as the Body of Christ and as the abode of the Holy Spirit.”

As regards the relation between the ministry of St. Peter and the Ecumenical Councils, as traditionally understood by the Roman Church, the consultations did not come to an agreement. However, the communique of the second meeting stated :

“the principle of collegiality emphasized by the Second Vatican Council is appreciated as a move in the right direction according to which the role of the bishop of Rome is seen within the Council and not above it.”

### **Primacy, Primates and the Pope**

On the question of primacy, there was more disagreement than convergence of opinion. While the primacy of the Bishop of Rome was claimed to be of universal scope, the Oriental Orthodox Churches traditionally exercised only regional primacy though the latter has now universal dimensions in the light of the growth of the diaspora. While Rome considers its primacy as rooted in the divine plan for the Church, the Oriental Churches understand primacy as of historical and ecclesiological origins. However, it was commonly recognized that in case of a full union among sister churches, each church as well as all churches together will have a primatial and conciliar structure, providing for their communion in a given place as well as on regional and world-wide scales. The communique of the fourth consultation stated in this connection :

The structure will be basically conciliar. No single church in this communion will by itself be regarded as the source and origin of that communion; the source of the unity of the church is the action of the triune God.”

### **The Uniat Church**

With regard to the Catholic Uniat Churches, it was agreed that :

“The Oriental Catholic Churches will not even in the transitional period before full unity be regarded as a device for bringing Oriental Orthodox Churches inside the Roman Communion. The Oriental Orthodox Churches, according to the principles of Vatican II and subsequent statements of the See of Rome, cannot be fields of mission for other churches.”

The final recommendations of the Fourth Consultation are :

“The results of the four Vienna consultations should be presented by the participants to their respective Churches for evaluation and assessment, so that these evaluations can be a basis for further steps to be considered by an official commission of the Churches taking into account especially the recommendations of the Third Consultation.

It would be useful to bring together in one volume the main conclusions of the four consultations with selections from the more

significant papers. This could be published for use by theologians and theological students as well as others interested.

A series of more popular and briefer publications and articles in various languages could be published for bringing the members of our Churches into the discussion. Other mass media presentations would also be useful.

The differences between the Roman Catholics and the Oriental Orthodox have grown out of their mutual estrangement and separate development in the period since the Council of Chalcedon. Differing historical experiences of the past fifteen centuries have made deep marks on the thinking and convictions of both traditions. In order to overcome these differences and to find mutual agreement and understanding, new ways of thinking and fresh categories of reflection and vision seem to be required so that sister Churches may together fulfil their common responsibility to the Lord and carry out their common mission in the light of the present situation and for the sake of future generations.

The Holy Spirit who guides the Church will continue to lead us to full unity. And all of our Churches have to be responsive to the divine call in obedience and hope.”

Obviously, the four Consultations have traversed forbidden tracts through deep and dark woods to discover a glimmer of light and ray of hope at the end of the tunnel—but still have miles to go.

The Episcopal Synod of the Church studied the documents of these Consultations at the request of Cardinal Koenig. On review, the Synod proposed that a Joint Council of theologians of both the Churches may be constituted which may pursue the recommendations of the Consultations to a meaningful conclusion. The proposal was accordingly placed before the Catholic Bishops Conference of India. The proposal is still under its consideration.

### **Eastern Orthodox Churches**

What do the Eastern Orthodox Churches acclaim or what does Eastern Orthodoxy mean? An idea is available from a brief statement given in the book “Martyria/Mission. The Witness of the Orthodox Churches Today” edited by Ion Bria (1980) for the

Commission on World Mission and Evangelism, World Council of Churches. It says,

“From an historical point of view, Eastern Orthodoxy is a communion of autocephalous and autonomous churches which, through the tradition of the seven Ecumenical Councils (325-787), continue the ancient apostolic Church by its doctrine, its canonical organization, and its liturgical and spiritual life. Orthodox preserve a full unity of doctrine and full communion in the sacraments: they celebrate the Byzantine Liturgy in the vernacular: they are governed by the local bishops synods which elect their own Patriarch independently and recognize the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople as first in rank among the Orthodox hierarchy. Orthodox represents an ecclesial entity shaped by a specific pattern of ecclesiology which primarily emphasizes the central place of the experience of the Saints, liturgical worship, the cosmic dimension of the Resurrection and Pentecost, and the importance of the national culture and of the local church. The great affirmation made by the Eastern Patriarchs in their Encyclical Letter to Pope Pius IX in 1848, that “the people are the guardians of the faith”, has been considered the very definition of Orthodoxy.

The four ancient patriarchates are :

Constantinople, Turkey : Fener, Istanbul (Patriarch Dimitrios I is the Ecumenical Patriarch)

Alexandria, Egypt : Alexandria (Patriarch Nicolaos VI)

Antioch, Syria : Damascus (Patriarch Ignatius IV)

Jerusalem : Jerusalem (Patriarch Benedictos)

There are also the following autocephalous and autonomous churches :

Russian Orthodox Church : Moscow (Patriarch Pimen)

Serbian Orthodox Church : Belgrade (Patriarch German)

Romanian Orthodox Church : Bucharest (Patriarch Justin)

Bulgarian Orthodox Church : Sofia (Patriarch Maxim)

Orthodox Church of Cyprus : Nicosia (Archbishop Chrysostomos)

Orthodox Church of Greece : Athens (Archbishop Serafim)

Orthodox Church of Poland : Warsaw (Metropolitan Bazyli)

Georgian Orthodox Church : Tbilissi (Patriarch Ilia II)

Orthodox Church of Czechoslovakia : Prague (Metropolitan Dorotej)

Orthodox Church of Finland : Kuopio (Archbishop Paavali)  
There are also two local Orthodox churches which have recently been formed :

Orthodox Church in America : New York (Metropolitan Theodosius)

Orthodox Church in Japan : Tokyo (Metropolitan Theodosios)”

The Eastern Orthodox Churches of to-day trace their origin to the Church of the Eastern Roman Empire of ancient times. The Church “split into two camps in consequence of the Council of Chalcedon of 451 A.D. The struggle between them for exclusive recognition as the One Church resulted in their separation from 536 A.D. Thus it came about that two ecclesiastical bodies out of communion with each other took shape in the East, one accepting and the other rejecting the Council of Chalcedon. They are referred to in recent times as the Eastern Orthodox and the Oriental Orthodox Churches respectively.”<sup>3</sup>

These two blocks of Churches are members of the World Council of Churches. This coming together propelled thoughts of unity among them. Dr. V.C. Samuel has narrated in detail the process of Consultations between the two blocks in an article ‘Eastern and Oriental Orthodox Churches—A Movement towards Church Unity’, in the *Star of the East*, (Vol : 4, No : 3, July—September 1982 Pages 11-19). Relevent portions there from are reproduced below.

### “The Four Consultations

From August 1964 to January 1971 four unofficial consultations have been held. Participants in them were on the whole theological experts from the Eastern and Oriental Orthodox Churches. Since their separation was the result of their acceptance or non-acceptance of the Chalcedonian Council, they are referred to sometimes as “Chalcedonian” and “non-Chalcedonian” Churches in the concerned documents. This terminology is employed in this paper also when felt necessary.

3. Samuel Dr. V.C. : Eastern and Oriental Orthodox Churches-A-Movement Towards Church Unity—*Star of the East*. July-September 1982. P. : 11.

The meetings were held in Aarhus, Denmark, in August, 1964; in Bristol, England, in July, 1967; in Geneva, Switzerland, in August, 1970; and in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in January 1971. In all, fifty-seven persons attended them, twenty-nine from the Chalcedonian tradition and twenty-eight from the non-Chalcedonian. The Chalcedonian participants were drawn from the Ecumenical patriarchate in Constantinople; U.S.A., and Geneva; the Russian Orthodox Patriarchate; the Church of Greece; the Rumanian Orthodox Church; the Bulgarian Orthodox Church; the Orthodox Church of Alexandria; and the Orthodox Church of Cyprus. The non-Chalcedonians came from the Coptic Orthodox Church; the Syrian Orthodox Church; the Armenian Orthodox Church; the Indian Orthodox Church; and the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. This shows that almost all the constituent Church bodies of both traditions were represented in the consultations.

The subjects discussed were also representative and relevant to the goal aimed to achieve. Christological doctrine held by each tradition was treated at length and depth. Issues like the meaning of the Cyrilline phrase "One Incarnate Nature of God the Word" as it is understood in both traditions, the question of the two natures, two wills and two energies, the doctrine of the person of Christ in the various Church traditions on both sides, had received attention. The place of Councils in the ancient Church and their inter-relatedness or otherwise; the question of the condemnations pronounced by those Councils and the ways to solve the problem which it raises for unity; a survey of efforts in ancient times to bring the two sides back to unity; and ecclesiological issues with reference to relations of the two sides, were also given sufficient prominence in the discussion.

### Areas of Clear Agreement

The result of the endeavour is indeed remarkable. The basic issue that separated the two traditions was indeed the doctrine concerning Jesus Christ. On this point the agreement reached by the participants was most rewarding. The Aarhus consultation of August 1964 spoke of this in a guarded way. As its *Agreed Statement* said :

"Our inherited misunderstandings have begun to clear up. We recognise in each other the one Orthodox faith of the

Church. Fifteen centuries of alienation have not led us astray from the faith of our Fathers”.

The Statement then continued:

“On the essence of the Christological dogma we found ourselves in full agreement. Through the different terminologies used by each side, we saw the same truth expressed”.

Both sides, it was shown, rejected a doctrine of two Sons on the One hand, and the teaching that confused the natures of which the One Christ is composed.

The Bristol consultation of 1967 spoke more clearly. After stating the positions of each side briefly, its *Agreed Statement* affirmed:

“But both sides speak of a union without confusion, without change, without division, without separation. The four adverbs belong to our common tradition”.

The fact may be recalled here that these adverbs are central to the Chalcedonian *Definitio*. However, at Chalcedon it was Patriarch Dioscorus of Alexandria, whom the Council deposed, who applied these adverbs to the union of the natures of which the One Christ is composed. Bristol went on to say:

“Both affirm the dynamic permanence of the Godhead and the Manhood, with all their natural properties and faculties in the One Christ”.

The members of the Consultation acknowledged the fact that the Eastern Orthodox tradition speaks of Christ as existing in two natures, and that the Oriental Orthodox tradition, while rejecting it, affirmed that Christ is “one incarnate nature of God, the Word”. It is clarified that the difference in terminology here does not lead either side to fall into the heresy suspected of it by the other.

“Those who speak in terms of ‘two’ do not thereby divide or separate. Those who speak in terms of ‘one’ do not thereby commingle or confuse. The ‘without division, without separation’ of those who say ‘two’ and the ‘without change, without confusion’ of those who say ‘one’ need to be specially underlined, in order that we may understand each other”.

While expressing so positively their essential agreement in the Christological doctrine, the members of the consultation did not

leave out the question of the Lord's will and energy. The Churches of the Chalcedonian tradition affirmed at the Council of Constantinople in 680-81 that there were two natural wills and two natural energies in Christ, existing united indivisibly, inconvertibly, inseparably unconfusedly. In agreement with the emphasis on the "two natures" of Chalcedon, a doctrinal development that is necessary and legitimate can be seen here. But the non-Chalcedonian side, which disagreed with Chalcedonians on the very issue of "two natures," has all along conserved a doctrinal continuity with its insistence on the 'One incarnate nature of God, the Word'. Its emphasis on this point is based on the union of the wills and energies of the natures, of which the One Christ is composed. Acknowledging this terminological difference, the *Agreed Statement* of Bristol makes it clear,

"All of us agree that the human will is neither absorbed nor suppressed by the divine will in the incarnate Logos, nor are they contrary one to the other".

The affirmation of a "dynamic permanence of the Godhead and the Manhood, with all their natural properties and faculties" by the non-Chalcedonian side is a clear indication of the fact that they do not ignore the conational and volitional faculties of the humanity in Christ. The position endorsed by both sides is, as the Bristol meeting made clear: "The uncreated and created natures, with the fulness of their natural properties and faculties, were united without confusion, or separation, and continue to operate in the One Christ, our Saviour".

These ideas were reaffirmed in Geneva in August 1970.

"On the essence of the Christological dogma," "our two traditions, despite fifteen centuries of separation, still find ourselves in full and deep agreement with the universal tradition of the one undivided Church."

The meeting went on to say that both traditions affirm the hypostatic union of the two natures in Christ, that for both

"He who is consubstantial to the Father according to Godhead became consubstantial also with us according to humanity in the Incarnation, that He who is before all ages begotten from the Father, was in these last days for us and for our salvation born of the blessed Virgin Mary".

<i>Church represented</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Representatives</i>	<i>Occassion</i>
Oecumenical Patriarch Constantinople	1958 February	Metropolitan James	—
	1961 December 9	Bishop Embros Bishop Constantinius	Good-will visit
	1982 September	Metropolitan Emilianos	Catholicate Saphthi Celebrations.
Russian Orthodox Church	1961 December	Archbishop Nicodim Archbishop Sergius Bishop Antony Bloom Prof. Fr. Vladimir Prof. Fr. Floresky	Good-will visit
	1965 December	Bishop Conitas Archbishop Alexi	150th year Jubilee Celebration of Theological Seminary.
	1969 January	Archbishop Antoni Fr. Serapian Fr. George Telpis	Good-will visit.
	1977 January 21 February 6	His Holiness Patriarch Pimen. Metropolitan Juvenaly, Archbishop Melchezedek, Heironomk Antony Kuznetsov, Protodeacon Vladimir Nazarkin.	Good-will visit.
	1982 September	Metropolitan Vladimir, Arch priest Levmanko Prof. Mistislav Voskrenksy	Catholicate Saphthi Celebration
Orthodox Church of Georgia	-do-	His Holiness Catholicos Patriarch Ilia II Archbishop Athanasius Bishop Ambrosies	-do-
Rumanian Orthodox Church	1961 December	Metropolitan Justin Moisecu, Archpriest Alexander Jonescu Mr. Joseph Chirvu	Good-will visit
	1969 January	Patriarch Justinian Metropolitans Nicolai of Ardeal, Nicolai of Banat, Rev. Archmandrite Bartholomeu	Opening of Theological Seminary building.

	1976 February	Metropolitans Theoktistoss, Antonios and Adrian	Reception to Catholicos Baselius Mar Thoma Mathews I.
	1982 September	Metropolitan Nestor, Epiphani, Prof. Rusrimoos	
Greek Orthodox Church	1961 December	Bishop Spiriden, Barnabas, Prof. Conidaris	Good-will visit
Bulgarian Orthodox Church	1982 September	Asstt. Bishop Velichki	Catholicate Saptha- thi Celebration.
Finland Orthodox Church	-do-	Ramban Ambrosier	- do-

#### ORIENTAL ORTHODOX CHURCHES

The Ancient Oriental (or pre-Chalcedonian) Churches separated from Eastern Orthodoxy after the fourth Ecumenical Council of Chalcedon in A.D. 451 because of the Council's christological definition, which they considered contrary to the doctrine of their own Church fathers and felt, had been imposed by the Byzantine emperor.

During the recent theological conversations between the two branches, it has been found that they have, in fact, preserved the same apostolic tradition and a similar christology, and in 1965, after centuries of isolation, it was decided to begin an official dialogue."

The Oriental Orthodox Churches are :

Coptic Orthodox Church : Cairo (Pope Shenouda III)

Ethiopian Orthodox Church : Addis Ababa (Patriarch Tekle Haimanot)

Armenian Apostolic Church of Etchmiadzine : Armenia (Catholicos Vasken)

Armenian Apostolic Church of Cilicia : Antelias, Lebanon (Catholicos Coadjutor Karekin II)

Syrian Orthodox Church : Damascus (Patriarch Ignatius Zakka I)

Indian Orthodox Church : Kottayam (Catholicos Beselios Mar Thoma Mathews I)

The Oriental Orthodox Churches too are autonomous and autocephalous. Autonomous in the sense that they are independent and self-sufficient in their administration. Autocephalous in the sense that they are independent with freedom and competence to raise their own ecclesiastical/hierarchical head, have their own dialects, and living in the cultural milieu of the country.

These characteristics of autonomy and autocephaly imply that these Churches share the same faith, same tradition, same form of worship and enjoy inter-communion notwithstanding the difference in language, expressions, custom. They may not have anything common in their historical development; but the inter-communion, common faith, common tradition bind them together. In this form of autonomous and autocephalous existence neither does one Church exert supremacy or authority over another nor does one remain subordinate to the other. They are co-equal.

#### **Adis Abbaba Conference 1976**

The five Oriental Orthodox Churches expressed their solidarity in a Conference held at Adis Abbaba, on 15-24 January, 1965. The Conference was convened at the initiative of Emperor of Ethiopia Heille Selassie. The main objectives of the Conference were to strengthen the solidarity of the five Churches, and to promote the cooperation between them. The Conference ended with the constitution of a Standing Committee with the representatives of each Church to continue and coordinate the inter-Church relations.

Heads of all the five Churches, His Holiness Coorilos, Patriarch of Coptic Orthodox Church, His Holiness Vasken I, Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of Armenian Orthodox Church, His Holiness Patriarch Ignatius Yakoub III of the Syrian Orthodox Church and His Holiness Catholicos Mar Ougen of the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church, had come together in this historic conclave.

#### **Exchange of Good Will Missions and Delegations**

In the spirit of friendship and cordiality, the Malankara Church has in the past received delegations from as well as sent delegations to sister Oriental Orthodox Churches.

<i>Church</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Visiting Member</i>	<i>Occasion</i>
Armenian Orthodox Church	1957 April	Bishop Polladion	Good-will visit
	1962 December	Catholicos Vasken	-do-
	1965 December	Archbishop Abrahamian	150 year Jubilee Celebration of Theological Seminary.
	1972 December	Patriarch His Holiness Derdarian, Archbishop Aslanian, Bishop Alerian, Archbishop Tattorian (All from Jerusalem)	19th Centenary Celebration of martyrdom of St. Thomas.
	1976 February	Archbishop Saffe Arjamian, Archbishop Tikoyan	Reception to Catholicos His Holiness Mar Mathews I.
	1982 September	Bishop Geevarghese Serai Dharia; Aagambaliosian	Catholicate Saphathi Celebrations.
Coptic Orthodox Church	1961 December		Good-will visit
Ethiopian Orthodox Church	1961 December	Abuna Theophilos	Good-will visit
	1965 December	Fr. Vikre Mariam	150th Year Celebration of Theological Seminary.
	1982	Metropolitan Nathaniel	Catholicate Saphathi Celebrations.

### **Delegations abroad**

Malankara Church too had reciprocated the visits of prelates of foreign sister Churches, by sending goodwill delegations to them and also others on invitations for participation in specific programmes. They include the following :

<i>Delegation</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Church visited</i>
Metropolitans Philipos Mar Theophilos, Geevarghese Mar Osthathios, Stephanos Mar Theodosios	1976 July	Russian Orthodox Church Participated in the Celebra- tions in memory of St. Sergius
Catholicos Mathews I Metropolitans Mathews Mar Koorilos, Paulos Mar Gregorios, Joseph Mar Pachomios	1976 21 Sept.	Russian Orthodox Church (Moscow) Armenian Orthodox Church. (Etchmiadzin)
Ramban C. Zacharia Fr. Joseph Vendrappally Dr. George Koshy P.C. Abraham Pothen Philip	2 Oct.	Rumanian Orthodox Church (Bucharest) Bulgarian Orthodox Church (Sophia)
Catholicate-designate Metropolitan Mathews Mar Koorilos	1983 20-23 June	Bulgarian Orthodox Church (Sofia) Participated in the Patriarchate re-establishment celebrations
Catholicos Mathews I Catholicos-designate Mathews Mar Koorilos Metropolitan Dr. Paulos Mar Gregorios Rev. Fr. Zacharia Perangat P.C. Abraham	1983 14- May	Vatican Meeting with Pope John Paul II

### Christian Conference of Asia 1985

The Malankara Church is a member of the Christian Conference of Asia (CCA) since 1969, which is a representative body of various Churches and Christian Councils of Asian region, with headquarters at Singapore. The first assembly of CCA was held at Prappat in Sumatra in 1957. 110 Churches and Councils of sixteen Asian countries, are members of the CCA. Initially known as East Asian Christian Conference, it was changed into Christian Conference of Asia (CCA) in 1973 at the fifth Conference held at Singapore.

The CCA held its last four-yearly 8th Assembly at Presbyterian Seminary, Seol, South Korea from June 25-July 2, 1985.

310 representatives of various Churches and organisations in the region attended the Assembly. The Indian Churches sent 30 members. Bishop Park Sang Jung of Korea is the present General Secretary.

Malankara Church was represented in the Assembly by Metropolitan Dr. Paulos Mar Gregorios, Deacon Reji Mathew and Mrs. Saramma Jacob Elenjikkal. Mrs. Jacob was later elected as the representative member from India to the General Committee of CCA.

### **Membership of the National Council of Christian Churches of India, 1983.**

In the Indian national scene and the commonwealth of Churches in India, the role of Malankara Orthodox Church has been limited although its stature as an independent, national Church has long been appreciated in all quarters. The Church itself has been expanding its frontiers and areas of activities. There has been a growing awareness of a need for better cooperation and coordination with other sister Churches in India in the fields of national, economic and relief programmes, and in areas where a united Christian front is required in the Indian national context in order to further the ideas of ecumenism and also to improve its national image.

In the circumstances, the Episcopal Synod of the Church reviewed its relation with the National Council of Christian Churches where all the non-Roman Catholic Churches are represented and decided to take its membership and also of its State branch—the Kerala Council—at its sitting on February 21-27, 1983 at Sophia Centre, Kottayam.

Meanwhile, the Council itself had adopted a revised constitution at its 19th Session held in 1979 at New Delhi. It was at this Session that the Council shed its erstwhile characteristic title National Christian Council. This Council had started in 1914 as the National Missionary Council of all missionary organisations in India in pursuance of the World Missionary meeting at Edinburgh in 1912.

Now that the Christian Council had reconstituted itself as a Council of Churches, most of the difficulties in taking its membership were removed. Another reason for the delay in applying

for membership was the hope that the three main traditions of Christendom, Roman Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox would together constitute a genuinely ecumenical Council. It was assessed by the Synod that waiting for such a Council may become indefinitely long.

The NCCI held its 20th Session on October 6-10, 1983 at Isabella Thoburn College Lucknow and admitted the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church as its 25th Member. The representatives of the Church who attended the assembly were Dr. Paulos Mar Gregorios, Geevarghese Mar Osthathios, Smt. C. M. Stephen and Rev. Dr. K.M. George.

In pursuance of being a member of NCCI, the Church became a member of its branch in Kerala too. The representative of the Church, Mar Osthathios, was elected the President of the Kerala Council of Churches.

In the next Session, the NCCI selected Rev. Dr. K.M. George as its General Secretary.

Looking back, one finds that the Church maintains an enviable position of honour and integrity in international Christian world and a cordial relationship with the Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox Churches. In the Indian scene also, she enjoys a position of distinction among the Churches. Given a status of national recognition, the Church has devolved on itself responsibilities of higher significance than hitherto. The Church has to awaken herself and develop an all—India view and also, to rise to meet this challenge. This challenge is her mission.



Metropolitan Alexis Mar Theodosius of Bethany (1938-65)



Inmates of Bethany with Mar Theodosius

# METROPOLITAN ALEXIOS MAR THEODOSIOS

## A Brief Life Sketch

Pure in heart. A rock in his convictions. A phenomenon of moral courage and austerity. Champion of Orthodoxy and autocephaly of Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church. These would set out a glimpse of the many faceted personality of Metropolitan Alexios Mar Theodosios who breathed his last on August 6, 1965.

## Early days

On August 28, 1888 was born Mar Theodosios, known as M.M. Alexander alias Chandy, in the traditionally priestly family of Mattackal at Niranam to parents Mathai and Kunjandamma. He had his school education at Mar Gregorios Memorial High School, Tiruvalla and Mar Dionysius High School, Kottayam and College education (1912-15) in the Church Missionary Society College at Kottayam.

At the age of 19 in 1907 while a school student, Alexander was called to the ministry of God and received ordination as a Deacon. Deacon Alexander, following collegiate education, joined Barisol Divinity College in East Bengal run by the Oxford Mission Fathers in 1915 and later in 1918 Serampore, for theological studies. In that year, Dn. Alexander was ordained a priest by Metropolitan Yuyakim Mar Ivanios at Parumala Seminary and was called Fr. Alexios.

While at Serampore, Fr. Alexios had come in contact with Fr. P. T. Geevarghese Panicker. Both became attached to each other and later on were very earnest in starting a monastic movement in the Church. The idea was well received among the Church dignitaries, both among ecclesiastical and lay leaders. Thus on their return from Serampore in 1918, they established a unique monastery and a monastic order at Mundanmala, a hilly forest area at Perinad near Ranny-a hundred-acre plot donated by E.J. John. The monastic institution was named Bethany. It received considerable esteem, support and encouragement all over the Church. Over the years, it grew in stature.

Bethany, however, received a catastrophic blow when Fr. P. T. Geevarghese Panicker, its Superior, defected to Roman Catholicism taking with him a number of inmates on September 20, 1930. At that critical juncture, it was thought that everything which Bethany stood for was lost. But as a flaming tower, Fr. Alexios rose up to the occasion, gave Bethany a new life and led it from success to success. Today, Bethany has a complex of institutions of monastery, convent, schools and hospital.

The monastery and convent offer a distinct service to the Church and provide a unique opportunity to young aspirants for an austere spiritual life. The nuns of Bethany serve in schools and in hospitals in various capacities.

Meanwhile, Fr. Alexios elected as Metropolitan candidate by the Malankara Association and was consecrated as Metropolitan Mar Theodosius on April 7, 1938 by Catholicos Basselios Mar Geevarghese II at Karmel Dayara, Mulanthuruthy. Diocese of Quilon and the Outside Kerala Diocese were assigned to the Metropolitan's charge. Mar Theodosius had the foresight and vision of the future development possibilities of the Church beyond the frontiers of Kerala. In fact, Mar Theodosius was the architect of the Outside Kerala Diocese. In 1947, a nucleus of the Diocese was laid when the Metropolitan formed the Indian Orthodox Mission at Madras. This was followed by organising a band of four dedicated priests viz K. A. George, C.V. John, Simon Mathews and K.C. Thomas (Thomas Mar Macarios), who were send out to Pune, Calcutta, Coonnor and Delhi respectively. The Delhi parish was formed by Mar Theodosios in November 1952 and Fr. K. C. Thomas took charge of the parish in January 1953. This Diocese is now divided into five major Dioceses of America, Bombay, Calcutta, Delhi and Madras.

Mar Theodosios also had taken keen interest in representing the Malankara Church in international inter-church forums and projecting its image to western Churches. He had travelled to London in 1933 to attend the Centenary Celebrations of Oxford Movement, to Oxford in 1937 to represent the Church in the first Faith and Order Conference and to Edinburgh the same year to attend the Life and Work Conference and in 1948 to Amsterdam to participate in the WCC Conference along with the

Catholicos Baselios Mar Geevarghese. By virtue of participation in such forums, Mar Theodosios was eminently able to focus the attention of Western Churches to the ancient apostolic origin of Malankara Church according to St. Thomas, its indigenous growth and autonomous stature and especially its Orthodox faith and consequently to create commendable appreciation about the Church in their estimation. Till 1953, the Metropolitan was a member of the Central Committee of WCC.

The ardent stress on conviction of faith was a distinguishing trait in Mar Theodosios. A few instances are outstanding. His conviction on the autocephalous nature of Malankara Church, which defied his overwhelming mentor Fr. P. T. Geevarghese Panicker (Mar Ivanios) at the time of his defection to Roman Catholic Church in 1930 and how he outsmarted the youthful bellicose Peace League organisers in a tense and emotion charged situation in 1951, show the strength of character and moral courage which Mar Theodosios nourished. When the Peace League Organisers were exerting pressure on the Catholicos and other Metropolitans for a compromise with the Patriarch, Mar Theodosios made the strongest statement which non-plussed the organisers: "I am not prepared to agree to surrender the independence of Malankara Church and to accept as invalid the ordination by Mar Abdul Messiah. I will not do anything against my conviction. I am going" and walked out of the Chingavanam compromise talks. On another occasion, the Freedom fighter in him surfaced. He is quoted to have said "Even if it happens that I become the old lay man Chandy, I do not like to be a Metropolitan of a Church which has lost its Freedom". This stand, Mar Theodosios had maintained in all the compromise moves which were held at various times earlier.

Mar Theodosios is however, better, remembered and revered for his qualities of spirituality. He was acknowledged as an ascetic, a good shepherd, a true yogi, a veritable sanyasi who led a simple and austere life, a life devoted to prayer and worship, and a protector of Orthodox faith. To all those who came in contact with him, Mar Theodosios was a remarkable person whose simplicity, asceticism, conviction of faith, meticulous observance of daily life, organisational perfection, charisma of love, care and concern, were beyond the realm of ordinary mans.

The blessed life came to an end on August 6, 1965 after a prolonged illness—a day observed by the Church as the day of the Feast of Transfiguration. His tomb at Bethany reflects the simplicity of an otherwise great luminary of the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church.

To his sacred memory, this humble work is laid.

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APPENDIX I

ORTHODOX CHRISTENDOM\*

<i>Name of Church</i>	<i>Strength</i>	<i>Head</i>	<i>Headquarters</i>
<b>I. THE ORIENTAL ORTHODOX CHURCHES (O. C.)</b>			
(i) Syrian O. C.	142,000	Patriarch Ignatius Zakka	Damascus, Syria
(ii) Indian O.C.	1,500,000	Catholicos Baselios Mar Thoma Mathews I	Kottayam Kerala.
(iii) Ethiopian O.C.	14,000 000	Patriarch Abba Tekle Haimanot	Addis Ababa
(iv) Coptic O.C.	4,000,000	Patriarch	Alexandria
(v) Armenian O.C.	2,000,000	Supreme Catholicos Vasken I	Etchmiadzin
<b>II. THE EASTERN ORTHODOX CHURCHES</b>			
(i) The Greek O.C. Under Ecu- menical Patriarch	3,500,000	Athenagorus Dimitrios	Sophia Istanbul
(ii) The Russian O.C.	50,000,000	Patriarch Pimen	Moscow
(iii) The Rumanian O.C.	17,000,000	Patriarch Justin	Bucharest
(iv) The Greek O.C. (Greece)	8,200,000	Archbishop Seraphim	Athens
(v) The Bul- garian O.C.	8,000,000	Patriarch Maxim	Sofia
(vi) Serbian O.C.	8,000,000	Patriarch Germanes	Belgrade
(vii) Cyprus O.C.	480,000	Arch-bishop Makarios	Nicosia

\*Martyria/Mission. (Ed) World Council of Churches, Geneva (1980) Pp : 253-5

(viii) O.C. of Finland	100,000	Archbishop of Finland	Helsinki
(xi) O.C. of Poland	460,000	Bazyli Metropolitan of Warsaw	Narsaw
(x) O.C. of Czechslovakia	200,000	Metropolitan of Prague	Prague
(xi) O.C. of Georgia	800,000	Ilia II Catholicos-Patriarch	Tbilissi Tiflis
(xii) O.C. of North America	1,000,000	Metropolitan Theodosius	New York
(xiii) Greek O.C. under Antioch	750,000	Patriarch Ignatius IV	Damascus
(xiv) Greek O.C. under Jerusalem	80,000	Benedictos Patriarch of Jerusalem	Jerusalem
(xv) Greek O.C. under Alexandria	17,000	Nicolaos VI Patriarch of Alexandria	Alexandria
(xvi) Orthodox Church Japan	24,642	Metropolitan Theodosios	Tokyo
(xvii) Antiochian Orthodox, Archdiocese N. America	152,000	Metropolitan Archbishop Philip Englewood	New York

## APPENDIX II

### LETTER FROM MAR AHATALLA

“In the name of the eternal Essence, Almighty without beginning and end. The Patriarch Mar Thomas, Apostle. The peace in God, the Father, and the mercy of Our Lord Jesus Christ and the communion of the Holy Spirit. I, Ignatius, Patriarch of all India and China. Now, since I have received this faculty from Lord Pope Ignatius, The Plenipotentiary Through the Grace of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and through the compassion of the Blessed Mother of God, always Virgin, I do grant faculty to cleric George, who has come to me from your region, to dispense from consanguinity of the first grade to the third and fourth; to absolve from vows, from other oaths, and from sins of every kind for which I have given faculty and permission. Then, again, when he receives the dignity of legitimate priesthood, appoint him and make him sit on the throne of the Archdiaconate. In the name of Mary, Mother of God, I grant to the priests and clerics and the laity of the holy Fold and to all the Elders that you make it that (there in?) the Monastery of St. Thomas, the Blessed Apostle, be the Father of all India. And, therefore, elect twelve priests, who are good, upright, talented, just, chaste, and patient men, and make them sit on the throne of the monastery or St. Thomas and when the Bishop who governs your region dies, cast lots and elect one of those twelve Doctors and make him govern our country. Don't be afraid, but trust me and proceed according to the rite of the holy Roman Church; be aware that besides what I have given you, I have with me great treasures and if I can come to you I would give them being very eager to see you and speak to you. But I do not know if God will permit me this or not. They have received me in the monastery of Jesuits to atone for my sins which I have committed against God. The love of God the Father, and the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Communion of the Holy Spirit be with Lord Pope Ignatius, and with you, and with us, and with all men. Amen. I, Ignatius, Patriarch of all India and China”.

The English translation is ours. The original letter which was in the Syriac is to be found in f. 344. This letter, however, was fabricated by one of their priests named “Ittithoman” who was the councillor of the Archdeacon and implacable enemy of “Lathinisation”. We are informed of this falsification by the testimony of “Georgius Bengur Cassanar” another councillor of the Archeadon, who later returned to the obedience of the Latin bishop. Cf. ff3 40-341.

Reference : Chapter Six.

APPENDIX III

CORRESPONDENCES REGARDING ESTABLISHMENT OF TRUST FUND

G. BUCHANAN

Chief Secretary to the Government  
Fort St. George,  
Madras.

Sir,

A request has been preferred by the Rev. the MAR THOMA. Bishop of the Ancient Syrian Church of Malayalam, which by his desire, I beg you submitting to the Government. He solicits permission to pay into the treasury of the Honourable Company, as a loan in perpetuity, for charitable uses solely, the sum of 3000 (three thousand) star Pagodas at the usual rate of interest for such loan and he requests that the interest may be indulgently paid in Travancore and be subject to the management of the bishop or metropolitan protempore or other regular superior, however. denominated of that ancient Church.

I have.....

Travancore  
25 th October 1803.

Sd/- Col. Macaulay  
Resident.

REPLY

To

The Lieutenant Colonel Macaulay  
Resident at Travancore.

Sir,

I am directed to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 25th ultimo and to acquaint you that the Honourable, the Governor in Council, has been pleased to comply with the request therein submitted in the part of the bishop of the ancient Syrian Church of Malayalam, to be permitted to pay the sum of 3000 pagodas in perpetual loan to the Company. The interest will be paid at 8% per annum and will be made payable in Travancore.

I have.....

Sd/- G. Buchanan  
Chief Secretary to the Govt.

Fort St. George, Madras  
12th Nov : 1808.

Travancore  
1st Dec : 1808.  
18th Vrisch : 984.

Colonel Macaulay, the Resident in Travancore do hereby certify to have this day received from Mar Thoma, Metran, Acting Metropolitan of the Syrian Church on Malabar the amount of 3000 Star Pagodas in the Honourable Company's loan in perpetuity and agreed today in Travancore, as long as this ancient Church lasts, to the Metropolitan, Metran or any other regularly constituted prelate annually, the interest of the above amount at 8 per cent by obtaining receipt for the same.

Sd/-Col. Macaulay

Reproduced from pages 78-80 of 'Malankara Suriyani Sabha Charithram (1952) by Rev : Fr. K. David.

Reference : Chapter Eight.

#### APPENDIX IV

### MAVELIKARA PADIYOLA

In the name of Father, Son and Holy Ghost, the one true God, Padyola (ageement) drawn up in the year of our Lord 1836, corresponding 5th Makaram 1011 at the church dedicated to the Virgin Mother of Lord at Mavelikara, between Mar Dionysius of the Jacobite Syrian Church of Malankara, subject to the supremacy of Mar Ignatius, Patriarch, the Father of Fathers and the Chief of chiefs ruling the throne of St. Peter of Antioch, the mother of all churches, and his successor Mar Kurilos and the vicars, priests, and parishioners of Ankamali and other churches under the charge of the said Metropolitan.

That whereas at an interview held at Kottayam between the Rt. Rev. Daniel, Lord Bishop of Calcutta and the Metropolitan, in Vrishchikam last it was proposed by the former that certain changes should be introduced in the liturgies and ordinances of our Syrian Church and whereas it was stated in reply that a conference of all the churches would be held on the subject and its determination made known, we the Jacobite Syrians being subject to the supremacy of the Patriarch of Antioch, and observing as we do, the Liturgies and ordinance instituted by the prelates sent under his command, cannot deviate from such Liturgies and ordinances and maintain a discipline contrary thereto, and a man of one persuasion being not authorised to preach and admonish in the church of another following a different persuasion without the permission of the respective Patriarchs, we cannot permit the same to be done against us and our churches being built by the aid of the prelates sent under the order of the Patriarch and on the wishes of the people of each parish and ornamented by their money, and as the accounts of the annual income according to our churches under the head of voluntary contributions offering etc. are as required by the rules, furnished to our bishops, as is the custom in the churches of Antioch as well as in the churches of this and other countries following different persuasions we are without the power, and feel disinclined, to follow and cause to be followed a different procedure from the above.

That the Honourable Colonel Macaulay, having taken a loan of 3000 star Pagodas from (Valia) Great Mar Dionysius who died in 983, gave him a bond for the same. The interest on the amount having fallen in arrears, Mar Dionysius Metropolitan who died in 992, made a representation to Col. Munro and received the interest with which he (Dionysius) built the Seminary at Kottayam. Having also collected at the Seminary, the money brought by the prelates that had come here from Antioch, and the property left by the late Bishops of the Pakalomattom family, Mar Dionysius laid out a portion of this together with the donation made by His Highness the Maharaja on behalf of the Syrian Christian Youths, on Kanom and therewith met the expenses of their education. The Reverend Missionaries who have come down to Kottayam, in their profuse benevolence taught the youth at the Seminary, English and other languages,

protected our children, like loving father caused books to be printed for the benefit of all classes, rendered all necessary help in maintaining the prevailing discipline of the Syrian Church, caused the annual interest due to be drawn on the receipt of the Metropolitan. had superintendence over the affairs of the Seminary and caused ordinations to be made agreeable to the request of the people and the power of the prelates. While affairs were being thus conducted, the Missionaries took to managing the Seminary without consulting the Metropolitan, themselves expended the interest money drawn annually on the receipt of the metropolitan dispersed the deacons instructed in the Seminary, conducted affairs in opposition to the discipline of the Church and created dissensions among us, all of which have occasioned much sorrow and vexation. For this reason we do (would) not follow any faith or teaching other than the orthodox faith of the Jacobite Syrian Christians to the end, that we may obtain salvation through the prayers of ever happy holy, and ever blessed Mother of God, the redresser of all complaints and through the prayers of all Saints, Witness, Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Amen.

Reference : Chapter Nine

## MALANKARA METROPOLITANS—1653-1986

S. No.	Malankara Metropolitan	Period	Year of consecration	Consecrated by prelates from	
				Malankara	Syria
1.	Mar Thoma I Archidiakon	1637-1653	1637	Hereditary leadership of Pakalomation family, Kuravilangad.	—
	Mar Thoma	1653-69 (died on April 26, 1669)	1653	12 Priests laid their hands on his head.	—
			1665		—
2.	Mar Thoma II	1669-86	1669	Mar Thoma I	Mar Gregorios Abdel Jaleel of Jerusalem.
3.	Mar Thoma III	1686-88	1686	—	—
4.	Mar Thoma IV	1688-1728	1688	—	Mar Ivanios
5.	Mar Thoma V	1728-65	1728	Mar Thoma IV	Mar Ivanios
6.	Mar Thoma VI (Mar Dionysius I)	1765-1808 (died May 13, 1808)	1761 1770	Mar Thoma V	—
7.	Mar Thoma VII	1808-09	1796	Mar Thoma VI	Mar Ivanios Mar Gregorios
8.	Mar Thoma VIII	1809-16	1809	Mar Thoma VII	—
9.	Mar Thoma IX	1816	1816	Mar Thoma VIII	—
10.	Pulikottil Joseph Mar Dionysius II	1815-16 (died Nov. 25, 1816)	1815	Kidangan Geevarghese Mar Philoxenos II of Thozhiyur Syrian Church.	—
11.	Mar Philoxenos (Metropolitan of Thozhiyur)	1816-17			—
12.	Punnathra Mar Dionysius III	1817-25 (died May 16, 1825)	1819	do-	—

1	2	3	4	5	6
13.	Cheppad Philipos Mar Dionysius IV	1825-55	1825	-do-	--
14.	Yuachim Mar Kurilos from Syria	1846-52		--	--
15.	Palakunnath Mathew Mar Athanasius	1852-76	1842 (at Syria)	--	Patriarch Mar Elias at Mardin (Syria)
16.	Pulikotil Joseph Mar Dionysius VI	1864-1909 (died July 11, 1909)	1864 (at Syria)	--	Patriarch Moran Mar Yakoub I at Diarberker (Syria)
17.	Vattasseril Geevarghese Mar Dionysius V	1908-34 (died February 23, 1934)	1908 (at Syria) (May 31)	--	Patriarch Moran Mar Abdullah at Jerusalem (Syria)
<b>CATHOLICOSES 1912-34</b>					
18.	Baselios Mar Poulos I	1912-13	1912	--	Patriarch Moran Mar Abdul Missiah at Niranam, Kerala
19.	Baselios Mar Geevarghese I	1925-28	1925	Malankara Episcopal Synod	--
20.	Baselios Mar Geevarghese II	1929-64	1929	-do-	--
<b>CATHOLICOS-CUM MALANKARA METROPOLITAN 1934--To date</b>					
21.	Baselios Mar Geevarghese II	1934-64		-do-	--
22.	Baselios Mar Ougen	1964-75	1964	Malankara Episcopal Synod presided over by Patriarch Mar Yakoub III	--
23.	Baselios Mar Thoma Mathews I	1975	1975	Malankara Episcopal Synod	--

N.B. Except for Mar Athanasius, Mar Dionysius V and Mar Dionysius VI, the consecration of all the other Malankara Metropolitans was done in Malankara.

APPENDIX V-B

PRELATES OF SYRIA IN MALANKARA 1665 — 1986

<i>S. No.</i>	<i>Prelate</i>	<i>Period</i>
1.	Mar Gregorios	1665 — 71
2.	Mar Andrews	1678 — 92
3.	Baselies Mar Yaldo	1685
4.	Mar Ivanios	1685 — 94
5.	Baselios Mar Sakralla	1751 — 64
6.	Mar Gregorios	1751 — 72
7.	Mar Ivanios	1751 — 94
8.	Mar Dioscoros	1806 — 08
9.	Mar Athanasius	1825 — 26
10.	Yuachim Mar Kurilos	1845 — 75
11.	Stephen Mar Athanasius	1849
12.	Patriarch Peter III	1875 — 77
13.	Simon Mar Athanasius	1881 — 89
14.	Patriarch Mar Abdullah	1909 — 11
15.	Patriarch Mar Abdul Messiah	1912 — 13
16.	Sleeba Mar Osthathios	1908 — 30
17.	Patriarch Elias III	1931 — 32
18.	Elias Mar Julios	1930 — 62
19.	Ramban Abul Ahad (Patriarch Mar Yakoub)	1934 — 46
20.	Ramban Aprem Aboodi	1972 — 73
21.	Patriarch Mar Zacca	1982

## APPENDIX VI

### PROCLAMATION DERECOGNISING MAR ATHANASIOUS

(Royal Proclamation, dated 23rd Kumbhom 1051, referred to at page 96 of Mr. Justice Ormsby's Judgement.)

Proclamation by His Highness Sree Padmanabha Dasa Vanchee Bala Rama Vurmah Koolasekara Kireetapathi Munnay Sultan Maha Raja Rajah Rama Rajah Bahadur Shamsheer Jung Knight Grand Commander of the Most Exalted Order of the Star of India, Maha Rajah of Travancore.

Whereas by a Proclamation dated 15th Karkadagom 1027, it was notified that Mar Athanasius has been appointed to the post of Metran of the Syrian Church by letter from Antioch; and whereas representations have been made that the Patriarch of Antioch or his predecessor claims to have deposed the said Mar Athanasius and to have appointed another Metran; this is to inform all whom it may concern that :—

The former Proclamation is not to be considered as in any way precluding the entertainment and decision by the ordinary Courts of Law of any questions, as to the right in, ownership to, any churches or property connected therewith, or as to the power of appointment or removal of officers connected therewith.

With regard to all such matters and to any other disputes that may arise from the alleged deposition of one Metran and appointment of another, the action of His Highness the Maha Raja's Government will be confined to the maintenance of peace and good order.

Any apparent connection with appointments relating to the Syrian Church which Proclamation issued under times and circumstances now altered may seem to indicate will henceforth be avoided.

All parties will be clearly given to understand that they are to seek such remedies as they may deem themselves entitled to through the established Courts of the country.

Reference : Chapter Ten.

## APPENDIX VII-A

### PATRIARCH ABDUL MESSIAH'S STHATHICON (I) ON RE-ESTABLISHING CATHOLICATE

In the name of the Almighty, Perfect in Essence,  
Eternal-Ignatius Abded Messiho II,  
Patriarch of the Apostolic throne of Antioch.

(Seal)

May the divine grace, heavenly blessings, holy and spiritual peace which our Lord Jesus Christ bestowed on His disciples at Jerusalem (Sion) and which gladdened their hearts, abide by the blessed chief priests of the order of Aaron, Antonian Dayarites, learned scholarly and enlightened deacons of the order of Stephen faithful Epithropas, Elders, traders, noble man, well protected children and infants, accomplished women and daughters and all faithful blessed and beloved people who have been redeemed by the precious blood, sealed by baptism, enlightened by orthodox faith, firm on the rock of St. Peter, obedient to the Even elion and traditional directions and who live in the grace of God, the Father, in the region of Malabar in India. May the blessings of God, our Lord, protect them from all temptations of body and soul. Be it so by the intercessionary prayers of Mary, the Mother of God, and all other saints, Amen.

Respected and dear friends, concerning Metropolitan Paulose Mar Ivanios of Kandanad Diocese, we inform you that he was elected from amongst you to the office of Catholicos at the blessed meeting of Malankara Church at Parumala. He had come to us and in our spiritual judgement we were pleased with him. We have come to know that you require upright and sincere shepherds to guide the flock of sheep redeemed by the precious blood. For, you say that the prelates you have now are not adequate to ensure your administrative prerogatives. On our cordial consultations with you, we are convinced of this. It is logical and proper to observe it efficiently in all respects. In accordance with the scriptural direction that God initially set Apostles, then prophets and thereafter Counsellors in the Church, this organisational measure is aimed at enhancing the status, regulating the administrative prerogatives of the Church and maintaining the discipline of its members. Following the procedure set by Lord Jesus Christ, when he told St. Peter thrice, "Feed my lambs, Feed my sheep, Feed my sheep (John 21/15-17), it is just and meet for us as the Shepherd, to grant your request. We do this because we shall not be found guilty and at a loss for any submission before the one who is the True Shepherd and the Lord of all shepherds when He comes to judge every one according to deeds, good or bad, one committed. Job the just asks, "What then shall I do when God riseth up, what shall I answer him?" (Job 31/14).

Keeping, therefore, these in view, we in our capacity as the Shepherd, and bound to, in accordance with the responsibility entrusted to Simeon Keepa by Jesus Christ, and in order to ensure dispensation of all spiritual gifts and maintenance of the prerogatives of the holy Church in accordance with its orthodox faith, have been pleased to establish a Catholicos that is Maphrian for you. We relied on God and Holy Spirit. He blows his breath and rests where He will, enlightens all conscience by His indwelling light and perfects all spiritual and mystical gifts. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth." (John 3/8)

We arrived at St. Mary's Church, Niranam along with Metropolitan Geevarghese Mar Dionysius, Chief of Metropolitans of Malankara, other Metropolitans, Dayarites, deacons and a multitude of believers on Sunday 2nd Kanni 1912 (September, 17, 1912). We have ordained in deference to your request, our beloved Ivanios with the title of Baselios as Maphrian, that is as Catholicos of the throne of St. Thomas of India and the East. On that occasion, all the fathers and the congregation shouted aloud in one voice, Oxios, Oxios Oxios Moran Mar Basselios is worthy and eligible. Worthy to the Call, he was declared and elevated as Catholicos. Just as the disciples were bestowed by our Lord Jesus Christ, he was also bestowed authority by Holy Spirit to serve the Church and to dispense the spiritual gifts necessary to exercise the prerogatives of the Church in consultation with the Malankara Syrian Christian Association of which Mar Dionysius is the President that is, to consecrate Metropolitans and Episcopas and Holy Mooron, to dispense all other spiritual gifts (sacraments) and especially to continue to administer Kandanad diocese as before. As a result, that your joy may be perfect in spirit, they cheered along loudly.

Again, blessed friends in spirit, we remind you that it is proper that you obey this honourable father, You love, honour and respect him for, he is your Head, Shepherd and Spiritual Father. Whoever honours him, honours me; whoever accepts him, accepts me. Whoever rejects his honourable words and refutes and opposes his views, he shall be treated as guilty in conformity with the Church canons. Beware of strife and violation of Church canons. Those who are obedient will receive grace and blessings. We have trust in God that he will not either violate the words of God or behave unlawfully or unjustly. Our request is only this. That our joy may be full, you remain in love and unity one another.

Again we implore from our Lord Jesus Christ who extended His holy hand and blessed the holy disciples, that He may extend His holy and invisible right hand and bless all of you with divine blessings; cast off from you all temptations of body and soul; bless your riches and all that you possess, open up the door of mercy before you. May He bestow mercy and blessings on you and support you with His Holy right hand. May He guide you in the salvation of your souls, be with you in all your good deeds, and protect you from all evil deeds. May He sow seeds of divine love among you and in your hearts and guide you through out your life. May He

grant you peace in the land you inhabit; cause mercy and kindness in the hearts of the rulers towards you and grant you times of happiness always.

May He extend mercy and blessings on you and your homes, make you and your departed ones along with the saints worthy to inherit the kingdom of heaven. May He make you and your departed ones hear that gladdening voice saying to the children on the right, "You who are blessed of my Father, come and enter and inherit the Kingdom of heaven which has been prepared for you from before the foundation of the World." Be it so by the intercessory prayers of Mariam, the Mother of God, all saints and martyrs, Amen.

Written by the grace of God, Abded Messiah, Patriarch of Syrian Church on Kanni 2, 1912, (September 17, 1912) at Niranam Church.

*Reference :* Rev. Dr. T.G. Zachariah : Illustrated Biography of His Holiness the Catholicos (1962) (Malayalam) Translation is by the author.

Chapter Eleven

APPENDIX VII-B

THE STATHICON (II) ISSUED BY MAR ABDUL MESSIAH II

In the name of the Self-existent, Eternal, necessary Existence upholding all; to Him be praises for ever. The feeble Ignatius Abdeomsecho II, Patriarch of the Apostolic Throue of Antioch.

(Seal of the Patriarch)

May divine peace and heavenly blessing abide and rest upon the crowns of our blessed blest dear ones who dwell and inhabit in the land of Malabar, protected by God; Catholicos and Metropolitan, head of the Dioceses of the faithful people and priests and monks and Deacons and stewards and elders and youths infants and children and the nobles and the common people and men and women and all our chidren and upon their homes and upon their farms and fields and upon all what they have; by the prayers of the Mother of the living and of the Apostle Mar Thoma and the holy Apostles and his comrades. So be it. Amen.

After repeating the blessings we inform your true love that from the time your letters reached our feeble self in Mediad we became greatly sorrowful about the confusion that Abdulla Afhand has shown in Malabar among our spiritual children and in all the Churches we have in Malabar and immediately divine compelled us and placing our hope upon God Almighty we rose up and setout to reach Malabar according to your request.

The merciful Lord directed us in our way without troubles and hindrances and brought us to you in Malabar in peace and from our enquiries we found that the Metropolitan Dionysius of Malabar and all those who follow him are sincere and we assembled the Association in the Parumala Seminary and we understood your need and the uncanonical acts of Abdulla Abhand and sorrow came and filled our heart by the confusion and slaughter done among the innocent lambs of Malabar. I hope our beloved and spiritual ones, you will understand that these acts are not from God but from Satan. The works of God are known to be peace and concord and love etc. and Our God Messiah has not killed any one or commanded to kill but gave Himself for His innocent flock. Our Lord Jesus Christ commanded His disciples to give them life for His flock. And again he commanded "The tree is known from its fruits". By this, know that those who act against the commandment of our Lord do not help His Church but lead astray the innocents. They say we help the Apostolic Throne of Antioch, but do not understand that the establishment of the Throne is not by murder or greedings or deceit or by fraud or by the desire of temporal powers. For these are not born from divine zeal but from the desire of the world and of the body. Understand, our dear children, be careful about yourselves that you may not err. Depart from such paths that you may posses eternal life. Now

then with great sorrow we pray of our Lord Jesus who by His Holy Spirit showed us that it is good to fulfil your request and your need. For this cause according to your request, by the grace of God we have consecrated the Maphrian, that is Catholicos in the name of Baselios Paulose and three new Prelates, the first being Geevarghese Gregorios and the second Yoyakim Ivanios and the third Geevarghese Philoxenos.

Since we understood that if we do not consecrate the Catholicos our Church of Malabar will not continue in purity and holiness for many reasons. Now then we know that by the power of the Lord she will be sustained for ever in her purity and holiness and that more than before she shall be established in the communion of the bond of love towards the Throne of Antioch and this is the joy of my heart. And now, Oh my children, remain in peace, let me go according to will of God. You shall believe that even if I go, I will not at all forget you but will always raise my eyes to heaven and offer prayers and petitions for you who are innocent lamps, brought by the invaluable blood of the Messiah, the Saviour. Pray for us and for the whole of our community. Be in love and peace and concord. Pray for enemies and for those who curse you vainly. You shall not fear from the uncanonical and causeless depositions and curses of the extortioner. Do not give heed to those who make confusion. May God requite them according to their works whether good or bad. I entrust you in the hands of our Lord Jesus Christ, the great shepherd and he shall keep you.

And I have hope that your shepherds, that is the Catholicos and the Metropolitans shall fulfil your every need. The Catholicos along with the Metropolitans shall consecrate for you chief priests and hallow for you the Holy Mooron in accordance with canons of the Holy Fathers. And when a Catholicos shall die, there is permission and authority to your prelates to consecrate in his place one as Catholicos and there is no power to any body to restrain you from it. Everything shall be done in order according to custom in consultation with the members of the committee of which the President is the Metropolitan Dionysius of Malabar. We require of your love and admonish you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ that you shall not slacken from your Petrine Faith upon which our Holy Catholic Apostolic Church has been built and we command your true love that you shall not separate from the communion of the bond of love towards the Apostolic Throne of Antioch, by reason of the uncanonical acts of one extortioner. I know that you are obedient and discerning like your Holy Fathers of old. This is enough for your understanding.

From little you understand, you understand much. Be sound in the Lord. Again we implore from our Lord Jesus Christ who extended his Holy Hand upon His Holy Apostles in the upper chamber of Sion and blessed them that He may extend His Lordly right hand full of mercy and blessings along with our feeble right hand and bless all of you and forgive your debts and sins and propitiate your faithful departed and make you and your departed ones hear that gladdening voice saying to the children on the right, "You who are blessed of my Father, come and enter and inherit the kingdom of heaven which has been prepared for you from before the foundation of the world". By the prayer of Mary the Mother of God and of all the saints, both male and female and of the Holy Apostle and of the Apostle Mar Thoma the protector of India, Amen.

Written on the 8th day of the month of February (Sheboth) in the year of Our Lord 1913.

From the Parumala Seminary.

Reference Chapter Eleven

*Note* : Quoted from : Dr. Alex Paul Urumpackal : The Juridical status of the Catholicos of Malabar : Appendix I Pp. 137-140.

## APPENDIX VIII

### LETTER OF RECONCILIATION FROM PATRIARCH

No. 447

In the name of Almighty, Perfect in Essence, Eternal, the feeble Ignatius Yakoub III, Patriarch of the Apostolic Throne of Antioch and all the East,

(Seal)

May divine peace and Apostolic blessings, by the prayers of Mary the Mother of God and of all saints, both men and women, abide by and abound for ever on our beloved brethren Metropolitans, honourable Cor Episcopas, deacons and upon the faithful Syrian community in Malankara and India within the jurisdiction of the apostolic throne of St. Peter of Antioch and all the East. Amen.

Having regard to your spiritual and personal welfare, we say, our Lord declared : "Blessed are the peace-makers for they shall be called the children of God." How sweet, melodious and entrapturing is the word 'Peace'; for peace builds up the destroyed, closes the fissures, unites the hearts, gathers together the separated sections of and brings the children of the one Church to unity.

Following the five thousand years during which heaven remained angry towards earth, God by His redeeming act of incarnation offered, in a month similar to this, that divine peace to the universe.

It is not a secret that that the dispute weich began nearly fifty years ago weakend and depleted the Church in many ways. From the beginning, many well-wishers of the Church and devotees, although they desired peace and unity, a solution and an end to the dispute, passed away sad and disappointed. We also had for long wished to see peace in the Church and unity among the members of the same body.

We had expressed this wish to you in our formal letter sent immediately after our ascension on the throne of the Holy Patriarchate of Antioch. Our Lord is pleased to remove this difference through us, which feeling has been gaining strength in us from day to day. Glory be to Him.

By this, we accept Mar Baselios Geevarghese as Catholicos in order to establish peace in Malankara Church.

Therefore, in this month of peace which you enjoy and celebrate, we extend our warm and hearty greetings of peace. We pray that God may shower His choicest blessings. May God enrich you with health, wealth, prosperity so

that by virtue of the saving acts pleasing to Him, you may become a privileged and blessed community.

Be it so, by His Grace, of God the Father and Holy Spirit. Amen.

Our Father who art in Heaven.....

Issued from our Palace at Homs,  
Syria on 9th December 1958  
the second year of our  
Patriarchal tenure.

Reference : Chapter Fourteen.

Quoted by Rev. Dr. K. C. Thomas (Thomas Mar Maccarios) in Mar Thoma Sleehayude Simhasanam Oru Naveena Srishtiyo. Annexure I. Pp. i-iii, (Malayalam); Translation by the author.

## APPENDIX IX

### LETTER OF RECONCILIATION FROM CATHOLICOS

No. 105

In the name of the Triune God, who is Eternal, Perfect in Essence (To Him be praise)

The feeble Geevarghase II, Baseliος Catholicos on the apostolic throne of the East of St. Thomas the Apostle.

May divine grace and apostolic blessings abide forever by our beloved Metropolitans, priests, deacons and the faithful in our See.

We were in a state of sorrow because the efforts the late Metropolitan Mar Geevarghese Dionysius and ourselves had made to end the longstanding unhappiness and strife in the Church could not establish peace. However, we are immensely happy and glorify God now that we have united, having expressed the desire and willingness to unite ending the unhappiness and strife.

We are pleased to accept Moran Mar Ignatius Yakoub III as Patriarch of Antioch for the sake of ensuring Peace in Malankara Church subject to the Constitution in vogue which was adopted by the Malankara Syrian Christian Association.

We are also happy to receive those Metropolitans under his obedience in Malankara subject to the provisions of the Constitution.

May the grace and blessings of Almighty God abide with you for ever. Be it so, with the prayers of Virgin Mary, Mother of God, St. Thomas the Apostle and Protector of India and all saints both men and women, Amen.

Our Father, Who Art in Heaven.....

1958 December 16,  
Catholicate Palace  
Kottayam.

Reference : Chapter Fourteen

Quoted by Rev. Dr. K.C. Thomas, in Mar Thoma Sleehayude Simhasanam Dru Naveena Srishtiyo. Annexure II Pages iii-iv, (Malayalam), Translation by the author.

APPENDIX X

PAULOS PHILOXENOS  
METROPOLITAN

Gethesemene Ashram Piramadam  
Mannathoor P.O.  
Tel. Moovattupuzha  
Kerala State, India  
22.12.'58

His Holiness Catholicos, Moran Mar Baselios II

I praise the Lord that after years of unhappiness in the Church, it has been possible by the grace of God to end the strife and achieve unity on the 16th of this month.

I believe that the future programmes of the Church will be carried out splendidly under your direction. In regard to their implementation, I solemnly submit that I will follow the canons of the Church, the Constitution in force, and the directions of Your Holiness issued from time to time.

Paulos Mar Philoxenos  
Metropolitan  
Kandanad Diocese

*Reference* : Dn. T. G. Zacharia. Illustrated Biography of His Holiness the Catholicos—1962. P ; 82 (Malayalam) Translation by the author.

Chapter : Fourteen.

## APPENDIX XI

### SPEECH DELIVERED BY POULOS MAR PHILOXENOS ON 26.12.1958

His Holiness the Catholicos, Brother Metropolitans, parish representatives and other members

I consider it a great privilege to say a few words on this occasion. We had offered intense prayers and worked hard for this peace. By God's will we could come together and think over Church's future.

We will remain under the banner of the Catholicate till the moon and stars last. This Catholicate will last here for ever. May God be pleased that we all will stand united under the leadership of this Catholicos who graces the throne.

I do not mean political or temporal matters. We have now the privilege of witnessing for our Lord unitedly under the stewardship of one Head. May this unity serve as a lead to all other Churches of India to fall in line under this common Father.

We Metropolitans will hand in hand serve under the holy throne of Catholicate. May this bond of friendship and mutual understanding with the Patriarchate of Antioch ever increase in us. May it please God that the Churches in India which stand separated come under the Catholicate and witness for our Lord. May our unity lead the way.

*Reference* : Dr. T.G. Zacharia. "Illustrated Biography of His Holiness the Catholicos (Malayam) 1962. P : 81. Translation is by the author.

Chapter : Fourteen.

APPENDIX XII-A

SECRETARIES OF MALANKARA SYRIAN CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION

<i>Secretary</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Malankara Metropolitan</i>
E. M. Philip		Pulikottil Joseph Mar Dionysius
K. V. Chacko	1911	Vattasseril Geevarghese Mar Dionysius
K. K. Thomas	1931 - 34	
K. M. Mathan Mappilla	1934 -	
Fr. K. David		Catholicos Mar Geevarghese II
Ramban M. C. Kuriakose	1943 - 46	
M. P. Joseph	1947 - 50	
E. I. Joseph	1951 - 65	
P. C. Abraham	1966 - 80	Catholicos Mar Ougen Catholicos Mar Thoma Mathews I
E. J. Joseph	1980 - 85	
Paul Mathai	1985 -	
	December 27	

Reference : Chapter Sixteen

APPENDIX XII-B

CO TRUSTEES ELECTED BY MALANKARA ASSOCIATION

<i>Year of Election</i>	<i>Clergy Trustee</i>	<i>Duration</i>	<i>Lay Trustee</i>	<i>Duration</i>
1870	Punnathra Chacko Chanda pilla Kathanar	1870-86	Kulangara Ittychan Pailey	1870 — ?
1886	Konat Kora Yohannan Kathanar	1886-92	Kunnumpurath Kora Ulahannan, Kottayam	1886-1901
1892	Konat Kora Mathan Malpan	1892-1911		
1901	—		C. J. Kurien (Kunnum- purath Ulahannan Kora), Kottayam	1901-11
1911	Palappalil Mani Paulose Kathanar Pampakuda	1911-58	Chirakadavil Kora Kochu Korula, Kottayam (d. 1931)	1911-31
1931	—	—	E. I Joseph, Kottayam	1931 58
1958	Manalil Jacob Kathanar	1958-65	Ooppoottil Kurien Abraham, Kottayam	1558-80
1965	T. S. Abraham Cor Episcopa	1965-82	—	
1980	—		P. C. Abraham, Kottayam	1980. —
1982	Konat Abraham Malpan	1928	—	

## APPENDIX XIII

## MALANKARA SYRIAN CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION MEETINGS

<i>Sl. No.</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Venue</i>	<i>President</i>	<i>Elected Trustees</i>	<i>Managing Committee</i>	<i>Catholicos/ Metropolitan Designates</i>	<i>Other Decisions</i>
<b>PRE-MULANTHURUTHY REPRESENTATIVE MEETINGS</b>							
1.	1653	Aalangad	—	—	—	Arch-deacon Thomas	Set up advisory council of four members.
2.	1836 (Jan. 16)	St. Mary's Church Mavelikara	Cheppad Mar Dionysius	—	—	—	Rejected Bishop Wilson's proposals. Decided to sever connections with CMS
3.	1843	Kandanad	Mathews Mar Athanasius	—	—	—	Appraised the appointment of Mar Athanasius by the Patriarch.
4.	1869	—	Pulikottil Joseph Mar Dionysius V	i. Punnathra Chacko Chandapilla Kathanar ii. Kulangara Ittychan Piley	—	—	—
<b>MULANTHURUTHY SYNOD AND AFTER</b>							
1.	1876 (1051 Midhunam 15-17)	Mulanthuruthy	Patriarch Peter III	—	Clergy 8 Laity 16	—	Decreed 18 Canons Established Malankara Syrian Christian Association.

2. 1886 (1062 Chingam 31)	Old Seminary	Pulikottil Joseph Mar Dionysius V	i. Konat Kora Yohannan Kathanar ii. Kunnumpurath Kora Ulahannan	—	—	—
3. 1892 (March 30 1067 Meenam 19)	—do—	—do—	Konat Kora Mathan Malpan	—	—	—
4. 1895 November 21 (1071 Vrischikam 7)	—do—	—do—	Re-elected Konat Kora Mathan Malpan	—	—	—
5. 1901 April 24 1076 Medam 12	—do—	—do—	Kunnumpurath Ulahannan Kora, (C.J. Kurien)	—	—	—
6. 1908 Feb. 27 (1083 Kumbham 15)	—do—	—do—	—	—	i. Vattasseril Geevarghese Kathanar.	Designated Vattasseril Geevarghese Kathanar as Malankara Metro- politan, succeeding Pulikottil Mar Dionysius.
7. 1911 Sep. 7	M.D. Seminary Kottayam	Vattasseril Geevarghese Mar Dionysius	i. Palapallil Mani Paulose Kathanar ii. Chirakadavil Kora Kochu Korula	—	ii. Kochuparampil Paulose Ramban i. Vakathanam Geevarghese Ramban ii. Kallacheril Punnose Ramban iii. Pampadi Kuria- kose Ramban	—

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
8. 1925 May 1	St. Mary's Church Niranam	—do—	—	—	—	Elected Vakan- thanam Geevarghese Mar Philoxenos as Catholicos desig- nate	—
9. 1930 Sep. 4	Old Seminary	—	—	—	33 members elected	Metropolitan Designates i. K.T. Geevar- ghese Ramban, Kizhakkeveetil Puthenkav ii. Valakuzhiyil Ouseph Kathanar, Mallapally iii. Paret Mathews Kathanar, Puthuppally iv. Fr. Alexios of Bethany v. Malpan Cheria- madhathil Scaria vi. K.C. Chacko	i. Elected more members to the Constitution Committee. ii. Draft Constitu- tion to be submitted to the Association within one year iii. Appointed a Committee to draft a constitu- tion with O M Cherian as Convener.
10. 1931 July 10	M.D. Seminary	—do—	—do—	Lay Trustec Erikat E.I. Joseph Kottayam	—	—	Establishment of a theological College.
11. 1934 (Dec. 26)	M.D. Seminary Kottayam	Catholicos Geevarghese Mar Baselios	—	Secretary K.M. Mathan Mappilla	—	—	The office of Malankara Metro- politan was vested

12. 1951 (May 17)	—do—	—do—	Clergy 22 Laity 44 Nominated 15	i. Vattakkunel Mathews Kathanar ii. P.E. Daniel Kathanar	i. Amended the Constitution. ii. Raised the strength of Managing Committee.	in the Catholics. i. Adopted a constitution. ii. Introduced the Catholicate Fund.
13. 1958 (Dec. 26)	Puthencav	—do—	i. Manalil Jacob Kathanar ii. Ooppoottil Kurien Abraham	—	All Metropolitan of Patriarchal Party were recognised.	
14. 1959 (Sept. 16)	M.D. Seminary Kottayam	—do—	—	Clergy 24 Laity 48 Nominated 18	—	
15. 1962 (May 17)	St. Mary's Church, Niranam	—do—	—	—	Elected Ougen Mar Timotheos as Catholicate designatc.	
16. 1965 (Dec. 28)	M.D. Seminary Kottayam	Catholicos Timotheos Mar Ougen	Very Rev. T.S. Abraham Cor Episcopa	Clergy 29 Laity 57 Nominated 22	i. C.T. Thomas Ramban ii. Malpan N.A. Youhanon iii. Rev. Fr. K. Philipos iv. Rev. Fr. Paul Varghese v. Rev. Fr. M.V. George	

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
17. 1970 (Dec. 31)	M.D. Seminary Kottayam	Catholicos Timotheos Mar Ougen	—	—	Clergy 29 Laity 57 Nominated 22	—	Elected Mathews Mar Athanasius as Catholicos designate.
18. 1974 (Oct. 2)	St. Mary's Church, Niranam	Mathews Mar Ivanios, Senior Metropolitan	—	—	do—	1. Fr. M.V. George Munduveilil, Mavelikara. 2. Fr. K.C. Thomas Kuttikandathil Ayroor. 3. Fr. Paul Varghese 4. Fr. K.K. Punnose. 5. Fr. P.V. Joseph	—
19. 1977 (May 16)	M.S.S. High School, Mavelikara	Catholicos Baselios Mar Thoma Mathews I	Lay Trustee Ooppoottil Kurien Abraham	—	Clergy 29 Laity 57	1. Fr. K.K. Mathew Kallarakaparam- bil Vengola, Perumbavur. 2. Fr. Youhanon Chakkala Parambil, Kottayam. 3. Fr. T.E. George Thevervelil Kozhencherry. 4. Fr. M.M Jacob Mazhuvanchery Ayyambilly. 5. Ramban C. Zacharia Mulamoottil Kundara.	Elected Mathews Mar Kurilos, Metropolitan of Quilon as Catho- licos designate.

20. 1980 (May 1)	M.D. Seminary Kottayam	—do—	Lay Trustee P.C. Abraham	Clergy Laity	38 76	—
21. 1982 (Dec. 28)	M.G.M. High School, Tiruvalla	—	Clergy Trustee Konat Abraham Malpan			Metropolitan designates : 1. Ramban K.G. Geevarghese M.A., Keeyath Othara. 2. Fr. Philipose Thomas M.Th Puthenparambil Naranganam, Kozhencherry. 3. Fr. K.T. Thomas M.Ed. B.D. Kizhakkethalak- kal, Puthencav. 4. Fr. K.J. Paul M.A., B.D. Mangat Kollanoor Kunnamkulam. 5. Fr. K. Mathai B.Sc., B.Ed. Koottazhikath Chenkulam.
22. 1985 (Oct. 23)	M.D. Seminary Kottayam	—do—	—	Clergy Laity	30 60	The Strength of the Managing Com- mittee from 20 dioceses was fixed at 138. Clergy Elected 36 Nominated 10 Laity Elected 72 Nominated 20

## APPENDIX XIV

### THE STATICON OF MAR PAULOSE II

No. 383 75

Sept. 8, 1975

We do still remember with appreciation, your love and earnestness towards us and the Holy Apostolic Throne of Antioch and all the East. This attachment is deeprooted being something inherited from your venerable forefathers of happy memory.

When we reached there in 1964, for the ordination of Augen Catholicos, we had only one thing in our mind, the peace and progress of our church in Malankara. But Catholicos Augen and his partisans, since then, were unceasingly trying to uproot from there, the Holy See of antioch and all the East and establish a ficticious Throne of St. Thomas, whereby their whole idea was to wipe off all connections with the St. Peter's Throne of Antioch.

They substantiated their evil aim by their speeches, publications and activities. We were watching the developments there with much concern, and as the Supreme Head of the Church we gave them timely admonishments. At last when we found that further waiting could only endanger the position of our Holy See and the belief of our people, we decided to assemble the Holy Synod of our church, as its supreme guardian. We invited the Catholicos and his Metropolitans also to the Holy Synod. But they did not care to attend the Synod and even become so rebellious, as to pass resolutions in their so-called local Synod, against attending the Holy Synod of our Church. It was then so clear, that they were all out for a clean fight against the Holy Throne of Antioch.

As fixed, the Holy Synod met at our Headquarters at Damascus and the Metropolitans who are obedient to our Holy See in Malankara, Co-operated with us in the synod. The synod discussed in detail the unholy position taken up by Catholicos and his partisans, The Holy Synod passed certain declarations against the stand of the Catholicos and his Metropolitans. Even after this, we, as the Supreme Head of the Church and with all kindness and consideration befitting to a spiritual Father, informed the Catholicos and his Metropolitans of the impending disastrous consequences, bequeathing them to an honourable settlement of the differences. But all in vain. They arrogantly persisted in their rebellious stand, with the result, that in view of the decisions and recommendations of the Holy Synod, we had to proclaim Catholicose Augen and all his partisan Metropolitans, and all those who follow them in their illegal and illadvised stand of upholding the ficticious Throne of St. Thomas and rejecting all connections with the Throne of St. Peter at Antioch,

as heretics and aliens to the Holy Syrian Orthodox Church and as such, having lost all their membership in the Holy Church. It is the will of God, that these persons, in the end, are to reap the consequences of their malicious intentions and actions.

Situations being such, for guiding our church there, we wanted somebody. And as per complete agreement between all the Venerable Metropolitans of our Holy Church, Our beloved Paulose Mar Philoxenose Metropolitan is found to be worthy to become the new Catholicose of the East in the place of the dethroned and dismembered Augen. Accordingly by the dispensation of the Holy Spirit, we have consecrated him as Catholicose of the East on Sept 7, 1975, at our Head Quarters in Damascus, with authority under the Holy See of Antioch and all the East to administer the Holy church there, and do things, which may be deemed fit for the progress of our church and community.

In this context, we do hereby exhort all our beloved spritual children to accept him in due honour and co operate with him in every respect, given him whatever support, you can, so that may be strengthened to buffet against the troubled waves and pilot the ship which is the church of Christ, our Lord, to the quiet harbour of peace and progress.

We conclude this letter, with expectations and prayers. May God Almighty shower on you all, His Choicests and bless you and every member of your family with long and prosperous life, that all our activities may flourish to the greater Glory of His Holy Name.

Reference : Chapter Eighteen

Reproduced from Dr. Alex Paul Urumpackal's book 'The Juridical Status of the Catholicos of Malabar'—Appendix IV Pp. 149-151.







## APPENDIX XVI

### JACOBITE PLEDGE 1975

We pledge in the name of Father, Son and Holy Spirit that :

We, the members of Catholic, Apostolic, One and Holy Orthodox Syrian Church under the spiritual authority of Moran Mar Ignatius, Patriarch of Antioch and all the East, celebrating on the Apostolic throne of St. Peter ;

Will stand firm for ever in the faith, canons and orders entrusted for once by the holy fathers by the Holy Spirit at the Councils of Nicaea, Constantinople and Ephesus;

Will not concede any change in the Orthodox faith drawn by our forefathers;

Do not have any relationship with the modern 'Indian Orthodox Church' of the Catholicos, who self-qualified himself as celebrating on the self-and newly created throne of St. Thomas the Apostle which goes against the Holy Evangelion (gospel), Holy Synods of our fathers and tradition;

Will call ourselves as 'Malankara Jacobite Syrian Church' only which our Church derived nationally from ancient times.

Declare once again that we reject the Catholicos and the Metropolitans siding with him for ever, since they became aliens to the Holy Church consequent on their schism and heresies and since they defied the chief of the Holy Church, blessed Patriarch Moran Mar Ignatius Yakoub III notwithstanding admonition to the contrary;

Will not allow the Catholicos and his partisans entrance to the churches established with the aims of preserving orthodox faith and ensuring holiness of life and salvation of soul and in those that will be established in future; and also will protect the sacred character of our churches and other establishments at whatever cost; and will not forget the holy Patriarchate of Antioch so long as we and our descendant generations live but will continue to preserve it till the last breath upholding the pledge which our forefathers took at Coonen Cross in this city in 1653.

May the intercessionary prayers of Holy Virgin Mary, Mother of God, of St. Peter, the Chief of Apostles, St. Thomas the evangelist and protector of India and all other holy men and women, be with us, Amen.

Reference : Report in Church Weekly. March 2, 1975. in Malayalam. Translation by the author.

Chapter Eighteen.

APPENDIX XVII- A

**ZAIL SINGH**  
*President of India*

[Address by Giani Zail Singh, President of India at the 70th Anniversary Celebrations of the re-establishment of the Catholicate of the Orthodox Syrian Church of the East at Kottayam on September 12, 1982.]

I am glad to be here this afternoon to associate myself with the celebrations to mark the 70th anniversary of the revival of the Catholicate of the Orthodox Church. Christianity came to India much earlier than in most countries and received warm welcome. It is known that St. Thomas, the Apostle of Christ, reached the Coast of Malabar in 52 A.D.

India has been the treasure house of spiritual knowledge and all religious thoughts have been traditionally acknowledged and preserved. A characteristic feature of India's ancient culture has been toleration and respect for all religions. This in turn has enriched the country's heritage. Our secular approach is the only right approach in a country like ours with diverse religious faiths and a long tradition of composite culture.

This is the glorious tradition of our country based upon respect for all religions. Through long periods of history our country has cherished the idea of unity in diversity. We have always believed that the eternal values of mankind like Truth, Love, Compassion, Devotion are common to all religions governing the human conduct. It may be recalled that these values also shaped our freedom struggle led by Mahatma Gandhi and our basic national policies of secularism, socialism and democracy.

Christians, who constitute a significant section of our population, have played a constructive role in the affairs of our country. Many of them have held high positions in the public life of this country. I am told that the Orthodox Church is very active in the educational, social, economic and humanitarian fields and is running a number of schools, colleges, industrial training centres, orphanages and hospitals. My compliment to leaders and members of this Church for their constructive and nation-building activities.

Concern for the uplift of downtrodden masses of this country is felt by all right thinking people. Many schemes for their betterment have been launched by the Government in recent years. These efforts of Government need to be supplemented by voluntary organisations like this Church. It is good to know that this Church, as part of its Saphthathi Celebrations, has decided to build 70 houses and distribute them among the poor families in different parts of the State.

understand that these celebrations are being attended by a number of foreign dignitaries from friendly countries. I welcome all of them and wish them a pleasant stay. I hope they would carry back happy memories of their sojourn here.

I thank the organisers for inviting me here and enabling me to inaugurate the Saphathi Celebrations of the Orthodox Syrian Church of the East. I wish you all success in your future endeavours.

JAI HIND

#### APPENDIX XVII-B

##### ILIA II

##### *Catholicos-Patriarch of All Georgia*

(The Speech of His Holiness ILIA II, Catholicos-Patriarch of All Georgia made during the visit to India in connection with the Saphathi Celebrations).

Your Holiness, dearly beloved in Christ brother BASELIUS MARTHOMA MATHEWS I, Patriarch - Catholicos of the East, Metropolitan of Malankara, Eminent Bishops, Sons and Daughters of the Indian Orthodox Church.

We've come to India from far-off Georgia, the country where the greatest sanctity of the world, the Robe of Our Lord Jesus Christ is preserved. The history of our two countries and their Churches is very old and too much complex. As we know, the Churches of Georgia and India are the oldest among the Churches of the East; both, they are Apostolic as the Georgian Church was founded by the Apostles Andrew, the First Called, and Simon, the Canaanite, and the enlighteners of the Indian Church were the Apostles Thomas and Thadeus. These two Churches have different traditions but at the same time they both were and are today the National Churches.

We do know quite well, that the Indian people, as the people of Georgia defended and preserved their rich and inimitable national culture from foreign invaders in the centuries-long fierce fight and resistance. The oldest Indian culture made a great influence on the culture of the whole world. From the ancient times, Georgia, because of its territorial position, was considered the crossroad between the Europe and Asia. According to our chronicle "The Life of Georgia," the relations between Georgia and India began in the 5th century, during the reign of the King Vakhtang Gorgasali. The relations between Georgian and Indian nations were clearly depicted in the Georgian literature.

The Georgian writers and politicians had the deep knowledge of the Indian Philosophy and were well acquainted with her poetry. The Georgian literary work 'Wisdom of Balavar', which originally was written in Georgian and in the 11th century translated into Greek by the Georgian monk Ekvtime Mtatsmindeli, depicts the turning to Christianity the King of India Abaness and his Son Iodanaph. Besides this, the Georgian classical poetry, as "The Knight in the Panther's Skin", "Amiran Daredjaniani", "Iamariani" and others, give us a lot of interesting facts about India. As the example of the tight political and cultural relations between Georgia and India, we can name the fact that the Georgian woman was the Queen of India in the 17th century. She had such a great influence on her husband Shah Daroon that turned him to Christianity.

So, our nations have the great and the long-century history. This is my third visit to India. The first two were made during the time of my being the Metropolitan. Especially I do recall my second visit in September of 1976, when I had the opportunity of getting to know much closer the life of the Indian people and her unique culture. The especially warm memories are connected with the day, when we were received by the Prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi. During this meeting I was assured once more what a great person she is and what a significant role she leads in the life of her country.

The great progress of India in the spheres of the economical and political life during the recent years, brings us much heartfelt joy, which overflows our hearts because of the brotherly cooperation between India and Soviet Union. We do believe, that the fraternal relations between our countries will be of a much help to the great mission of achieving and preserving peace in the world.

Your Holiness, with brotherly love in Christ, I do greet you on behalf of the Saint Synod of the Georgian Church and personally myself. The 1750 years and 70 years anniversary of re-establishment the Catholicate of the East in India, are the dates of the great importance in the history of your Church.

We ask the Almighty God to grant Your Holiness the long, prosperous years filled with health and happiness and the Church of St. Apostle Thomas much more growth and flourish. With special feelings of love, I greet you on behalf of the Georgian people and our Apostolic Church, because the head of St. Thomas: the enlightner of your country, is preserved in Georgia, in the Sioni Patriarchal Cathedral.

"O Lord, save Thy people and bless Thine inheritance". Amen.

ILIA II  
Catholicos-Patriarch of  
All Georgia, President of  
the World Council of Churches.



To His Holiness  
Baselios Mar Thoma Mathews  
Catholicos of the East

I am very appreciative of your gesture in inviting me to send a representative to the celebrations to be held on 5-12 September 1982, the seventieth anniversary of the re-establishment in India of the Catholicate of the East.

I know that the Indian Catholic Bishops, priests and faithful will also be participating in the anniversary celebrations of an event of such importance. The presence of a delegation from the Holy See will be in itself a sign of the degree of communion which we already enjoy, and will help to strengthen and foster the unity of all those who believe in Christ.

It is with these sentiments that I am happy to send a delegation from the Catholic Church to join the other guests and delegations at the seventieth-anniversary celebrations, and with them to share in the ceremonies, prayers and studies which are to mark that anniversary.

I assure you of my earnest prayers to God for Your Holiness, your clergy and faithful, for the unity of the Orthodox Syrian Church in India.

From the Vatican, 2 August 1982

*Joannes Paulus P. I.*

APPENDIX XVII-D

**MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS DIMITRIOS,**  
*Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople*

as delivered by H. E. Metropolitan Emilianos of Silibria,  
at Kottayam, September 12, 1982.

Your Holiness Baselius Mar Thoma Mathews I, Catholicos of the East; Your Holiness Patriarch Ilia of All Georgia; Your Eminences, Excellencies, friends,

This ecclesiastical feast of the Seventieth Anniversary of the re-establishment in India of the Catholicate of the East, a feast of the ancient See of your venerable Church, acquires today a wider dimension for all of us. It has drawn us together from all the sister churches, because the re-establishment of the Catholicate is part of the growth into stability of the whole Body of Christ.

In the last few decades we have, not only entered into a theological dialogue between our two churches, but registered definite and enormous progress in our rapprochement. We have, in all humility and honesty, rediscovered together our convergence on matters of faith by being reminded that the unhappy developments in the history of the relations between our two churches, during the period between the two ecumenical councils of Ephesus (381) and Chalcedon (451) were mostly due to non-theological factors. This rediscovery has a positive bearing for our common mission in the world.

Our churches are today engaged in the most promising efforts for spiritual renewal, by our common witness to the rich patrimony of the Holy Fathers of the East, to the discipline and spirituality of our ascetic life, to our rich liturgical and hymnographic heritage—all of which have a relevant message to a frustrated world desperately longing for a word of cheer and hope of salvation from the Lord.

This is indeed a blessed occasion for expressing our gratitude to the Triune God for all the blessings so richly bestowed on this your holy sister church throughout her long history. The remarkably high level of your clergy trained in a widely known theological seminary and the numerous excellent and highly esteemed theologians actively participating in all ecumenical gatherings are all signs of the intellectual and spiritual vitality and the enormous potentiality still formed in the ancient church established by the Holy Apostle St. Thomas. These resources are a portent and promise for the spread of the Gospel of Jesus Christ in India.

His Holiness, the Ecumenical Patriarch Dimitrios—I, with all the Holy Synod, extend to all of your bishops, clergy and laity, their heartfelt greetings, and express the wish that this jubilee may become a stimulus for further spiritual attainments in peace and unity, and in prosperity by the Holy spirit.

Dimitrios, Ecumenical Patriarch.

APPENDIX XVII-E

PIMEN

*Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia*

His Holiness Baselius Mar Thoma Mathews I  
Patriarch-Catholicos of all the East  
Metropolitan of Malankara  
Kottayam, Kerala, India.

Your Holiness, Beloved Brother in the Lord,

With great inspiration and profound spiritual joy we heard the news about the celebrations to be held on the occasion of the 1750th anniversary of the establishment of the Catholicate of the Malabar Orthodox Syrian Church and on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the transference of the Catholicos's See to India.

These remarkable anniversaries once again remind us of the deep historical roots of the Orthodox Church in the East and her centuries-old traditions rooted in the Apostolic Tradition.

It gives us a great joy to greet you warmly on behalf of the plentitude of the Russian Orthodox Church on this great and remarkable occasion in the life of your Church.

These celebrations have great significance for the Russian Orthodox Church; and though the historic fortunes of our Churches differ, we have one Apostolic Tradition and one Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed which gives us confidence and hope for a future conciliar unity in the spirit of the Ancient One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church.

Since the revival of the Catholicate in India, our mutual ties and contacts have grown, contributing to a deeper and fuller awareness of the community of our Christian ideals.

Sending greetings to Your Holiness and your great flock in these days joyful for the whole Orthodox World, I take the liberty of noting the services rendered by many hierarchs, clerics and laymen of the Malabar Church for establishing better understanding between our two Churches. Among them are His Holiness the late Baselios Augen I of the blessed memory with his exceptional contribution, Metropolitan Poulos Mar Gregorios and Metropolitan Philippos Mar Theophilos who were and remain the faithful friends of the Russian Orthodox Church.

I am confident that the celebrations held by the Malabar Church will contribute to making a fresh evaluation of the experience of the Christian life

preserved from the time when Apostles Thomas and Thaddaeus preached and increased through centuries by the faithful sons of the Church, and to gathering together the cultural and theological traditions and to turning these celebrations into a true spiritual triumph of the Church of Christ.

We pray that the Saviour through His co-presence (Mt. 18, 20) may bless the work of your hierarchs, clerics and laymen so that they may continue and multiply the remarkable initiatives aimed at creating the inter-Orthodox unity, strengthening the friendship between our people and peace throughout the world.

With constant brotherly faithfulness to Your Holiness,

August 24, 1982  
Moscow.

PIMEN  
Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia

APPENDIX XVII-F

**ROBERT RUNCIE**  
*Archbishop of Canterbury*

It is with much joy that I offer my warm personal greetings to the faithful people of the Orthodox Syrian Church for the 70th Anniversary of the re-establishment in India of the Catholicate of the East on September 12th. I offer thanks to Almighty God for this 70th anniversary and pray that He will abundantly bless all members of the Orthodox Syrian Church.

(September 1, 1982)

## APPENDIX XVIII

### PRESS CONFERENCE STATEMENT OF PATRIARCH

(Rev. Dr. V.C. Samuel)

(Translation from Malayalam)

As one who desires unity of all Christian Churches, Patriarch Ignatius Zakka I's statement at his first Press Conference in Kerala is heartening. Mar Zakka, who is at present on a tour to Kerala, made emphasis on the unity of Churches during his talks. In many of the programmes held on the theme of peace among Churches, both of us had together participated from 1964 onwards when he was Metropolitan Mar Severios. We had also participated together in such consultations with the theologians of Byzantine Churches which included Greek and Russian Churches, and Roman Catholic Church. Besides these two, we had also cooperated in the Conference of the heads of Oriental Orthodox Churches and its subsequent activities. In this background, as one who maintains a bond of friendship with him, I propose to point out certain facts concerning the Statement which he made in the Press Conference.

Patriarch Mar Zakka of to-day, was Mar Severios Zakka, one of those Metropolitans, who had accompanied Patriarch of Antioch during his visit to Kerala in 1964. Eighteen years ago, he had received the hospitality of the entire Malankara Church. To-day, he has not. Why is it ?

Malankara Church and Antiochene Syrian Church.

To put it in brief, it is not with the knowledge of the Church here that the Patriarch has arrived in Malankara. The history of the relationship between Malankara Church and the Antiochene Syrian Church, its character, its duration—are all subjects which deserve careful study. It is not possible here to enter into these subjects which require treatment at length. However, in the last two and a half decades, two incidents took place which help to point out what should be the relationship that be maintained between these Churches. The foremost of them was the peace achieved in Malankara Church in 1958. Consequent of the judgement of the Supreme Court, the two factions in the Church united after half a century of separation. How this unity materialised is very much relevant at this juncture. Peace came into being on the basis of the Constitution of the Church which was recognised by the Supreme Court. Catholicos accepted the Patriarch, the Metropolitans, the priests and the people siding with him subject to the Constitution. On the other side, they reconciled with the Catholicos without setting forth any condition. In effect, the Patriarch fully recognised the integrity and autonomy of Malankara Church.

The second incident was the Conference of Heads of Churches held at Addis Ababa in January 1965. This Conference was convened at the initiative of the Ethiopian Church with the view to ensure unity and cooperation among

the five autonomous Oriental Orthodox Churches of Egypt, Ethiopia, Armenia, Syria and India which maintain close contact and identity in faith. In that Conference, Mar Ignatius Yakoub III, the Syrian Patriarch of Antioch, had given effective leadership. Apart from the heads of each Church, five representatives of each of them also had attended it. In order to continue and maintain the form established by the Conference, it constituted a Standing Committee with two representatives from each of the Churches. In all these, Mar Severios and this writer had a place.

The fundamental principle underlying this Conference and its a subsequent activities was that all the five Churches were autonomous. We had cooperated in the Conference as well as in the Committee as members of autonomous Churches.

Two points are evident from the preceding position :

1. In 1958, the head of Malankara Church was receiving the head of Syrian Church of Antioch, the Patriarch, subject to the Constitution of the Malankara Church. Malankara Church had not admitted the supremacy of the Patriarch too.

2. The only principle which the Addis Ababa Conference adopted was that the Malankara Church and the Syrian Church of Antioch were two autonomous sister Churches.

What happened in Malankara Church ?

After the above two incidents, from 1970 onwards certain changes were discerned in the attitude of the Patriarch. He tried to intervene, without any provocation, but unauthorisedly, in the affairs of Malankara Church. His actions may be summed up as follows :

1. Patriarch Ignatius Yakoub III, who had, while a Ramban stayed in Kerala at a time when the Patriarchal faction had a glorious period, influenced a number of people among his old friends and favourites. This act which ignored the head of the Malankara Church is against the principle of the Church.
2. A novel theory that St. Thomas the Apostle was not even a priest which goes against the tradition of the Church was circulated in Kerala with the particular intention that none shall claim the autonomous stature of the Church on the ground that it was established by St. Thomas, the Apostle.
3. Aprem Aboodi Ramban hailing from Iraq, who, as the guest of autocephalous and autonomous Malankara Church, had earned love and affection of many in the Church, was raised as Metropolitan without the knowledge or consent of Malankara Church and sent him to Kerala who was also tried to be appointed as the Patriarchal delegate to India.
4. Having thus created a congenial climate, a faction, favourable to the Patriarch comprising of those who were considerate to that Metropolitan and others influenced by personal letters, was formed in the Church.
5. With a view to strengthen that party and maintain it in his favour, some priests of the independent Malankara Church were unilaterally consecrated as Metropolitans without observing any principle and also installed a rival Catholicos.

6. In this manner, the Patriarch was, ignoring his self-respect, and by creating a division in Malankara Church which was continuing as one whole, working out a strategy to keep the party sub-servient to his authority.

7. After having fulfilled these, the Patriarch satisfied himself by declaring anathema to the Metropolitans of Malankara Church and the large multitude of their followers continuing in the main Church.

Mar Ignatius Zakka is the successor to Patriarch Mar Ignatius Yakoub III who had performed all these most efficiently. Although Malankara Church respect him as the supreme head of a sister Church, members of the Church are fully aware of the disasters which his predecessor caused in this Church illegally. The successor was declaring that those who astrayed will be accepted if they returned and that doors are kept open to sustain the illegal acts of his predecessor by which he tried to establish his hegemony at least on a section of the people of Malankara. On a careful consideration of the above matters, the following facts are pointed out :

1. After 1958, those who are morally astrayed, are the Patriarch and his partisans.

2. Malankara Church has its own history and integrity (Individuality).

To honour this cause, is the primary responsibility of the Patriarch who expressed his desire for peace in the Church. Without doing this, he has no moral right to talk of peace.

3. The Christian worlds recognise Malankara Church as one of the five autonomous Oriental Churches. The Patriarch admits this fact without any hesitation through the Addis Ababa Conference and its follow-up activities.

4. The Syrian Church of Antioch is one of the Oriental Churches which had opposed the Chalcedon Synod held in 451 A.D. Patriarch Mar Severios of Antioch, who was the unquestioned Father and Malpan of those Churches and who died in 533 A.D., had given the following dictum to be considered in case of a reconciliation with those who accepted it :

The validity of priesthood is not founded on the throne but on maintaining orthodox faith.

This writer considers that it is this principle which should be accepted in regard to the unity of Churches. To-day what is obtained in Kerala is a climate of discord among the members of Malankara Church which uphold same faith same tradition of worship and same nature of Church, created by the actions of Patriarch which destroy the bond of affection among them. Patriarch Mar Ignatius Zakka has special responsibility to solve this problem.

5. It is understood that the rival Catholicos whom the Patriarch who has installed in Malankara is not given the power and freedom of action as attached to that office. If so, is not the Patriarch trying to use a community ignorant of matters concerning the Church, to maintain his supremacy over Malankara ?

*Note :* Originally, this appeared in Malayalam as Supplement to Malankara Sabha Magazine in March 1982—Translation is by the author.

Reference : Chapter Nineteen.

## APPENDIX XIX

### MEMORANDUM SUBMITTED TO OUR HON'BLE CHIEF MINISTER AND HOME MINISTER IN CONNECTION WITH THE VIOLATION OF COURT ORDERS ON 1.2. 1978

In view of some of the recent disturbances of peace in some areas of Central Kerala, connected with our unfortunate church dispute, may I bring the following facts to your kind attention, for prompt action.

1. As you are well aware there are politicians in these areas who would like to use the church dispute for their own political ends and would, for that purpose put pressure on the police to show undue favours to the Patriarch's party, violating prevailing court orders-These political actions by individual politicians are contrary to the law of the country and will in the long term prove to be counter productive. I hope that the leadership of the political parties can enforce some discipline so that individual politicians do not violate the law or put pressure on the police to do things which they are not legally entitled to do.

2. As far as the Malankara Orthodox Church is concerned we are not asking any extra-legal privileges, but merely demanding the protection to which we are entitled under the law, In this connection we whole heartedly welcome the circular order of the Inspector General of Police, No D-5-79409/74 dated 10-10-1974, which instructs all police authorities to act according to two principles.

(a) "if there are court orders, they should be implemented"

(b) "if there are no such orders the statusquo should be maintained."

The I. G. 's orders of 1974 continues,

"The police should not take on themselves the role of adjudicators. But if it is possible to talk to both parties and help them arrive at a compromise, there is no harm in attempting it, without prejudice to the final out come in a Court of Law."

A copy of this circular was forwarded to us by Special Assistant to the Minister for Home Affairs with his letter dated January 17' 1977, indicating that the instructions were still in force in 1977. We would like these instructions to be reiterated to all police officers, since we have observed police actions in violation of these principles.

3. Coming to specific cases. we wish to point out some of the violations in regard to the situation in Perumbavur, Kuruppampady, Palakuzha. Pothanikkad, Kadamattom, Mudavoor, Mulanthuruthi and Alwaye.

#### 4. Perumbavoor (Bethel Sulokho Church)

The legal situation is that the court has fixed times for the Orthodox Group (6.00-8.30 a.m.) and the Patriarch's group. (8.30—11.00 a.m) on all days, management under trust being given to the Patriarch's group. For special feasts like Christmas or Easter, both parties should approach the court and get special arrangements authorized by the Court (Judgement dated 28-11-1974 of Parur Additional Dt. Court in C.M A 44 and 45 of 1973). Conflict arises in relation to feast days. In 1981 Christmas was celebrated by both sides by mutual agreement mediated by the Police. But in 1982 the Police did not permit the Orthodox group to celebrate Christmas, and gave permission only to the Patriarch's group. This year and in coming years the rights of the Orthodox to celebrate Good Friday, Easter, Christmas and other festivals should be respected and protected by the Police, and Police should be instructed not to give protection only to one group.

#### Kuruppampadi

The Additional Munsiff of Perumbavoor has ordered on 15th October 1974, in IA No. 2640/1974 in C. S. No. 350/74 that the names of the Catholicos and Malankara Metropolitan (Baselius Mar Thoma Mathews) and Diocesan Metropolitan (Mar Theophilos) should not be omitted from the prayers. No priest or religious-dignitary other than those appointed by Mar Theophilos are to be inducted into this Church. The trustees and vicar are restrained from doing anything in violation of the Malankara Church Constitution, or against the orders of the Orthodox Catholicos and the Diocesan Metropolitan Mar Theophilos. The senior priest of this parish is Fr. P.A. Paulose, the father of the Finance Secretary Mr. Babu Paul.

All the orders of the court are violated, with the help of the police. We suspect the influence of politicians like Mr. P P. Thankachen and also that civil officials are supporting such violation of law. No priest except those authorized by Mar Theophilos is to enter this church to officiate. But the priests appointed by Mar Theophilos are permitted only under great restriction, while the unauthorised priests have a free way in this Church. The court orders are not being enforced here, and the Police is supporting their violation.

We request prompt action to make sure that the court orders are strictly adhered to in this church : i.e.

(a) not to induct into the church any religious dignitary not ordained or appointed by the Malankara Metropolitan Baselius Mar Thoma Mathews or by the Diocesan Metropolitan Mar Theophilos.

(b) not to obstruct Catholicos Mar Thoma Mathews, Diocesan Metropolitan Mar Theophilos, Vicars and deacons appointed by Mar Theophilos from officiating in the church or from carrying on the administration of the church and its institutions in accordance with the constitution of the Malankara Church by the orders of the Catholicos and Diocesan Metropolitan.

In this connection may we bring to the attention of the Chief Minister and the Home Minister, that a high official of the Kerala Government, Sri Babu Paul, was responsible for the violation of court orders, when under his leader-

ship his father, the Very Revd P.A. Paulose, the defendant in the suit, inducted the Syrian Patriarch into Kuruppampadi Church. The Police was also party to the violation of court Orders. Kerala Government should feel responsible for these misdemeanours of its officials and make amends immediately, by strict enforcement of court orders, and public acknowledgement of Government's own errors and offences in this regard.

**(6) Palakuzha**

Fr. Paulose Kulirankal is the only priest here. There are no court orders against him. There is a temporary order from the court to maintain status quo, that is, to allow Fr. Paulose to function freely. But police have intervened to close this church. This is against the orders of the Court and the Police refuse to give protection to the priest in carrying out his duties. The church should be reopened and Fr. Paulose allowed to function as Priest Vicar.

**(7) Pothanikkad**

Fr. Isaac is the legitimate priest here. There are two court orders: IA 75/581 dated 21-3-1975 in OS 120/75 and IA 818/1974 in QS 120/74 by the Munciff. Muvattupuzha, directing that the rights of the Catholicos party and Fr. Isaac the Vicar should not be interfered with. The court recognises that the constitution of the Malankara Orthodox Church has been in force in this church since 1965. The court has found that the meeting held to change this constitution was invalid.

But the church has been closed and the Catholicos party is not allowed to exercise its legitimate rights. Police should be instructed to give protection to Fr. Isaac the Vicar and for the people acknowledging the legitimate authority of the Malankara Orthodox Church.

**(8) Kadamattom**

This is one of the largest of our northern parishes, with some 8000 members (1500 families). The ruling decree here is from the Parur Dt. Court that this church should be governed under the constitution of the Malankara Orthodox Church and its hierarchy.

The Catholicos party and the Patriarch's party have jointly constituted a Managing Committee to administer the parish and there is an understanding that bishops of both sides would not enter the church. Things were running on this basis since 1973 when the Civil Court gave an injection against the holding of the Parish Pothuyogam.

Trouble has started in 1983, The Patriarch's group has begun to build a chapel for themselves near the church and are inviting their bishops there. The Catholicos party did not obstruct.

The Catholicos side then started a Catholicate Centre near the Church. The Patriarch's party approached the court to restrain the Catholicos group from using the Church road for this purpose. The court did not grant the injunction, but asked that status quo be maintained (order dated 1-2-1983 in OS 38/83).

So the Patriarch's group approached the R. D O and the police. The R.D.O, has given a one-sided order and has forbidden the Catholicos party bishops to use the Church Road, while bishops of the Patriarch's party were allowed to use this road. There is no other access to the Catholicate Centre. The R.D.O. says that the Catholicos Party bishops using that road would be a violation of status quo, and now says only non-bishops on the Catholicos side can use the access road.

This is unfair, and there is no reason why the bishops of one side alone are allowed to use this Church Road.

#### 9. Mudavoor (Muvattupuzha Dt)

The dispute started in 1974, in the Vacation Bench of the High Court and was committed to the Muvattupuzha Mun-iff Court, who ordered equal time for both parties. This order was stayed by the Ernakulam Dt. Court. After hearing both sides the Dt, Court transmitted the case to the Special Court. The Special Court again ordered equal time for both parties, and appointed a Receiver for the administration of the Parish.

On an appeal petition, the High Court (Hon'ble Justice Sukumaran) set aside both the decisions of the Special Court (CMA/10/82 dated 26-3-1982 in OS 184/1977)

The Patriarch group leaders locked up the Church to prevent the Catholicos side from using the Church, and in the process prevented their own people from worshipping in the Church

The people, even on the Patriarchal side, were infuriated at this action of a few leaders, and someone opened the church. The Police intervened and the Dt. Collector proclaimed Section 27 of the Police Act, thus making it impossible for the Catholicos group to worship in the Church. People on the Patriarch side filed a writ petition against the Government action. A few months later, the writ petition against the Government was heard in the High Court, and the Hon'ble Justice U L Bhat in his Judgement on O. P.No. 6088/1982-A and 6089/1982-A dated 14-10-1982, directed the Dt. Collector to visit the locality and contact different representatives of the two groups, exploring the possibilities of an agreed solution for opening the church, and conducting services without disturbance, especially in view of the coming festival on 17-10-1982.

The only possible solution was to allot specific times to both groups. The Patriarch group leaders refused to accept this solution and claimed sole right to the church. The Dt. Collector renewed his section 27 order which had expired on 26-10-1982.

The people were infuriated at this solution and felt that the Dt Collector had too easily given into the recalcitrance of a few troublemongers. They submitted a petition to the Dt. Collector on 15-1-1983 with the signature of 12 family heads on the Patriarch side expressing the desire of the majority on both sides that worship should be resumed in the church by setting apart special times for both groups. They disagreed with the line their own leaders had taken on the basis of personal spite and bitterness. They requested

the Collector to appoint a Receiver and determine separate times for the two groups. As the printed petition and further leaflets say: "What is the point of having parties. if there is no worship?". They accused their own leaders of misusing church funds, using the absence of Pothuyogam and Managing Committee.

The people on the Patriarch's side have petitioned the Chief Minister and the Home Minister, as well as the Collector, and a decision is awaited.

We request that the Home Ministry will directly intervene in this matter and secure an agreed settlement giving equal time to both sides, and appointing a receiver for administering the church funds.

#### 10. Mulanthuruthy.

This church was closed by the Patriarch's side on June 1<sup>st</sup> 1975. It is almost eight years that there is no worship in this church. Only on feast days both sides were allowed to use the threshold of the church for prayers. From 1980, Police Act 27 was in force and the Police had taken over the church, refusing permission to both sides to use even the threshold (natakasala). In November 1980 the Dt. Collector took the seminary also in custody, opening it for both sides only with special permission.

The legal situation is as follows :

(a) Trichur Munsiff Court Order IA 1187/75 in O. S 434/75 dated 30-7-1975 gave an ex-parte interim injunction restraining the Patriarch's party people from obstructing the vicars and priests appointed by the legitimate bishop Mar Severios (Catholicos side) from entering any of the parishes in Cochin Diocese, of which he is bishop. The Patriarch's party closed the church, and filed a suit praying injunction against the Catholicos party bishops and priests.

(b) Ernakulam Munsiff Court—rejected the Patriarch's party prayer for restraining the legitimate bishop of the Orthodox Church from appointing vicars for Mulanthuruthy St. Thomas Church. Order IA 1398/75 in O. S. 387/75 dated 11-7-1975 lays down that Metropolitan Mar Severios can appoint Vicars informing the Managing Committee of the Church ahead of the date of effect. The Patriarch Party's appeal over this decision of the Ernakulam Munsiff is now pending before the High Court, but the legal situation is that the Catholicos side bishop is the legitimate authority to appoint priests for Mulanthuruthy Church.

(c) The interim injunction from the Trichur Munsiff was later withdrawn after the trial. An appeal is pending before the High Court (CMA 212/1980).

(d) Receiver petition filed by the Catholicos side (3636/76) was rejected in Feb. 1979. An appeal has been filed and is pending before the High Court.

(e) In appeals and the High Court appointed an advocate commission to report on the respective strengths of the two parties in the parish. The commission reported a majority for the Patriarch's side (2289), a substantial minority on the Catholicos side (634), with 233 names undecided by the commission for technical reasons, most of these names being Catholicos party supporters. Objections to the way this referendum was conducted has been filed in the High Court.

(f) In 1980 Patriarch's party filed two injunction petitions against the Catholicos party. These are pending before the Special Court.

(g) Section 144 was declared in the Mulanthuruthy Church area, and the same withdrawn in February 1983.

(h) On 13th February there were new disturbances in the Church, mainly caused by the Patriarch's party people disrupting the quiet assembly of our people for prayer.

#### *Solution*

In Mulanthuruthy at the moment the only peaceful solution possible is to give equal time to both parties, and make special arrangements for feasts. Free access should be given to both sides to the cemetery also.

#### (11) **Alwaye**

The situation in Alwaye can get out of hand any time. Thrikkunnath Seminary and Chapel belongs to the legitimate Metropolitan of Angamali. Philipose Mar Theophilos. It is not a parish church But people want access to the tombs of previous bishops situated in the chapel. This the bishop is quite prepared to facilitate, provided the people came to pray and not to create troubles.

#### *Legal Situation*

The Patriarch's party prayed the Ernakulam Munsiff for an injunction against Mar Theophilos. This was dismissed (1A 5158/73 in O. S. 980/73 dated 10th February 1975). The Government requested a special commission (Justice S. Velu Pillai commission) to report on the interpretation of the court orders and to elucidate the legal situation. This report has not been published.

Following several concerted organised aggressions against the Seminary by the Patriarchal group, Section 144 was declared some 6 years ago and continues till now. A commission was appointed by the Government (Justice E. K. Moidu Commission) to enquire into the situation. This report also has not been published.

#### *Solution*

The legitimate bishop Philipos Mar Theophilos and his nominees should be allowed to use the chapel of his Aramana without hindrance. Those who come to the sepulchres of the previous bishops for prayer can be allowed to do so, but if they shout slogans, create disturbances, or start sit-in-strikes police will have to remove them bodily. With such guarantee Section 144 can be withdrawn, and the court orders can be implemented.

12. In making these requests we have tried not to be partisan or unjust. Only what is legally correct and conducive to peace has been demanded. We sincerely hope that the government of Kerala will not give in to political pressure related to the interests of some politicians. but will do what is just and right,

We hope written orders can be issued to Police officers in each of these cases.

Reference : Church Weekly. Chapter : Eighteen and Ninteen.

## APPENDIX XX

### ADDRESS BY POPE JOHN PAUL II WELCOMING THE CATHOLICOS OF THE EAST AT VATICAN

Your Holiness,

It is with great warmth and joy that today I welcome you and your honoured delegation to this city in which the Apostles Peter and Paul crowned their testimony.

In your person I greet a Church which traces its origins to the preaching of the Apostle Thomas and to his witness to Jesus Christ. The apostolic fraternity unites us to the same mystery of Jesus Christ, whom the apostles followed and listened to. After his Resurrection from the dead, they overcame fear and doubt and they confessed him before the world.

“My Lord and My God” (Jn 20:28) exclaimed the Apostle Thomas, indicating for all time a confession of faith in Christ, proclaiming his divinity, his salvific Lordship, his bodily Resurrection so real that it could be seen and touched (cf. Jn 20:27). It is in this faith that comes through the Apostles even unto our time that we meet here today.

Our two Churches proclaim together this faith through the Nicene-Constantinople formula: “Credo in unum Rominum Iesum Christum, Filium Dei Unigenitum”.

The development of history, in its complexity, has led our Churches to live separately for long ages, in mutual lack of knowledge and even, at times, in opposition.

A lack of knowledge of one another’s cultural and religious language as well as historical, geographic and political factors, has unfortunately brought about a reciprocally harmful estrangement which has progressively deepened not only diversities, but also divergences, sometimes leading to confusion between the one and the other, thus making the burden and its consequences yet more heavy.

The deepening of theological studies and, above all, our direct contacts are clarifying the horizon and making us now see with a greater light the profound communion that already exists between the two Churches.

I see in my mind’s eye the tribune of delegated observers of the various Churches to the Second Vatican Council. Among them were the representatives of the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church, for whom the Catholic Church again expresses its profound and permanent gratitude. Their silent but attentive presence, at a time when the Catholic Church was in the process of outlining her policy in regard to other Christians, was a living appeal to fraternal

respect, to objective research into the communion of faith actually existing, to the serene identification of the real divergences and of the instruments for confronting and resolving them. I believe that the deliberations of the Council owe much to this physical and spiritual presence.

The Council not only recalled a fraternal attitude towards other Christians, but also showed the foundation of common faith and doctrine. In regard to the Churches of the East, the Council asserted that they have "true sacraments, above all, by apostolic succession, the priesthood and the Eucharist, whereby they are still joined to us in a very close relationship" adding in consequence that "through the Eucharist in each of these Churches, the Church of God is built up and grows". (*Unitatis Redinte gratio*, 15).

It is in this rediscovered communion of faith and sacraments, which goes beyond every contingent interpretation or non-comprehension, that the Second Vatican Council has established further relations between the Catholic Church and the Oriental Churches.

Study and direct contacts have made it possible to see a new reality which the dust of time had almost buried and which dimmed eyes could no longer see.

Blessed be the Lord who warms the heart of man and enlightens his mind to understand at the proper time his will and also gives the strength to accomplish it.

Our encounter today is certainly blessed by the Lord, because we wish to be attentive to his will which directs that his disciples be one, so that the world may believe (*Jn 17:21*).

Jesus Christ died upon the Cross "to gather into one all the dispersed children of God" (*Jn 11:52*).

To his prayer and to his salvific work we want to remain faithful. And it is my hope that the spirit of this our fraternal and abiding meeting will be spread to the faithful of the Catholic Church and the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church, particularly where they are living side by side. May there grow mutual understanding. May there grow mutual respect and love, and let them be expressed in fraternal and constructive collaboration, according to the concrete possibilities of peace, whether in the social field, the cultural climate or above all, in the pastoral sphere, in order to testify before our neighbours that Jesus Christ is our God and our only Lord.

Ecumenism on the local level has decisive importance for the general promotion of unity of all Christians.

Unity is a distinctive note of the Christian Community. Division in its various expressions tarnishes it, sometimes compromises it. The Second Vatican Council pointed out that this damages the most holy cause of preaching the Gospel to every creature. (*Unitatis Redintegratio*, 1) As much before all those who do not yet know the name Jesus Christ, as among those nations tradi-

tionally Christian but which are facing a crisis of identity and are in danger of rejecting the Christian faith or at least of minimizing it, there emerges the urgency of a growing commitment to the quest for unity.

I wish to assure Your Holiness, on the part of the Catholic Church, that no effort will be spared to give due attention to all that needs to be done. We shall make use of theological research, examine areas of pastoral concern, and engage in theological conversations and dialogue. Above all we will have recourse to prayer, for we are certain that unity, just like salvation itself, is a gift of God and, therefore, “depends not upon man’s will or exertion, but upon God’s mercy” (Rom 9:16).

The Catholic Church is thus disposed to intense ecumenical collaboration in the search for perfect unity, in order to render common testimony to our one Lord, and in order to serve together the people of our time, proclaiming to them that Jesus Christ our saviour is the life of the world.

Your Holiness, with these sentiments, I greet you with reverence and fraternal love. Blessed be God who has made this meeting possible. May He grant that, overcoming the remaining difficulty, we shall meet one day in full unity in the concelebration of the Eucharist.

“To him be glory in the Church and in Christ Jesus to all generations ever and ever. Amen” (Eph 3:21)

From the Vatican, 3 June 1983

July 10

(Sd) John Paul II.

Reference : Church weekly — July 10, 1983 Chapter : Nineteen

#### APPENDIX XXI

#### (THE SPEECH, DELIVERED BY HIS HOLINESS THE CATHOLICOS DURING HIS VISIT TO HIS HOLINESS THE POPE IN ROME)

Your Holiness, Our Esteemed and Beloved Brother in the Lord,

With gratitude to God and with great joy we greet Your Holiness. It is God’s infinite grace that has brought us together this day, and has given us this privilege of visiting this ancient and most holy Church of Rome, to pray at the tombs of St. Peter and St. Paul chief among the Apostles, to receive grace from the land made sacred by the blood of so many martyrs, including St. Ignatius of Antioch and St. Clement of Rome, to venerate the sacred relics of the passion of our Lord. We thank Your Holiness and the Church of Rome for making all this possible for us.

We bring you greetings from a small Church, the fruit of the preaching and martyrdom of the Apostle St. Thomas, a Church as ancient as any, and

as proud of its heritage and autonomy as any. In a sense this is a meeting between the Apostle St. Thomas and the Apostles St. Peter and St. Paul in the persons of their successors.

Our predecessor the late Catholicos Baselios Augen I had the privilege of embracing the late Pope Paul VI in the Indian city of Bombay in 1961. But this is indeed the first time in history that the head of the ancient Orthodox Church of India comes to Rome on an official visit. It is, therefore, an historic occasion.

For the first four centuries of the history of the Church, our two churches were united in communion with each other. We both still hold on to that common heritage. Accidents of history and the pride of man conspired to separate us, and we have remained separate for centuries. It is our task now to repent and to recreate history more in accordance with the will of the Lord.

What we hold in common is immensely greater than that which divides us. The three great ecumenical synods of Nicea, Constantinople and Ephesus and the Apostolic faith which our common fathers correctly expounded in these great councils provide the common foundation for our mutual dialogue and future unity.

Our faith is in the Blessed and Holy Trinity, Father, Son and Holy spirit, one true God, glorious and eternal, uncreated, self-existent con-substantial, adorable; and in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Only begotten Son of God the Father, the Word of God Incarnate, fully God and fully man, perfect in his divinity which is homoousion with the Father and the Holy Spirit, perfect in his humanity which is consubstantial with us, one divine-human nature and person inseparably, unmixedly, unconfusedly united our Saviour and our Lord and our God; and in one Holy Spirit, Lord and God proceeding from the Fathers adored and worshipped with the son and with the Father Life-giver and perfector.

Our Scriptures of the old and New Covenants are the same basically. In matters relating to the understanding of the Church, ministry and the sacramental mysteries we hold much in common. We have a common apostolate in the world to work for the redemption of humanity, to proclaim the redeeming gospel, to serve all in love, to work for justice and peace in the world.

In all this we are still basically united. But we have allowed lesser things to separate us for centuries. In this second half of the twentieth century technological developments facilitate frequent contact, and the growth of scholarship makes more objective assessments of history possible. It becomes our sacred duty, therefore, to seek a common understanding of our separate histories and to discover the basis on which communion existed between our Churches in the first four centuries. This will enable us to find a new basis, continuous with the old, on which to restore communion between our Churches, along with our sister Orthodox Churches. It is our hope that we will not fail in this sacred duty.

We come from a land where a good many are well-off, while millions suffer from poverty and want. How Christian it would be if our two churches could corporate in actions to relieve this misery to free the poor from the shackles which exploit and oppress them! Perhaps the most fitting follow-up to this historic meeting would be the setting up of a joint commission for dialogue and co-operation in the field of service to the community.

It is God who has brought us together this day. It is he who will continue to lead us in his ways. May the Lord bless the Church of Rome and grant, Your Holiness good health and long life to lead this great Church in the ways of the Lord! May the Holy Spirit lead us all into the unity for which Christ prayed.

## APPENDIX XXII-A

## POPULATION

## STATEMENT SHOWING THE GROWTH OF MAJOR SIX RELIGIONS IN INDIA DURING 1971-81

<i>INDIA Religion</i>	<i>Census Year</i>	<i>Total Population</i>	<i>Percentage Increase</i>	
INDIA	1981	665,287,849	24.69	
	1971	533,534,500		
<i>Religions</i>	<i>Census Year</i>	<i>Population</i>	<i>Percentage to total Population</i>	<i>Percentage increase 1971-81</i>
Hindus	1981	549,779,481	82.64	24.15
	1971	442,832,012	83.00	
Muslims	1981	75,512,439	11.35	30.59
	1971	57,826,145	10.84	
Christians	1981	16,165,447	2.43	16.77
	1971	13,844,035	2.59	
Sikhs	1981	13,078,146	1.96	26.15
	1971	10,366,971	1.94	
Budhists	1981	4,719,796	0.71	22.52
	1971	3,852,377	0.72	
Jains	1981	3,206,038	0.48	23.69
	1971	2,591,923	0.49	

Reference : Census of India. Series-1—India Paper 3 of 1984—Household population by Religion of Head of Household Pp. x-xiii

STATEMENT SHOWING POPULATION GROWTH OF CHRISTIANS DURING 1971-81  
(Census of India—1981 Series—1 India Paper 3 of 1984 Household Population By Religion of  
Head of Household. Pages X—XV)

India States Union Territories	Census year	Total population	CHRISTIANS		Percentage increase 1971—1981	
			Percentage increase of total population	Population		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
INDIA (Excludes Assam)	1981	665,287,849	24.69	16,165,447	2.43	16.77
	1971	533,534,500		13,844,035	2.59	
STATES						
1. Andhra Pradesh	1981	53,549,673	23.10	1,433,327	2.68	(— 21.39)
	1971	43,502,708		1,823,436	4.19	
2. Bihar	1981	69,914,734	24.06	740,186	1.06	12.37
	1971	56,353,369		658,717	1.17	
3. Gujarat	1981	34,085,799	27.67	132,703	0.39	21.37
	1971	26,697,475		109,341	0.41	
4. Haryana	1981	12,922,618	28.75	12,215	0.09	24.62
	1971	10,036,808		9,802	0.10	
5. Himachal Pradesh	1981	4,280,818	23.71	3,954	0.09	11.19
	1971	3,460,434		3,556	0.10	

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. Jammu & Kashmir	1981	5,987,389	29.69	8,481	0.14	18,09
	1971	4,616,632		7,182	0.16	
7. Karnataka	1981	37,135,714	26.75	764,449	2.06	24.70
	1971	29,299,014		613,026	2.09	
8. Kerala	1981	25,453,680	19.24	5,233,865	20.56	16.46
	1971	21,347,375		4,494,089	21.05	
9. Madhya Pradesh	1981	52,178,844	25.27	351,972	0.68	23.04
	1971	41,654,119		286,072	0.69	
10. Maharashtra	1981	62,784,171	24.54	795,464	1.27	10.92
	1971	50,412,235		717,174	1.42	
11. Manipur	1981	1,420,953	32.46	421,702	29.68	51.02
	1971	1,072,753		279,243	26.03	
12. Meghalaya	1981	1,335,819	32.04	702,854	52.62	47.89
	1971	1,011,699		475,267	46.98	
13. Nagaland	1981	774,930	50.05	621,590	80.21	80.28
	1971	516,449		344,798	66.76	
14. Orissa	1981	26,370,271	20.17	480,426	1.82	26.80
	1971	21,944,615		378,888	1.73	
15. Punjab	1981	16,788,915	23.89	184,934	1.10	14.01
	1971	13,551,060		162,202	1.20	

16. Rajasthan	1981	34,261,862	32.97	39,568	0.12	31.01
	1971	25,765,806		30,202	0.12	
17. Sikkim	1981	316,385	50.77	7,015	2.22	321.83
	1971	209,843		1,663	0.79	
18. Tamil Nadu	1981	48,408,077	17.50	2,798,048	5.78	18.17
	1971	41,199,168		2,367,749	5.75	
19. Tripura	1981	2,053,058	31.92	24,872	1.21	58.29
	1971	1,556,342		15,713	1.01	
20. Uttar Pradesh	1981	110,862,013	25.49	162,199	0.15	23.06
	1971	88,341,144		131,810	0.15	
21. West Bengal	1981	54,580,647	23.17	319,670	0.59	26.98
	1971	44,312,011		251,752	0.57	
<b>UNION TERRITORIES</b>						
1. Andaman & Nicobar Islands	1981	188,741	63.93	48,274	25.58	59.10
	1971	115,133		30,342	26.35	
2. Arunachal Pradesh	1981	631,829	35.15	27,306	4.32	641.21
	1971	467,311		3,684	0.79	
3. Chandigarh	1981	451,610	75.55	4,470	0.99	78.51
	1971	257,251		2,504	0.97	
4. Dadra & Nagar Haveli	1981	103,676	39.78	2,025	1.95	5.58
	1971	74,170		1,918	2.58	
5. Delhi	1981	6,220,406	53.00	61,609	0.99	40.92
	1971	4,065,698		43,720	1.08	

1	2	3	4	11	12	13
6. Goa, Daman & Diu	1981	1,086,730	26.69	318,249	29.28	16.78
	1971	857,771		272,509	31.77	
7. Lakshadweep	1981	40,249	26.53	266	0.66	11.30
	1971	31,810		239	0.75	
8. Mizoram	1981	493,757	48.55	413,840	83.81	44.63
	1971	332,390		286,141	86.08	
9. Pondicherry	1981	604,471	28.15	49,914	8.26	20.87
	1971	471,707		41,296	8.76	

N—Negligible

∞—Infinity

ANNEXURE I

CHRONOLOGY OF CATHOLICOSES OF THE EAST

	A.D.
1. St. Thomas the Apostle — (Founder)	35-72
2. Addai (Thaddeus)	72-120
3. Aggai (Aggaeus)	120-152
4. Mari	152-85
5. Abrosius	185-201
6. Abraham	201-13
7. Yakoub	213-31
8. Ahod Abuei	231-46
9. Shahluppa	246-66
10. Pappa	267-336
11. Simun Bar Sheba	337-50
12. Shahoudoth	350-52
13. Bar Bosomin	352-60
14. Thomuso	360-68
15. Quoyumo	370-75
16. Ishaq	375-86
17. Oah	386-93
18. Yahb Allaho	393-98
19. Magina	398-400
20. Merbukhat	401-20
21. Daudesh	421-56
22. Babuyah	457-84
23. Acasius	485-98
24. Babi	499-502
25. Shilo	502-504
26. Elisho	504-36
27. Paulos	537-39
28. Aabo	540-52

29	Joseph	552-56
30.	Ahoudemme (Consecrated by Yakoub Burdana)	559-77
31.	Qoum Yesu	578-79
32.	Samuel	614-24
33.	Morooso (Maphrianate at Tigris)	628-49
34.	Denha-I	650-59
35.	Bar Yesu	669-84
36.	Abraham	686-87
37.	David	687
38.	Youhanon Soubo	687-88
39.	Denha-II	688-728
40.	Paulos	728-57
41.	Youhanon Keeyunoyo	758-88
42.	Joseph	789-93
43.	Sharbeel	794-810
44.	Simun	812-828
45.	Baselios Bar Baldoyo	828-838
46.	Daniel	838-847
47.	Thoma of Tigris	848-56
48.	Lo Asar	856-69
49.	Sargis	872-883
50.	Athanasius	887-904
51.	Thoma Asthunoro	912-13
52.	Denha-III	915-35
53.	Baselios III	938-62
54.	Kuriakos	964-82
55.	Youhanan Darmascus	991-97
56.	Ignatius Barkiki	997-1022
57.	Athanasius of Edesa	1027-141
58.	Baselios of Tigris	1046-69
59.	Youhanan Sleeba	1075-1106
60.	Dionysius Moosa	1112-42
61.	Ignatius Lo Asar	1143-64
62.	Youhanan Srugayo	1165-88

63. Dionysius Bar Msah	1188-1204
64. Gregorios Yakoub	1204-15
65. Ignatius David	1215-22
66. Dionysius Sleetba	1222-31
67. Youhanan Bar Madan	1232-53
68. Ignatius Sleetba of Edesa	1253-58
69. Gregorios Bar Hebraeus	1266-86
70. Gregorius Bar Sauma	1289-1308
71. Gregorius Mathai	1317-60
72. Athanasius Abraham	1365-79
73. Baselios Bahnam	1404-12
74. Dioscoros Bahnam	1415-17
75. Baselios Barsauma	1422-55
76. Baselios Asiz	1471-87
77. Ignatius Nuh of Homs	1490-94
78. Baselios Abraham	1494-96
79. Baselios	1560-89
80. Baselios Yalda (d. at Kothamangalam)	1634-85
81. Baselios Shakrulla (d. at Kandanad)	1751-64
82. Baselios Elias	1838-40
83. Baselios Bahnam in Malamkara	1850-60
84. Baselios Paulose (Catholicate in Malankara)	1912-13
85. Baselios Geevarghese-I	1925-28
86. Baselios Geevarghese-II	1929-64
87. Baselios Ougen	1974-75
88. Baselios Mar Thoma Mathews-I	1975-

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## ANNEXURE II

### CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS

A.D.

20—48	Gondophornes ruled over Indo –Parthian Kingdom
33	St. Thomas sent Thaddeus to King Agbar of Edessa Church established in Edessa
40	St. Thomas in the kingdom of Gondophornes
41	St. Peter at Antioch
52	St. Thomas landed in Muziris
72	St. Thomas martyred
72—1653	Rule of Archdeacons in Malankara
154—222	Bardesan of Edessa wrote Acts of Thomas
165	Relics of St. Thomas translated to Edessa
190	Pantaenus visited Malankara
216—428	Perumal rule in Kerala
231	Jerusalem Synod sanctioned Catholicate for Persia
267	Catholicos Papa at Seleucia
300	Metropolitan Daud visited Malankara
325	Council of Nicaea
345	Immigration of Mar Joseph, Cana Thoma and others Cana Thoma Chepped.
354	Theophilus of Maldiv Islands visited Malankara
410	Council of Seleucia
424	Council of Markabta
431	Council of Ephesus
498	Nestorian Catholicate formed in Persia
552	Cosmas Indicopleustus visited Malankara
559	Yakoub Burdana consecrated Ahoudemme
578	Death of Mar Yacob Burdana
629	Consecration of Morooso as (1st) Maphrian
774	Vira Raghavan Perumal Chepped
800—1102	Kulasekhara rule in Malankara
823	Immigratoin of Mar Sabrisho, Mar Aphrod at Quilon
849	King Ayyan granted Quilon Chepped
868	Kaphthurtha Synod
883	King Alfred sent envoys to Mylapore

1098	Edessa captured by Emir of Mosul
1142	Relics of St. Thomas shifted to Chieos
1226—86	Bar Hebraeus, Catholicos of Persia
1292	Marco Polo visited India
1503—04	Portuguese captured Cochin, Cranganore
1503—49	Mar Jacob, Nestorian bishop, in Malankara
1514	Padroado
1523	Portuguese opened the tomb of St. Thomas
1545	Franciscan Theological School at Cranganore
1556—69	Mar Joseph, Nestorian Bishop, in Malankara
1557	Goa made an Archbishopric
1568—97	Mar Abraham Nestorian bishop in Malankara
<b>1599—1653</b>	<b>ROMAN PERIOD</b>
1599	Archbishop Menezes in Malankara Udayamperur Synod
1601—24	Francis Roz, Arch bishop
1624—41	Stephen de Britto, Archbishop
1637—70	Archdeacon Parampil Thomas (1637-53) <b>MAR THOMA I</b> (1653-70)
1641—59	Francis Garcia, Archbishop
1652	Mas Ahatalla arrived at Surat, Mylapore, Cochin
1653 May 16	: Koonen Kurish Sathyam
1653 May 22	: Aalangad meeting raised Archdeacon Thomas as Mar Thoma I
1654	Mar Ahatalla burnt at Goa
1657—63	Fr. Joseph and Fr. Vincent Mary in Malankara
1661—63	Dutch captured Quilon, Cranganore, Cochin
1663	Alexander de Campo consecrated as Metropolitan of the Roman Catholic Church, in Malankara
1665—1171	Mar Gregorios from Syria in Malankara
<b>1670—1686</b>	<b>MAR THOMA II</b>
1678—92	Mar Andrews from Syria
1685	Arrival of Catholicos Mar Baselios (d. 1685) Metropolitan Mar Ivanios (1685-1694)
<b>1686—1688</b>	<b>MAR THOMA III</b>
<b>1688—1728</b>	<b>MAR THOMA IV</b>
1708	Mar Gabriel arrived

- 1728—65** **MAR THOMA V**
- 1748 Mar Ivanios arrived from Basra. (d. 1764)
- 1751—94 Catholicos Mar Baselios Sakralla, Metropolitan Mar Gregorios and Ramban Mar Youhanon
- 1752—94 Ramban Youhanon made Metropolitan Mar Ivanios
- 1754 Agreement between Mar Thoma V and Syrian prelates
- 1761 Consecration of Metropolitan Mar Thoma VI
- 1765—1808** **MAR THOMA VI (MAR DIONYSIUS I)**
- 1770 Consecration of Mar Thoma VI by Mar Baselios as Malankara Metropolitan with the title of Mar Dionysius I
- 1773 Establishment of an Independent Thozhiyur Syrian See
- 1788 Establishment of Church Missionary Society in England
- 1789 Invasion of Tippu Sultan
- 1791—92 Romo - Syrian dialogue
- 1796 Consecration of Metropolitan Mar Thoma VII Arrival of English and displacement of Dutch from Cochin
- 1799 Mar Dionysius versus Mathoo Tharakan
- 1806 Richard Kerr Mission
- 1806—08 Mar Dioscoros
- 1806 Nov. Dr. Claudius Buchanan met Mar Thoma VI
- 1808—1809** **MAR THOMA VII**
- 1808 Establishment of Trust Fund
- 1809—1816** **MAR THOMA VIII**
- 1809 Assembly at Kandanad
- 1810—1819 Col. Munro, British Resident at Trivandrum
- 1813 Nov. 13 Rani Laxmibai allocated 16 acres for Seminary
- 1815 Establishment of Old Seminary by Pulikottil Ramban Joseph
- 1816—19 Arrival of CMS Missionaries
- 1815—1816** **PULIKOTTIL JOSEPH MAR DIONYSIUS II**
- 1816** **MAR THOMA IX**
- 1816—1817** **MAR PHILOXENOS, KIDANGAN (THOZHIIYUR)**
- 1817—1825** **PUNNATHRA MAR DIONYSIUS III**
- 1818 Mavelikara Assembly
- 1825—1855** **CHEPPAD MAR DYONYSIUS IV**
- 1829 Death of Mar Philoxenos Kidangan
- 1833 Rev. Joseph Peet and Rev. Woodcok arrived
- 1835 Dr. Daniel Wilson, Metropolitan of Calcutta visited Malankara
- 1836 Jan. 16 Mavelikara Synod

- 1836 March : Rev. Peet breaks open Old Seminary room  
 March 8 : First Anglican Church at Mallappally  
 Sept. : Reformists submitted a memorandum to Col. Fraser  
 British Resident
- 1837—1845 Abraham Malpan of Palakunnath, Maramon Starts  
 Reform Movement
- 1840 Cochin Award
- 1843—1877 **PALAKUNNATH MATHEWS MAR ATHANASIOUS**
- 1843 Meeting at Kandanad
- 1846—75 Metropolitan Yoachim Mar Kurilos
- 1849 Mar Athanasius Stephen arrived
- 1848 Jan. : Quilon Committee
- 1850 Anglican Church of Mavelikara
- 1852 July 28 : Royal proclamation recognising Mar Athanasius
- 1864—1909 **PULIKOTTIL JOSEPH MAR DIONYSIUS V**
- 1866—1869 Mar Dionysius claims Malankara Metropolitan office  
 Submitted petition to Travancore and Madras Govts.
- 1868—85 Thomas Mar Athanasius
- 1870 Election of co-trustees of Church properties
- 1875—77 Patriarch Mar Peter III in Malankara
- 1876 March : Withdrawal of recognition to Mar Athanasius
- 1876 June 29 July 1 : Mulanthuruthy Synod
- 1876 Dec. 10 Consecration of Metropolitans by Patriarch Peter III  
 (i) Kadavil Poullose Mar Athanasius (Kottayam)  
 (ii) Konat Geevarghese Mar Julios (Thumpamon)  
 (iii) Ambat Geevarghese Mar Kurilos (Ankamali)  
 (iv) Chathuruthi Geevarghese Mar Gregorios (Niranam)  
 (v) Murimattom Paulos Mar Ivanios (Kandanad)  
 (vi) Karot Simeon Mar Dionysius (Cochin)
- Parumala Seminary started
- 1878 Parumala Synod
- 1879—89 Mar Dionysius filed a case against Thomas Mar  
 Athanasius — Seminary Case
- 1886 Malankara Association Meeting at Old Seminary  
 Acquisition of Woodland Estate (M.D. Seminary)  
 Formation of Brahmawar Diocese
- 1889 Formation of St. Thomas Evangelistic Association and  
**MAR THOMA CHURCH**
- 1890 May 29 Consecration of Mar Timotheos (Rene Vilayitti)
- 1892—93 Establishment of M.D. Seminary and M.D. High School
- 1892—1895 & 1901 Malankara Association Meetings

- 1895 Death of Patriarch Peter III
- 1902 Nov 2 : Death of Metropolitan Mar Gregorios (Parumala)
- 1908 May 31 Vattasseril Ramban Geevarghese and Ramban Paulos consecrated by Patriarch Mar Abdulla
- 1908—1934 VATTASSERIL GEEVARGHESE MAR DIONYSIUS VI**
- 1909—11 Patriarch Mar Abdulla in Malankara
- 1908—30 Sleeba Mar Osthathios, Patriarchal delegate in Malankara
- 1910—June 10 Paulos Mar Athanasius consecrated by Patriarch Mar Abdullah
- 1910—Feb. March  
April Udampadi given by Puthuppally, Kandanad, and Karingachira Churches
- 1910 Aug: 31 Edavazhikkal Mar Severios consecrated
- 1911 June: 9 Excommunication of Mar Dionysius
- 1911 Aug: 30 Always Meeting. Mar Kurilos installed as Malankara Metropolitan. Patriarchal Party formed
- Sept: 11 Malankara Association Meeting M,D. Seminary
- 1912—13 Patriarch Mar Abdul Messiah in Malankara
- 1912 Sept. 10 Geevarghese Mar Gregorios consecrated
- 1912—1914 I CATHOLICOS MORAN MAR BASELIOS PAULOS**
- 1912 Sept: 17 Catholicate of Persia re-established in Malankara. Paulos Mar Ivanios installed as the First Catholicos
- 1913 Feb : 7 Consecration of Metropolitans :
- i. Yuakim Mar Ivanios of Kandanad
- ii. Geevarghese Mar Philoxenos (Vakathanam)
- 1913 Inter-pleader suit filed at Trivandrum
- 1914 May 2 Death of the Catholicos
- 1918 Bethany Ashram at Vadasserikara (Perunad) established
- 1919 District Court judgement in favour of Mar Dionysius
- 1923 June : 23 Mar Dionysius visited Patriarch Mar Elias III Peace talks
- Sept : 23 Death of Alwares Mar Julios
- Oct : 23 High Court Judgement allowing the appeal
- 1924 Ougen Mar Timotheos consecrated by Patriarch Elias III
- 1924 Society of the Servants of the Cross and The Evangelistic Association of the East started
- 1925—28 II CATHOLICOS MORAN MAR BASELIOS GEEVARGHESE I**
- 1925 May 1 Malankara Association Meeting, Niranam
- May 2 Consecration of Catholicos
- May 3 Consecration of Episcopa-Geevarghese Mar Ivanios - (1925--30)
- June 6 Death of Karot Yuachim Mar Ivanios of Kandanad

- 1926 Oct. 20 Consecration of Thomas Mar Dioscoros (1926—39) and Michael Mar Dionysius (1926—56)
- 1927 May 15 Consecration of Ougen Mar Timotheos at Jerusalem  
 June 11 Death of Metropolitan Edavazhikal Mar Severios  
 June 11 Death of Fr Konat Kora Mathan Malpan
- 1928 July 4 Decree of High Court on Trust Fund suit  
 Dec. 17 Death of Catholicos
- 1929—64 **III CATHOLICOS MORAN MAR BASELIOS GEEVARGHESE II**
- 1929 Feb. 13 Mar Ivanios Episcopa raised as Metropolitan  
 Feb. 15 Installation of Catholicos Geevarghese II  
 Feb. 16 Consecration of  
 1 Kuriakose Mar Gregorios Pampady (d. 1965)  
 2 Jacob Mar Theophilos of Bethany  
 Dec. Lord Irwin, Viceroy of India, at Kottayam
- 1930 Sept. 4 Association Meeting Old Seminary  
 Sept. 20 Defection of Mar Ivanios and Mar Theophilos of Bethany-  
 Formation of Antiochene rite Syro Malankara Church  
 Nov. 9 Consecration of Geevarghese Mar Philexinos, Puthencav
- 1930—62 Patriarchal delegate Elias Mar Julios in Malankara
- 1931 March 20 Mediation efforts by Lord Irwin, Viceroy, Patriarch Mar  
 Elias III in Malankara, Ex-Communication revoked  
 April 22 Consecration of Mooron  
 July 10 Association meeting, Kottayam  
 Dec. 31 Decree of High Court in the Trust Fund suit
- 1932 Feb. 13 Death of Patriarch Mar Elias III  
 May 5 Consecration of Joseph Mar Severios (d 1956)
- 1933 Formation of the Orthodox Syrian Sunday School  
 Association of the East
- 1934 Feb. 23 Death of Geevarghese Mar Dionysius VI  
 April Paalampadam Terms  
 June 2— Catholicate visits Patriarch Aprem at Homs  
 Sept. 20  
 Dec. 26 Association Meeting, Kottayam. Church Constitution  
 adopted
- 1934—46 **Ramban Abdul Ahad (Patriarch Yakoub III)  
 at Manjinikara**
- 1935 Aug. 22 Patriarchal Malankara Association meeting at  
 Karingachirra  
 Paulos Mar Athanasius elevated as Malankara  
 Metropolitan
- 1936 April Mediation efforts by Bishop Pakenham Walsh.  
 Christu Sishya Ashram at Tadagam formed
- 1937 August Catholicos on European tour — attended WCC Assembly  
 at Edinburgh

- 1938 March 10 Patriarchal Party files suit. District court Kottayam  
 April 7 Consecration of Alexios Mar Theodosios  
 Sept. 9 Trust Fund suit
- 1940 May 6 Consecration of Thoma Mar Dionysius
- 1941—51 PEACE MOVES**
- 1941 Round Table session at Alwaye
- 1942 Oct. 7 Kandanad Diocesan Council recognised Catholicos
- 1943 Jan. 18 District Court decree on Trust Fund suit
- 1946 Aug. 4 Consecration of Mar Severios and Mar Gregorios by  
 Patriarch Aprem  
 Aug. 8 High Court allowed the Appeal on District Court  
 Judgement  
 Malankara Sabha Masika started Publication
- 1947 Sept. 27 Formation of C S I  
 Nov. 2 Canonisation of Mar Gregorios of Parumala and  
 Catholicos Mar Baselios (Kothamangalam)
- 1948 Ethiopian-Coptic Churches agreement on autonomy
- 1948 WCC Conference at Amsterdam
- 1949—50 Peace League Parleys at Chingavanam, Satyagraha at  
 Kurish pally, Kottayam.
- 1951 April 17 Death of Mar Philoxenos, Puthencav  
 „ 20 Consecration of Holy Mooron  
 May 17 Association Meeting, Kottayam—Constitution amended  
 Dec. 21 High Court dismissed the Review application
- 1952 March 8 Devalokam purchased  
 Aug. 2 Establishment of Catholicate College  
 Oct. 19 Consecration of Paulose Mar Philoxenos by Patriarch  
 Aprem, at Homs.
- 1953 Jan. 25 Death of Paulose Mar Athanasius of Alwaye  
 May 15 Consecration of five Metropolitans, Kottayam.  
 July 15 Death of Mar Ivanios Archbishop
- 1954 Jan. 1 Death of K. C. Mammen Mapilla  
 April 15 Consecration of Abraham Mar Climis by Patriarch Aprem  
 May 21 Supreme Court admitted review application and decreed  
 re-hearing  
 — WCC conference at Evanston
- 1955 June Death of Palappallil Paulose Kathanar Clergy Trustee
- 1956 Jan. 18 Death of Michael Mar Dionysius  
 Oct. 21 Visit of Ethiopian Emperor Haille Sellasie  
 Dec. 31 High Court decree in favour of Patriarchal Party
- 1957 April 6 Visit of Bishop Palladian of Armenia  
 June 21 Patriarchal Party Association meeting at Manarcad  
 Mar Climis elected as Malankara metropolitan  
 June 23 Death of Patriarch Aprem of Antioch

- Oct. 14 Patriarch Yakoub III enthroned  
 1958 Sept, 12 Supreme Court Judgement  
 1958 Dec 16 Concordat and reconciliation at old Seminary Kottayam.  
 Dec 26 Association meeting at Puthencav.  
 1959 O V B S started by Fr P.T. Cherian  
 Aug 1 Trust Fund interest drawal (1953-59)  
 Sept 16 Association meeting, Kottayam  
 Nov 2 St Paul's Ashram at Puthapady opened.  
 1959—60 Mar Philoxenos starts dissention.  
 1960 Pan Orthodox Conference at Rhodes  
 June 17 Catholicos suspends Mar Philoxenos.  
 1961 (April) -1964 Association Case  
 1961 St Thomas Evangelical Church of India formed.  
 Nov 18- WCC Conference at New Delhi  
 Dec 6 : Visit of delegates of Rumanian, Russian, Greek, Coptic,  
 Ethiopian Churches  
 1962 March 17 Death of Paulose Mar Severios.  
 May 17 Association Meeting Niranam,  
 Nov 7 Visit of Archbishop Makarios, President of Cyprus.  
 Dec 21 Visit of Catholicos Vuscan of Armenia.  
 1963—65 II Vatican Council  
 1964 Jan 3 Death of Catholicos.  
 1964—75 **CATHOLICOS MORAN MAR BASELIOS OUGEN**  
 1964 May 22 Patriarch Mar Yakoub in Malankara Installation of  
 Catholicos at Elia Chapel Kottayam.  
 June Ramban Aprem Aboodi arrived at Manjinikara  
 Dec 4 Mar Ougen-Pope John meet at Bombay  
 1965 Jan 15-24 Catholicos attends Conference of Oriental Orthodox  
 Churches at Addis Ababa  
 Feb 2 Catholicos—Patriarch meet at Damascus Relics of St  
 Thomas and Sunoro of St Mary brought to Kerala.  
 Feb 1 Theological Seminary affiliated to Serampur University.  
 April 5 Death of Pampady Mar Gregorios  
 Aug 6 Death of Mar Theodosios of Bethany.  
 Dec 25 Association Meeting at M.D. Seminary  
 Dec 26-30 150th year jubilee celebrations of Old Seminary.  
 1966 Aug 24 Consecration of 3 Metropolitans at St Pauls & St Peters  
 Church Kolencherry.  
 Nov 6 Death of Geevarghese Mar Gregorios Ankamali  
 February Visit of Most Rev Dr Donald Cogen Archbishop of  
 York England.  
 January 3 Fr Paul Varghese took over as Principal of Theological  
 Seminary  
 1967 April 14 Constitution amended.

- 1967 Dec 21 Consecration of Mooron
- 1968 Feb 2 Death of Patros Mar Osthathios
- 1968  
July 4-19 East Asian Christian Conference  
WCC Conference at Upsala
- 1969 Jan 5-12 Visit of delegation from Rumanian Orthodox church.  
Patriarch Justinian opened new block of Old Seminary.
- 1970 June 27 Patriarch Yakoub III's Order 203/70.  
Nov 29 Formation of Church of North India  
Dec 31 Association Meeting at M. D. Seminary Mathews Mar Athanasius elected as successor to Mar Ougen.
- 1972 Feb 14 Aboodi Mar Timotheos posted as Patriarchal delegate.  
Feb 16 Synod asks Patriarch to withdraw the delegate.  
Oct 10 19th Centenary Celebrations of St Thomas Martyrdom  
Dec 3 Death of Thoma Mar Dionysius.
- 1973 June 16 Patriarch calls for a revolt.  
July 8 Aboodi Mar Timotheos left India.  
Aug 27 Patriarch Consecrated Kadavil Paulose Mar Athanasius
- 1974 Jan 30 Patriarch charge sheeted Catholicos.  
August 3 Patriarch Yakoub III is de-recognised.  
Oct 2 Association Meeting at Niranam
- 1975 Jan 10 Patriarch Consecrated two Metropolitans Mar Dionysius and Mar Gregorios  
Feb 16 Patriarch suspended Catholicos  
Consecration of 5 Metropolitans  
Feb 23 Patriarchal Party meeting at Ernakulam Formation of Jacobite Church declared  
May 22 Synod excommunicated Mar Philoxenos  
May 28 Synod expelled Mar Clemis  
June 16 "Universal" Synod at Damascus  
June 23 Patriarch excommunicated Catholicos.  
Sept 7 Patriarch installed rival Catholicos Mar Paulose II  
Dec 26 Jacobites Association meets at Thuruthissery.
- 1975—**  
**CATHOLICOS MORAN MAR BASELIOS MAR THOMA MATHEWS I**  
Oct 27 Enthronement at Old Seminary.  
Dec 8 Death of Mar Ougen. WCC Conference at Nairobi Kenya  
Delegation sent from the Church. Patriarch consecrated 4 Metropolitans
- 1976—80 Church Suit
- 1976 Feb 15 Reception to Catholicos at Ernakulam  
March 27 Reorganisation of Dioceses  
July 9 Special Court set up to hear church suit  
Sept— Delegation on visit to Russia,

	Oct	Rumania, Bulgaria, Armenia
	Oct	Commitee on Social welfare
1977		Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church Medical Mission registered. OVBS brought under Sunday School Assn.
	January—	
	February	Patriarch Pimen of Russian Orthodox Church in Kerala
	April 1	Consecration of Holy Mooron
	—	Baselios Mar Thoma Charity Fund established.
	May 16	Association meeting at Mavelikara. Patriarch Pimen opened new block at Theological Seminary.
1978	Feb 1	Charter of Demand to Chief Minister.
	Feb 23	Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church Mission Society registered.
	May 15	Consecration of 5 Metropolitans at Pazhanji
	Dec 8	Reorganisation of Dioceses
1979	Jan 1	Scheme of Admn. of Parumala Complex
	July—	
	Sept	Catholicos on visit to America, England
	Aug 15	3 year course at MTC inaugurated
	Oct 15	Two villages in Andhra rehabilitated.
	July 7	Child Welfare Board established.
1980	May 1	Association meeting at M D Seminary, Mahtews Mar Kurilos elected as Catholicos-designate
	June 6	High Court Judgement on Church suit.
	June 14	Malankara Mission Board inaugurated
	June 26	Death of Patriarch Mar Yakoub III
	August 31	Death of Paret Mar Ivanios
	Sept 14	Mar Sacca installed as Patriarch
	Oct 12	Death of Yuhanon Mar Athanasius
1982	Feb 22	Karungiri M G D Bal Bhawan at Panayampala opened.
	Feb	Visit of Patriah Zacca
	March 10	Mar Gregarios's open letter to Patriarch,
	—	Reorganisation of Dioceses-Idikki Diocese formed.
	Sept 5—15	Sapthathi Celebrations
	Dec 28	Association meeting at Tiruvalla
1983		
	Feb 21-27	N C C C I meeting at Lucknow
	July 24—	WCC assembly at Vancouver, Canada
	Aug 10	
1984	May 1-4	Catholicos Pope Meeting at Vatican
	May-June	Catholicos visited Middle East Parishes.
	August	Divya Bodhanam inaugurated
	Nov 15	Indian Orthodox Congress Formed.
	Nov 24-25	Catholicos consecrated Delhi Orthodox Centre.
1985	March 10	Diocese of Chengannur formed
	April 14	Diocese of Kunnumkulam formed.

- May 15           Concecration of Five Metropolitans ot Mavelikara.  
June 25           Christian Conference of Asia  
Oct 23           Diocese of Sultan Bateri formed.  
Oct 25           Association meeting at M. D. Seminary  
                  St Stephens Rural Hospital and Thoma Mar Dionysius  
                  Cancer Centre opened at Tiruchirappaly:  
Dec 8            Mar Osthathios laid foundation stone of St. Gregorios  
                  Balagram at Yacharam, A. P  
Dec. 27.        Managing Committee elected Paul Mathai as Church  
                  Secretary.  
1986 Feb 8     Catholicos-Pope Meeting at Kottayam.

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