

Rev. Dr. K.M. Simon Cor-Episcopa

His Life and Times



A Biography

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REV. DR. K.M. SIMON COR EPISCOPA
HIS LIFE AND TIMES

A BIOGRAPHY

V. Rev. Dr. K.M. Simon Cor-Episcopa

His Life and Times

English—A Biography

Author Rev. Dr. Simon

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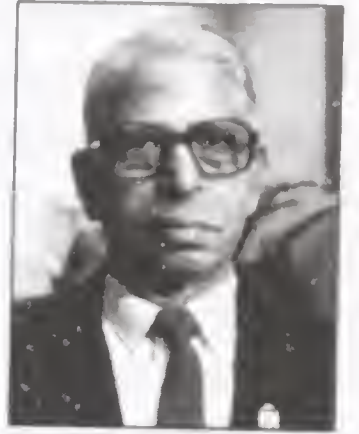
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DEDICATION



This book is dedicated to the loving memory of my paternal grand father the late K. Mathew Chummar who nurtured me from the seventh year of life when my parents were called to their heavenly abode.

Author



PREFACE

It gives me immense pleasure to pen a few lines as introduction to the Biography of the late Rev. Dr. K.M. Simon.

Popularly known by his dearly loved petname, Simon Chemmachen, the late Rev. Dr. K. M. Simon hailing from the ancient Kunnumpurathu family of Kottayam was born on 5th January 1917 as the only son of Mr. Mathew and Mrs. Sarah. By the time he was seven years old he lost his father and mother in close intervals of time. His grandfather, K.M. Chummar took up the task of rearing his orphaned grandson in an ideal atmosphere of love and care.

Attracted by his melodious voice Fr. E.G. Lukose of Edavazhical introduced him to attend in the Holy Qurbana when he was in his early teens. He had his high School education in CMS High School, Kottayam. His stint as a helper in the Church service attracted the attention of the parishioners who in a special meeting of the Church selected him to be candidate for the elevated position of Korio which was officiated by bishop Thomma Mor Diascoros. This was a turning point in his life.

This moulded his disciplined Christian life. While he was studying in the CMS College he became involved in the SCM movement. Rev. Philip Lee, his teacher in the College, became aware of his religious turn of mind and offered him a chance for higher studies in Theology in the Kelham College with a scholarship.

During his four years stay in Kelham, he was able to cultivate the acquaintanceship and friendship with a large circle of influential people from different countries and religious beliefs. This paved the way for him to establish contacts with people of profundity and refinement. On his arrival in India he was elected as the general Secretary of the Knanaya Association.

When he became part of the elite social circuit, he reminiscences his rendezvous with a refined lady of substance who did not hide her desire to be his life partner. As marriage outside the Community was tabooed, he did not violate the social milieu. Incidentally I am reminded of the episode of E.M. Philipose who was offered a chance for higher studies abroad if he agreed for an inter community marriage. But reluctant to come out of the confines of the community marriage Philipose too declined the offer of an inter community marriage.

After securing his diploma in Theology from Kelham, he returned to his dear and near ones. He embarked on an attempt to form a Knanaya Central fund and gave leadership for reviewing the then existing Knanaya constitution.

In all his responsibilities he measured upto the expectation of the people who picked him along with Vayala Fr. Abraham as a candidate for a prospective Knanaya bishop. Meanwhile the YMCA secretary, Tracy Strong recommended Simon deacon to go for higher studies in the Union Theological Seminary, USA.

Having taken his M.A. Degree from there he worked for another Masters degree from the General Theological Seminary. After a while he conducted a programme of tour giving lectures on social, religious and cultural matters which impressed the gatherings wherever he went. The audience turned his captives. His sociableness, interaction in the society and impressive persona made him popular. He was humble and accessible without being overbearing. He was a man with an immense sense of humour, repartees and loads of anecdotes. Recognising his intellectual discourses, the Lincoln University conferred upon him an honorary Doctorate.

He returned home to a waiting crowd of admirers and well wishers who accorded him a befitting welcome. On his own he withdrew from a possible contest for bishop election giving chance to Fr. Abraham of Vayala.

Impressed by his multifaceted activities Dr. Tracy Strong's recommendation made him the general Secretary of the Third World Conference of Christian Youth which required his continued presence in Geneva. This conference was jointly sponsored by World Alliance of YMCA's, World Council of Churches and World Council of Christian Education. He moved to Kottayam and with unreserved public

cooperation and support the World Conference which he convened lasted for ten days and ended as a grand success. It was a milestone in his life and Simon deacon's fame still resonates in the State. He represented the kinetic energy that triggered his listeners into action.

His marriage to Thankamma was solemnized in 1953. They were given presents and a reception by the royal family of Travancore. After the World Youth Conference. Abuna Theophilos of Ethiopia invited him to Ethiopia where he came in contact with the Emperor Haile Sellassie who appointed him as the Principal of the Holy Trinity Theological College, Addis Ababa. When the Emperor made his state visit to India in 1956. Deacon Simon was a senior member of the ministerial entourage accompanying the Emperor.

When Mor Clemes visited Ethiopia in 1956 at the invitation of Emperor Haile Sellassie, Deacon Simon was ordained a priest. Fr. Simon was invited by Yesu Mar Athanasius to the US to be in charge of St. Mark's Cathedral in Hackensack.

The Syrian Orthodox Church became a member of the W.C.C. at the initiative of H.H. Moran Mor Ignatius Yacob III, Patriarch of Antioch and All the East. He deputed Rev. Dr. Simon to the W.C.C. to represent the Syrian Orthodox Church.

But after a while, the relations between Mar Athanasius and Dr. Simon came under stress as a result of which Dr. Simon gave up his Deanship of St. Mark's.

Soon afterwards Dr. Simon got a teaching job in the Fairleigh Dickenson University where he continued teaching until 1984 when he retired from active service. During one of the Sabbaticals Dr. Simon availed himself of the opportunity to visit Russia and the Middle East. During this time he received an invitation from Archbishop Nicodim of the Russian Orthodox Church. Dr. Simon delivered a series of lectures in the various Theological Seminaries. Patriarch Alexy of Moscow and All Russia received him and gave him valuable presents.

Then Rev. Dr. Simon paid a visit to the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople and the Middle East countries. But he was not allowed to visit Edessa due to certain political reasons.

This book begins with a paternal letter from Rev. Dr. Simon to his beloved sons Renji and Ronnie. This letter deals with the heritage of his family and a short history of the Knanaya Community in Kerala during

the past seventeen centuries highlighting the triumphs, trials and tribulations. In this letter Rev. Dr. Simon reveals a truth that he is by nature a procrastinator, postponing things to the last moment. As a result of this nature, Rev. Dr. Simon was not able to complete his account of his chequered career and Mrs. Thankamma Simon had to take the responsibility of narrating the rest of his active life in U.S. till his demise in 1996.

The appendix portion of this book contains messages, newspaper articles and pictures. The messages from some of the eminent people who knew him well for years throw a lot of light on his life and work.

Simon Achan was an excellent conversationalist and a silver-tongued speaker. He knew the art of winning friends and influencing people. By becoming the Vicar of the Yonkers Church, New York he earned the gratitude of the Knanaya Community in the USA. In later years Knanayites who settled in different parts of USA, as immigrants established Churches in various cities - With a view to consolidating Knanaya Churches and believers Mor Clemis Metropolitan appointed V. Rev. Simon CorEpiscopa as the first Administrator of the Churches in the United States. Rev. Dr. Simon was hailed as a friend, philosopher and guide of the Knanaya Community there.

He rose to the heights of glory by virtue of his transparent simplicity, sincerity of purpose, humility and nobility. He was actually a modern Thomas of Cana who paved the way for the immigration of a large number of Knanaya people in USA. As the prop and pillar he was the pioneer in the settlement of the Knanayites in America.

To put it in a nutshell, V. Rev. Dr. Simon was a mastermind in all the fields he served. He was an ideal family man who maintained a profound bond with his wife and the two sons. People were drawn to him not by his heroic razzle-dazzle but by what he was as a human being. The biography of Rev. Dr. Simon gives some sort of stimulation and inspiration for leading a true Christian life.

With immense pleasure and pride I commend this book to the public.

August 16, 2005.

Chev. Jacob Stephen
Valanjanthuruthil
Ranni, Kerala.

PRELUDE

It was my husband, Simon Achen's long cherished dream to have his life sketch published when he was alive. I deem it a proud moment to write a few lines as prelude to his biography which fulfills his desire, It is my as well as our sons' intention to follow his path. This is an endeavour to reach all friends-relatives and well-wishers through the medium of his biography to appraise them of the milestones and nostalgic memories in his life. I am thankful to him for steering our family ship successfully through all troubles and tribulations. No doubt he made careful planning and necessary preparations for the biography before he left for his heavenly abode.

Engaging and compelling he emerges from his biography as a person endowed with great qualities of the mind and heart. In the book he gives a glimpse of himself and his family that the readers may not have heard before. I am glad that the book is well-written and details rich. His writing with interesting anecdotes keeps things lovely and readers spell-bound.

In compiling this book Mr. Abraham V. Abraham, Vazhayil, US, had rendered his valuable time and talents. I take this opportunity to express our sincere thanks for his selfless service rendered to us. We are also grateful to Chev. Jacob Stephen for the inspiring preface he has written. I am indebted to M/s K.U. Thomas, Koipurathu and M.I. Kuriakose Murikanadiyil for their valuable contributions in the compilation of this book. We are also thankful to M/s D.C press (Pvt.) Ltd, Kottayam who took up the designing and printing in a meticulous manner.

Above all, I hereby express my deep devotion and praise to our saviour Lord Jesus Christ for enabling me to bring out this book in memory of my beloved late husband Simon Achen.

Mrs. Thankamma Simon

1

LETTER TO THE SONS

MY DEAREST SONS, RENJI AND RONNIE,

It is quite some time since I thought of writing to both of you to let you know of our heritage as I have learned from my parents and from their parents and uncles and others. I am by nature a procrastinator postponing things to the last moment. This is a bad trait, which I hope and pray that you both should try to avoid. Procrastination is the thief of time.

Your mother and I are so proud of you both and we value your affection and consideration for us. Neither of you have ever said or done anything that has offended us, or made us feel unhappy. We pray that the Good Lord will keep you both and your families safe and happy, leading a life which is pleasing in the sight of God.

Emily and the children, as well as Anju and Thangam, have all brought happiness to us and we thank the Almighty for them. More than anything else, we've come to appreciate your love and concern for us. We never had any reason even to think of any action or word from either of you that made us unhappy. We hope and pray that the Good Lord will let us keep on enjoying this privilege and position, and you both will enjoy the affection of your children.

Among the Indian Christians, we Knananites are a unique community, tracing our ancestry to a group of Syrians – 400 strong belonging to 72 families who migrated to India from Edessa, a region in Turkey, in 345 A.D. under the leadership of Thomas of Cana who was a merchant. The then ruler of Kerala – Cheraman Perumal – not only

welcomed them but also conferred on them many honors. Thus they lived at Cranganore (Kondungalloor) south of Mahadevar Pattanam. But after a while, due to the invasion and occupation of Kodungalloor by the Muslims, our ancestors were forced to move out and settle at Kaduthuruthi not too far from Kottayam.

FIRST KNANAYA CHURCH

In the history of the Knananites, Kaduthuruthi has a special place. The church there is the oldest church of the Knanaya Community. This church was built at a place that was granted free of tax in 1590 by the then ruler – Cheraman Perumal. Later, our people moved to places like Kottayam and Kallissery.

Outside most of our churches, there is a big cross built in granite. The largest cross in the area is the one in Kaduthuruthy. It is 40 feet high. Its base is 10 X 10 feet and is 10 feet high. Its chancel (madbaha) is very similar to the chancel of Kottayam Valiapally. After the Knanaya migration to Crangannore, the first place they settled down was Kaduthuruthi. The first church built by our fathers is in Kaduthuruthi. At one stage, in the life of our community all of the Knananites belonged to this church. After the synod of Diamper (1599) at the height of the power of the Roman Catholic Church under the protection of the Portuguese government, this church was taken over by the Roman Catholics. This church is now a parish church of the Kottayam (Knanaya) diocese. Thus this may be referred to as the “mother church” of all the Knanites.

THOMAS OF CANA OR KNAI THOMMA AND THE KNANAYA MIGRATION TO INDIA

Thomas of Cana was perhaps the most prominent merchant of Syria, trading with India. He traded mostly in pepper (Kerala is sometimes referred to as the land of pepper). After the death of Apostle Thomas, the Indian church was confronted with the lack of creative leadership, and consequently it resulted in the decline in true faith and practices. According to the Syrian Christian tradition, the Bishop of Edessa (Uraha) Mar Joseph had a similar revelation. During the same night, the Catholicos of Jerusalem also had a revelation. The situation of the church in Kerala became a matter of great concern for the bishop of Edessa. As

a result of continued deliberation among the Catholicos, the bishops and the monks, it was decided that a group of knowledgeable and dedicated people, headed by a bishop, some priests and monks would migrate to Kerala. Subsequently, it was decided that this group should be led by Thomas of Cana, a man who was already acquainted with Kerala. Thomas came from Cana, made famous by the first miracle performed by Jesus as well as the fact that this was the home town of the brothers of Jesus.

Before his departure, Thomas went to his hometown of Cana and there gathered from among his relatives and friends 400 people from 72 families. They went to Edessa and from there they migrated to Kerala along with priests, deacons, and a bishop named Mar Joseph. This was done for the purpose of energizing the almost dead church in South India and to take over its administration. The Catholicos gave Thomas of Cana a parting gift of a beautiful handwritten Bible.

Perhaps it was also hoped that Thomas of Cana would discover the earthly remains of Apostle Thomas and, if possible, would take it to his homeland and thus establish a permanent sacred bond between Edessa in Syria and Kerala in India.

Not many details are available about the early period of these migrant colonists. Perhaps they had fallen accustomed to the Indian tradition of giving oral history (traditions passed from parents to children by the telling of the "story") rather than to written history. Besides, they were busy settling down in an alien land while maintaining their tradition. The immigrants settled down to the life of an ideal Christian community in South India. Primarily due to the solidarity of the new immigrant community and perhaps due to the caste exclusiveness practiced by the Indian communities around them, there was practically no intermarriage. However, the community grew and progressed, spreading to different parts of Kerala and building churches. Occasionally they would have the visitation by the bishop to confirm believers and provide episcopal legitimacy and sacramental purity. It must be taken into consideration that although the distance between Syria and South India was not great, travel was in boats facing monsoon storms. Travel was difficult and only the stoutest of the hearts undertook the journey. That speaks for the resilience of the community in times of distress.

ARCHBISHOP MENEZES & PORTUGUESE PERSECUTION

Such a time of distress was the late 16th century when Portuguese power became ascendant in South India. Their original purpose was the lucrative trade between them and South India. This was particularly true in view of the fact that the Portuguese was a fish-eating group and they pined for the pepper and spices of the Malabar Coast. But unlike other Western colonists in India, the Portuguese had a religious commitment to keep the supremacy of the Roman Catholic Pope over all Christendom. When the Portuguese discovered that there was a flourishing Indian Christian community following Eastern Orthodox tradition, they were puzzled and curious. Several inquiries were made as to whom the Syrian Indian Christians owed their loyalty to. In fact, the Portuguese Archbishop Menezes asked the Indian Syrian Christians his logical question, “Are you under the Pope?” To this the Indian Syrian Christians, never having heard of the Pope, replied “Who is the Pope?”

But Archbishop Menezes was not the kind of person who would easily give up his cherished dream of globalizing the Papal authority over all Christendom. This was truly the beginning of the struggle of our forefathers to keep their unique identity and church. But Archbishop Menezes had laid plans to bring the Indian church under the leadership of the Pope. At first, our forefathers welcomed this attention after years of isolation. But they resisted the attempts by the Portuguese to proselytize our people. However, some joined the Roman Catholic Church there and came under the tutelage of one of the most powerful colonial powers which could bestow privileges and wealth.

The archbishop devised a strategy that to him was foolproof. As the primate of a powerful colonial power at sway in South India, he called together a Synod at Diamper in 1599 in the Portuguese fort guarded by Portuguese militia. Our forefathers were victims of a cruel hoax. Under the pretense of a synod, what the Archbishop designed was a total capitulation of the independent Indian Syrian Church. He accomplished that through military coercion and our forefathers succumbed to the pressure to submit to the supremacy of the Pope as the head of Christendom. Our liturgical books were burned and our priests were insulted. In spite of all this, a large group of Indian Syrian Christians remained loyal to the supremacy of the Pope over the universal

church. The group that did not join the rest became the object of persecution by the Portuguese just as non-Christians were persecuted with the now known auto-defe, a march by people who either pledged loyalty or were burned.

OATH AT THE COONAN CROSS (KOONNAN KURISU SATHYAM)

But as the Portuguese power in India waned and the Dutch power became ascendant, our forefathers became more and more restive under the Roman yoke. In 1653, there was a mass gathering of those who protested the Papal supremacy over the Indian Syrian Christian community. They gathered in Mattancherry and one of the leaders of these dissidents was Anjilimoottil Itty Thomas Kathanar (a term referring to the priests). There was a cross called the “Coonen Cross” because it was leaning from its base rather than standing straight. Not all the dissidents could grab the cross during their pledge to leave the Roman yoke. So they tied ropes around the cross and held on to them while making the solemn pledge never to submit to the supremacy of Rome over their church, tradition or faith.

This created a clear division in the Indian Syrian Christian Church. Those who persisted on remaining with the Roman Catholic Church were known as the Syrian Roman Catholics thus never denying their Indian-Syrian origins. They were permitted to use the Syrian Christian liturgy with minor changes which acknowledged the Pope as the supreme head of the Indian church.

ARRIVAL OF THE BRITISH IN INDIA

By the eighteenth century, the British became the ascendant power not only in North India but over the whole Indian continent. They had chaplains and bishops to serve their communities in different parts of the country. One of these, Claudius Buchanan became intensely interested in the small Syrian Christian Church in Kerala. He went on a search mission of this community. He was fascinated and enthralled. But like all other colonial powers he felt that the Indian Syrian Christians should become part of the Church of England. Short of that, he recommended to Archbishop Wilson of Calcutta that a mission should be sent to the South Indian Christians to “educate” and reform them.

The Archbishop accepted this recommendation and thus the Church Missionary Society was born.

The Indian Syrian Christian Church was not only always tolerant; mirroring the Indian culture of tolerance, but they also welcomed any mission of help. The help that the CMS offered was higher education, especially using English as a medium of communication opening the South Indians to the whole British world and establishing a printing press to propagate the Bible in the local vernacular language. These developments had four dramatic results:

- 1) Higher education spread in South India. The CMS started using the Old Seminary as a haven for this type of education. More people used this opportunity to become educated and became very mobile, but not limited to Kerala because of the language barrier. Members of the Syrian Christian community later on had flourished in government, business, education, health services and a multitude of other disciplines due to this education. That is a lasting heritage.
- 2) The printing of the Bible in the local language – Malayalam – had a profound effect. Some people read the Bible for the first time and came to the conclusion that the Biblical message was inconsistent with the tradition that sustained the Indian Syrian Christian Church for almost nineteen centuries. That tradition was challenged with its practices.
- 3) The English church supported by the British power was unwilling to let the Indian Syrian Christian tradition grow on its own. They mandated some changes at the Synod of Mavelikkara. In essence this was a sort of repetition of the Diamper Synod and our forefathers steadfastly refused to succumb. There was thus a separation between the Syrian Christian Church in India and the helping mission of the Church of England.
- 4) The missionaries, knowing that the Syrian Christians were not amenable to the type of gospel they were preaching, went out seeking the so-called outcasts who were not the focus of the Indian Syrian Church. Thus when the separation came, there was a new church called the C.M.S. Church (now called the C.S.I. – Church of South India). Some Syrian Christians remained in the C.M.S. Church. Indian Syrian Church thus faced another loss.

The break-up of a group known as the Mar Thoma Church was another development and a loss to the original Indian Syrian Christian community. It began with a teacher named Abraham Malpan who had come to study the newly available Bible and came to the conclusion that certain practices in the current Indian Syrian Church were not Biblically sanctioned. He "revised" the liturgy striking out here and there, deleting portions that he thought were unbiblical. He led the first Eucharist under the new and revised St. James Liturgy at Maramon in 1836 and a group of people followed him. But the matter as to who constituted the original Syrian Church was finally adjudicated by the Royal Court in 1879 and the Reformists (who called themselves "Mar Thomites") were disinherited from most of their claims for churches and possessions.

Although the Mar Thoma split affected our community, it was not as serious a blow as the division in Diamper. Certainly it affected the solidarity of the Indian Syrian Christian Church. A majority of the Syrian Christians remained loyal to the Patriarch in Syria. But one must admit that all these developments had taken its toll on the Knanaya community. But unlike the Roman Catholic split the Mar Thoma Church split affected us only in insignificant numbers. There are some Knanaya Mar Thoma members just as there are a few Knanaya Protestants. But it is worth noting that neither the Mar Thoma Schism nor the Protestant Schism affected our church as much as the Roman Catholic schism and their continuing inroads.

KNANAYA ROMAN CATHOLICS OR KOTTAYAM DIOCESE

Now the Knanaya Roman Catholic group forming the Kottayam Diocese has a membership almost double that of ours. The Pope has wholeheartedly supported them by establishing even a special Syrian rite for those who joined them. They are, for all practical purposes, Syrian Orthodox except for the fact that they acknowledge the Pope as the supreme head of their church. But for a long time, those who joined the Roman Catholic Church remained a part of the larger Roman Catholic Church. But by a special decree in 1910, the Pope created the Kottayam Diocese, specifically for the Knanaya Syrian Christians who were members of the Roman Catholic Church. It was then headed by Bishop Makil who was previously the bishop of the Changanacherry Diocese.

The Knananite Roman Catholics were part of the Changanacherry Diocese but in 1910 a separation took place by which the Roman Catholic Knanaties became a separate diocese known as the Kottayam Diocese.

During the earlier stages of development of the Kerala Church, the Knanites played a leading role. Actually, the General Secretary of the Church, virtually the right-hand man of the Malankara Metropolitan was Sri. E. M. Philip Edvazhikal. But as time passed and the tension within the church grew, the Patriarch created a separate diocese called the Knanaya Diocese in 1910. This diocese, unlike the other dioceses, is not geographically demarked. This diocese has its headquarters in Chingavanam and it consists of parishes established by the members of our community in different parts of India and abroad. Its present head is the Most Rev. Abraham Mar Climis, who in addition to being the diocesan bishop, is also the Chief Metropolitan of the East, an honor given by the Patriarch.

2

FAMILY HERITAGE AND HISTORY OF THE COMMUNITY



Our family – “Kunnumpurath” – originally was at Katil – near Kumarakam and during the time of my grandfather, K. Mathew Chummnar, moved to Kottayam. My maternal grandfather also moved to Kottayam from Chungam near the “Old Seminary.” Hence we referred to him as “Chungathil Appachan.” But his name was Poonoose. He had only two daughters – Sarah (“pet name” Kuttyamma) and Aleykutty.

Aleykutty was married to Abraham Kizhekeparampil who was a schoolteacher in Chingavanam. He had plenty of land which was planted with banana plants, tapioca (or “Yuka” as it is known in South America and the U.S.), coconut trees and other tropical plantations. Many times we enjoyed the fruits of the same. My aunt was an extremely loving person and I used to go to her frequently.

My paternal grandfather had three sons. Mathew (“Kochappy”), the eldest, was my father. The second son was Chacko and the youngest was Abraham. My grandfather was a merchant in rice and other groceries

needed in a rural community. He used to buy these items in bulk and at wholesale prices at Cochin and sold the same to the public. This trade was carried on by his second son. The youngest son, Abraham, after his high school diploma, took a job with a European Company (Pierce Leslie & Company) in Cochin. A few years later he left it and engaged himself in different trades including running a gasoline depot.

My father, Mathew, was a steady and consistent person. After completing his high school, he took up a job at the government engineering office. There he was a clerk and eventually rose to become the head-clerk. He got married young – he was eleven and his bride, my mother, was nine. They were happy. Both were religious but my mother was extremely so. She took the traditional fasts so seriously that throughout the Great Lent for fifty days, she had only one meal a day. During the Passion Week, after Holy (Maundy) Thursday, she did not touch food till after Easter. She was one of the most loved persons in our neighborhood. Her time consisted of days when the in-laws had complete dominance and she suffered a lot of hardships. But she calmly and courageously took in everything in such a way that she won the admiration and affection of all those who knew her. I have only vague recollections of her. Once she caned me for slapping my sister Mariama. Then she cried. Her grief hurt me more than her caning.

Since both my parents died in 1923 when I was only seven years old (mother died on the 3rd of “Meenam” and father died on the 3rd of “Edavam” (by the Malabar calendar) – a mere sixty days in between, I did not have the privilege of receiving parental love at first-hand. But my grandparents more than made up for it. My paternal grandfather – Mathew Chummar – moved to a separate house with the three of us, myself and my two sisters. He usually went out of his way to make us very happy and he looked after our well being. My maternal grandparents, who lived in the same neighborhood, also were lavish in showing their affection. In fact, they had left their entire property to me in spite of the fact that they had another daughter who lived in Kurichi, five miles away, with her family.

3

EDUCATION AT KOTTAYAM



CHILDHOOD

I grew up under the watchful eyes of my paternal grandfather. He never wanted us to be neglected in any way and I can never repay his love and thoughtfulness.

As I got older, I got involved more and more in the services of our church. Soon I became a server of “Qurbana” (the Eucharist). I was endowed with a good singing voice and our “Valiyachan” (the Rev. E. C. Lukose) started taking special interest in me. During the Great Lent, it was customary for the Achan (priest) to move into the church quarters in order to enable him to say the regular prayers in the church and to spend as much time as possible teaching us the church lyrics, liturgy and the faith of our fathers. I shall always remember with deep gratitude, his care and concern for me. He was truly a servant of God and a model priest. Even after he passed beyond age of seventy, he never took a shortcut where prayers were concerned. He never missed a single genuflection while saying the prayer, including the forty genuflections at noontime. He may not have been a great scholar, but I

can't think of another priest or layman who truly practiced what he preached. When he celebrated the Holy Qurbana or when he said the traditional prayers, it was clear that he felt the presence of God. He transmitted this message to us through the exemplary life that he led. Many times he repeated his sermons but none of us felt unhappy about it because he always brought new life into them. He was truly a great spiritual father to us. How I wish I could be one-tenth as fervent and dedicated a priest as he was. I humbly invoke his blessings.

At the C.M.S. High School where I studied, we had good teachers and a headmaster who really cared for his students. Of all the teachers I consider Mr. M. J. Joseph as a very prominent person. Though he was not my class teacher he took a genuine interest in me. Many a time he had taken me for walks and talked only in English in order to help me with my conversational English. He also encouraged me to preach sermons in the church. Before I first ever preached, he wrote the speech for me and made me recite many times before the occasion.

ORDINATION AS DEACON

While I was still in high school, on the basis of a resolution passed by the general body meeting of Valiapally, the then bishop of the diocese (Mar Dioscoros) ordained me as a sub-deacon. This was partially due to the fact that I had a good voice and mostly due to the general feeling that I had a true calling for the priesthood. It was customary at that time to ordain young people to the diaconate. I was not sure that I had a true vocation for the ministry at that time, as I was too young to decide. This decision was made for me by my elders.

God works in mysterious ways. I was happy to be ordained a deacon but at that time, primarily for the wrong reasons. There was always an aura of recognition connected with this office. A clergyman is always held in high esteem. He goes about in clerical outfit whether or not he is in a minor or major order. A clergyman is the first to be seated and served food at feasts or festivals. Above all, there was always a possibility of rising to the high office of a bishop if he remains unmarried and if he distinguished himself in the service of the community. It was in such circumstances that I was ordained as a subdeacon by the Metropolitan of the Knanaya Diocese, Mar Dioscoros.

Mar Dioscoros was the second bishop of the Knanaya Diocese, the first having been Mar Severios Edavazhikal who was consecrated in 1910 by patriarch Mar Abdulla Ignatius.

Although the Knanites played such a crucial role in the life of the Church in India, they never had a bishop of their own for long. This was partly because of the fact that, while remaining a socially exclusive community, the Knanaya parishes were scattered all over the state and were parts of the regional dioceses. Perhaps it was because of this that this community was able to play a crucial role in times of crises. An example of this was Anjilimootil Ittythomman Kathanar. He was a key leader during the Portuguese domination over South India. This was a time when the declaration of the independence of the Malankara Church accepting the supremacy and governance of the Patriarch of Antioch was made. Another person who played a crucial role was E. M. Philip Edavazhikal during the struggle with the "reformers" influenced by the Protestants and Evangelicals. Ultimately this struggle ended up in the establishment of the reformed Syrian Church ("Naveekarana Sabba") now known as the Malankara Mar Thoma Syrian Church and portions of the Church of South India in Kerala.

As a young deacon (fondly called as "Simon Chemmachen") I continued with my education at the C.M.S. High School. I thoroughly enjoyed my education and it did not cost my grandfather much to send me to C.M.S. High School, an elite one during that time. It was somewhat outstanding that I as a clergyman (deacon) of the Knanaya Diocese was being educated at the Church Missionary Society High School. This was possible because some of the endowments that some missionaries gave to the C.M.S. College and High School stipulated that the proceeds be used for the furtherance of the education of the clergy in the Syrian Orthodox Church. I do believe that this is till the case at the C.M.S. institutions of higher education in Kottayam.

I was only in the Fourth Standard when I became a deacon. Although there were priests ordained from various families at the Valipally, for quite some time the "Edavazhikal" family enjoyed the privilege of a long line of clergy, including our first bishop Mar Geevarghese Severios.

Although I was ordained at the request of the parish general body and by the then Diocesan bishop Mar Dioscoros, at first the Edavazhikal

family did not relish the prospect of my ordination. In fact, our senior vicar (Edavazhikal Lukose Kathanar) even went to Chengalam Church (a daughter parish) on the Sunday of my ordination. But this was only a temporary phase, and as time passed by because of the absolute confidence shown and cooperation by myself and my family, the sense of competition and jealousy were transformed into a sense of love and interdependence. Father Lukose practically took me under his wings and trained me in the Syriac language. During vacations and other off-times, he taught me how to sing the lyrics and chants in Syriac.

Father Lukose – “Valiyachan” – was truly a great man. He treated me as his spiritual offspring and instructed me in matters pertaining to the church. In all measures he became my spiritual mentor. Apart from the normal human instinct of jealousy, the Edvazhikal family also feared the threat of usurpation of their long line of authority in the parish; there was also the fear of the loss of part of the church income. As a deacon, the monetary aspect was little as the deacon received only one half of the income of the priest. But the major concern here was that another family too joined the “Aaronic order.”

There were some outward characteristics that set me apart from my classmates at C.M.S. High School. As a clergyman, I wore clerical garb including a skullcap. This severely restricted a young man’s freedom of action. Actually, it changed my life. I had to be a young man of good character and my behavior, conversation, and interaction with people were always noticed. The expectations were always higher than the norm that was expected of others. Everywhere a clergyman was respected and regardless of his age, was given a seat of honor. He was regularly invited to most of the religious and social functions. At the school too, deference was shown by my fellow students as well as my teachers.

4

LIFE IN ENGLAND



I was fairly active in the S.C.M. (Student Christian Movement of India) meetings. Rev. Philip Lea the only Englishman on the college staff appreciated this interest of mine and on one occasion came and asked me, “would you like to go to England?” I said, “Yes, if I can get a scholarship” and he said “Let me see.”

He then wrote to Father Shore of the Oxford Mission in Calcutta, who then wrote to Kelham Theological College at Kelham, Newark, Notts, England. They then offered me a full scholarship and my traveling expenses were paid for by my grandfather. I went via Colombo, Ceylon (what is now Sri Lanka). Mr. Kallarakal who was the manager of the commercial bank with which my grandfather did business wrote to the bank’s agent in Colombo. His name was Mathew and he met me at the Colombo harbor and helped me with the choosing and tailoring of my clothes for England.

From Colombo, I proceeded to England by S. S. Ranshy, a P&O ship. Deacon K. Philipose (now Bishop Mar Theophilus) was with me. We had an uneventful journey except that I was terribly sea-sick during the first few days of the voyage, and not having been familiar with this experience, did even feel that I was going to die. This changed as I recovered from my seasickness. The ship called to port in several places on the way – Aden, Port Said, and Malta included. During one of those stops, among the passengers I met the “Karisayip” or Mr. Baker who was perhaps the largest landowner in the Kumarakam (near Kottayam) area. He was a down to earth man and spoke beautiful Malayalam just as any Malayalee. He befriended me and was a good friend throughout the journey. He was the brother of Miss Baker who was the founder of the Baker Memorial High School.

KOTTAYAM VALIYAPALLY & THE PERSIAN CROSS

Miss Baker was interested in our parish church, Valiapally. So it happened that during one monsoon season, one of the walls of our church compound gave away. This was about the time that the Viceroy Lord Irwin (later Lord Halifax) was visiting our parish church to see its famous “Persian Cross.” The state government of Travancore did not want the Viceroy to visit our church with a fallen wall. So they rebuilt it but it was nothing more than patch-up work. Not too long after the visit by the Viceroy the wall again gave way.

Then at the decision of the general body of our parish, my grandfather (Mr. K. M. Chumar) took up the task of collecting funds to rebuild the wall. Among the people he sought assistance from was Miss Baker who was known for her generosity. When my grandfather visited her she received him with great pleasure and told him that she was really interested in Valiapally and that she would match every rupee that the parishioners could raise. This was a challenge that my grandfather accepted as a duty. Suffice it to say that my grandfather rose to the occasion and raised the needed funds, mostly from our own people. He was an indefatigable man who would never rest until he accomplished what he set out to do. The walls were rebuilt and Miss Baker kept her promise. She told my grandfather that when her father first came to Kerala as a CMS missionary this was the first church that he visited and prayed in.

Valiapally was visited almost every day by foreign dignitaries. This is because of the two granite crosses one on each side facing the side altars. The left one is regarded as the older one of the two and is smaller. Archaeologists and other scholars visited the cross and many ventured to interpret the writing. The majority said that it was written in Phalavi (Persian) which was the language of the Sassanians in the 4th century A.D. Different interpretations were given by different scholars totalling as many as seventeen. The most popular interpretation was "O Lord, have mercy upon Afras, the son of Chaharbukt, the Syrian who cut this." Another one was "a bird from Nineveh came, etc." A third one was, "Lord, let me not glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." Since my home was very close to the church, I attended the regular services and became an altar boy in the Valiapalli. My grandfather greatly encouraged me in this respect.

LIFE AT KELHAM

At Kelham, I studied for four years and graduated with a diploma. Kelham was run by the Brethren of the Society of Sacred Mission. This was a religious order and the theological college was a principal project of this order. They had missionary projects abroad including one in South Africa.

Each student had a chaplain who personally guided the student. Fr. Paul Hume was my chaplain. He certainly helped me very much in the formation of my character at this critical period in my life. The superior of Kelham was Fr. Stephen Bedale, an austere and scholarly priest. He was respected by all. The overall Superior General was Fr. Reginald Tribe. He was on tour a great deal of the time, visiting various centers and raising funds for the college and the monastic order in general.

Life at the seminary was pleasant but the discipline was strict. We students had to attend four of the main hours of prayer, plus thirty minutes of meditation in the chapel. The members of the community offered prayers at all the canonical hours. Everybody wore the uniform of the society (a black cassock and a scapular). Even when we went out to the local town, we had to keep our uniform except the scapular. All of our expenses were met by the college but during vacations the Church of England Council on Foreign Relations arranged for me to travel around the country and stay with various religious leaders. I was a favorite of

Canon J. A. Douglas, its secretary and the Rt. Rev. Dr. J. C. Bedlam, the Bishop of Gloucester, its chairman. So many times I stayed in their homes. I even travelled around with Bishop Bedlam. These were all great experiences.

LOSS OF TWO GOOD FRIENDS

During this time, Grace Lukose and Babu Lukose, the children of Justice K. K. Lukose and Mrs. Poonnen Lukose were also studying in England. And we used to meet along with Deacon K. Philipose (now Bishop Theophilus) who was studying at St. Augustine's College in Canterbury. We developed a sense of real fraternity. I maintained that close relationship with Bishop Theophilus and even now we are close friends. Unfortunately, Babu and Grace (Jegga) died at early ages. Babu's wife and daughter are now living in Kottayam. Grace was one of the most beautiful girls of our community and as such she was much sought after both as a speaker and as a companion. She had an infectious faith in God and in our church. In moments of stress, she was a pillar of strength to me. She became a surgeon in Lady Harding Medial College Hospital until her beautiful life was cut short through a tragical and accidental electrocution. She was drying her hair when it got caught in the blades of an old electric fan. This was a great tragedy for the whole community as she had openly dedicated her life for human service. Her death and the death of Babu not long afterwards were more than any parents could bear. But the parents took this as God's will and remained loyal in their service to their fellow human beings. I have such beautiful memories of them. Momma and Pappa, as I called them, loved me almost as my own parents. May God almighty grant them eternal rest.

I also stayed with Mr. and Mrs. Barkworth at Felixstowe and with the Debanams. The Debanams were patrons of the Alwaye settlement. Canon J. A. Douglas was fond of me. He seldom went to bed before one or two in the morning. But strangely enough he invariably woke me up to say "good night." He had two maids who were especially good to me – Mrs. Morrison and Mrs. Renton. They prepared my favorite dishes.

CLOSE FRIENDS

Bishop C. K. Jacob's daughter, Chrissie, was also in England studying for the nursing profession. We used to meet frequently. She was such a

dedicated person and committed to the service of God. This is a real tribute for her upbringing. She took a special liking to me and even said, "If you care to marry, I am available." She did not know that the Knanites are discouraged to marry outside of their community. Because of this tradition, I had to disappoint her but we remained friends.

Another true friend was Mr. P. C. Joseph, our history professor who later became the principal of a college. As I was negotiating with the Kelham authorities, P. C. Joseph helped provide all the recommendations which I needed from the heads of the church. One was from Mar Dioscoros and another was from Mar Julius Elias, the metropolitan and the delegate of the See of Antioch. He even came with me to Omalloer to get a letter from Mar Julius.

On all these occasions, I cannot forget the interest taken in me by my very close friend, Palampadam Avarachan. He came with me to many places in his father's car which helped. Avarachan was every inch a gentleman. He was handsome both inside and outside. He inherited the spirit of generosity and service from his famous grandfather, Mr. P. T. Thomas Palampadam Vakil. Palampadam Vakil was also fond of me. Although I was very young, he treated me like an equal and had serious conversations often. Valiyamma (Mrs. P. T. Thomas) was also very fond of me. She always attended services at our church and she used to come with her grandchildren. She was an admirer of our Valiyachan Fr. E. C. Lukose.

Mr. C. K. Thomas our principal was also very helpful to me. He wrote the first recommendation for me to Kelham. He was a good man and a dedicated Christian. When I got admission at Kelham and started preparing to go, our whole community was enthused. There were several farewell meetings by the community as a whole and by individual parishes. Perhaps all these were because I was the first in the community to go overseas as a student.

DEATH OF MY PARENTS

As a matter of fact, my father K. C. Mathew was the first to go overseas. He went as a military clerk and served in Mesopotamia for some time. But his service in the military was cut short by a tragic wound that he sustained. He was travelling in a car with his superior (Major Mathai). The Germans were shelling and one shell hit the car and shrapnel hit

my father on his chest. He was treated for this but did not quite recover from it and the military discharged him with a handsome pension for life.

He returned to Kottayam and resumed work at the PWD (Public Works Department). He was constantly transferred and the family went with him. It was during our stay in Ponkunnam that my beloved mother had her fourth confinement. But unfortunately, complication developed and she was transferred to Kottayam for treatment. Since I was studying in Ponkunnam and fearing that the constant moving might disrupt my studies, my father entrusted me with one of his close associates in Ponkunnam. Unfortunately, my mother's condition got worse and she was called to eternal rest in a few weeks time.

My father dispatched a rickshaw with two rickshaw-wallas to take me home. They came to Ponkunnam and took me in a rickshaw almost seventeen miles. They never told me of the death of my mother. I was happy to go home and sang part of the way. When I reached home, I saw crowds there and someone lifted me up and carried me to my mother's bedside. All people cried. I will never forget that experience. To be deprived of my dear mother who never even once punished me.

On one occasion, when I quarrelled with my sister Mariamma, she took a little cane and asked me to stretch out my palm and hit me gently. Then instead of my crying, she burst out crying. How can I forget that. Never again did I do anything to hurt my darling mother.

My dear father was different. He was hot-tempered and for even minor infractions used to cane me. But later he showed affection to me by giving me gifts even without asking.

My mother's death was a terrible shock to my father. He loved her and depended on her so much. He became a lost soul without her. His health started deteriorating and exactly 60 days after my mother's demise, he too went to the Lord. I vaguely remember his last hours. The priests were giving him the last rites and as they were singing he not only listened to the song but even beat the rhythm on his chest with his fingers.

I was too young to understand the significance of these events. I was only 7 and my sisters were 5 and 3. We became orphans all of a sudden. But the good lord didn't leave us in the lurch.

My grandfather (K. M. Chumar) rose to the occasion and became my all. My grandfather and the three of us moved to a separate house and started housekeeping. My maternal grandparents, who also lived close by, went out of their way in showering us with all types of gifts. Although my maternal grandparents had another daughter called Aleykutty, we became a passion for them. They even officially transferred their property in my name, besides showering all types of gifts. They were simple folks. They had a fair amount of wealth but lost most of it except the property they were residing in. My Aunt Aleykutty was also so solicitous of our welfare. Often we were taken to Kurichi, her home, and tried to give us a second home. She and her husband, Abraham who was a schoolteacher, were affection personified for us. As a result, I did a lot of commuting between Kottayam and Kurichi.

My paternal grandfather wielded real control over us and let us go away only on occasions. But their love will always remain fresh in my heart until my death. One day my maternal grandmother had a stroke and my grandfather personally came running to our home and took me to her bedside. She died while we were saying our prayers for her. She was a beautiful person, both in body and spirit. She was buried at the Valiapally Cemetery. Grant her rest eternal, O Lord. After Ammachy's death, my maternal grandfather moved to Kuruchi and stayed the rest of his life with Kochamma and Appappan. When he died he was buried at Chingavanam Puthenpally Cemetery. Kochamma and Appappan belonged to that parish. The news of my grandfather's death reached me a little late and by the time I reached Chingavanam, the burial was practically over. But his love will remain in my heart forever. May he rest in peace.

C.M.S HIGH SCHOOL

I persisted with my studies at C. M. S. High School. Mr. P. M. Kurian was the headmaster and he was a great disciplinarian. I had only two encounters with him. The first was when some of us students who failed to bring our umbrellas had to stay behind after school when it rained. While waiting for the rain to stop, just for fun, a couple of the friends went to the next compound and plucked out some tapioca belonging to the neighbor. The neighbor complained to the headmaster and he punished us by caning. This was a sad episode in my life. This was the only time I was punished by the headmaster.

The second time I had a personal encounter with the headmaster was when His Holiness Mar Ignatius Elias the Patriarch of Antioch died at Omalloor. We requested the school be closed in his honor. But Mr. M. Kurian refused. Then as the leader of the Jacobite group, I went to the headmaster to make further representation. I asked the headmaster, "Why don't you close the school at the demise of our beloved patriarch? After all, you closed the school when a classmate of mine – Markose, who belonged to the Puka community – died." To which he replied, "Markose was a student of the school and not the Patriarch." At this, we walked out. We expected some disciplinary action to be taken against us. But he didn't. Perhaps he realized that since the Jacobites were the majority in the school such an action might have unpleasant repercussions.

At the school, as a deacon, I enjoyed the privilege of studying without paying any fees. This is in recognition of the small income from the Munro Island to the school. In the college, the clergymen of the Jacobite church studied free.

I was fairly good at tennis and both at the school and later at the college not only did I play tennis, but I was the elected tennis captain too.

At the retirement of Mr. P. M. Kurian, a new headmaster was appointed. He was Mr. George Thomas. He came there from Maslipatan and was a great speaker. He and I became good friends. Often he used to call me to his office and we had long chats. This friendship continued even after both he and I left the school.

On the eve of our departure from the high school, there was a farewell party at which I was asked to speak on behalf of the students. I made a fairly good speech which was appreciated by all. I was helped by Mr. M. J. Joseph in the organizing of the speech.

After high school, I joined the college in the third group – history and logic, etc. Mr. C. K. Thomes was the principal and Mr. P. C. Joseph was the Indian history professor. Mr. C. T. Thomas was the British history professor. Mr. T. R. Subramaniyan was our English professor and Mr. C. I Raman Nair the Malayalam professor. I was quite happy at the college. When I finished the college, I received a scholarship to go to Kelham Theological College, Kelham, Newark, Notts. Mr. Philip Lea, who was a professor, took a liking for me and

asked me whether I would like to go to England. I said yes and then he wrote to Fr. Holms of the Oxford Mission Calcutta who in turn wrote to Kelham and got me admission with a full scholarship.

For this I had to produce a number of certificates including one from the church. The church certificates were written by Mar Dioscors, the then Metropolitan of the Knanaya diocese and by Mor Julius Elias, Metropolitan delegate of the Holy See of Antioch. Mr. P. C. Joseph came and took me to both Chingavanam to see Mar Dioscoros and to Omalloor to see Mar Julius. Mr. Joseph wrote both the recommendation letters. Mr. Joseph was such a good friend and headmaster. This friendship continued unabated until his death.

DEPARTURE TO ENGLAND

My departure for England was an event in our community. I was the first to go to England as well as to the U.S.A. from our community. As a matter of fact, my father was the first to go overseas – of course in his case to serve in the military. I went to England in 1937 and was at Kelham for 4 years. I had a very happy time there. Kelham was run by the Society of Sacred Mission – a community of Anglican Monks. Their dedicated life was one of real inspiration.

I was one of the two foreign students. The other was Mr. Nadkarin who was a member of the Anglican Church. But as a member of a sister church, not in communion with the C/E, I received special treatment. I was allowed to go to the Armenian Church – to Fr. Tireh Nirsoych – to make my communion. My travelling expenses were met by the C/E Council on foreign relations headed by the V. Rev. Canon J. A. Douglas. All my vacations were also spent as the guest of the council – traveling through the country and staying with the teachers of the church.

One person in particular I would like to mention among these hosts of mine – the Most Rev. Arthur Cowlap Headlan, the Bishop of Gloucester. Before he became the bishop, he was the religious professor of divinity at Oxford. He liked me personally. He not only repeatedly invited me to his residence to stay but also took me around many times when he travelled in the British Isles while on my vacation.

Another good friend was Mr. Barkworth of Felixstowe. He was very active in the church and headed many social service programs.

INITIATION AT KELHAM

At Kelham, a new student was always initiated in ways which might seem strange to us. In my case, they shut me up in the big laundry basket and pushed me down the steps from the fourth floor of the house. I was really frightened. But there was really nothing to worry about. I didn't complain. If I had, then they would have put me through other strange experiences. Very soon I was one of the boys.

But one thing which took a little time for me to get used to was the manual work all of us had to do to students, faculty, and the other members of the brotherhood. This may be work in the kitchen, peeling potatoes, cleaning lavatories, etc. I was put on the cleaning of the lavatories on one or two occasions. At first, I resented it and told the chaplain, Fr. Paul Herone, such work is done only by the untouchables in India. He said he was sorry that I felt that way. I thought he would not let me do that again. But when the next list came out, I was again put on this job. I was very unhappy. As I did this a third time, I lost my resentment as I saw others doing it with pleasure. Actually this took a much shorter period than the other tasks. I even asked my chaplain to put me on this task on a steady basis. Then he explained to me that he noticed an element of false pride in me and he wanted to break it. He never put me on this task again.

Kelham had a Lady Chapel dedicated to St. Mary. I used to go to this chapel a great deal to offer private prayers.

Whenever a person leaves after the completion of his studies, he is given a farewell he will never forget. After a farewell service in the chapel and after receiving the official blessings from Fr. Prior, all the students and faculty and members of the brotherhood line up to bid you goodbye. This is an unforgettable experience. Kelham really became a second home to me and its brethren, members of my family. I had been to Kelham several times after my student days and, each time, I appreciated the visit and the spirit of dedication of the brethren.

During my vacations, the C/E arranged for me to stay in different places with different prominent people. This was one way we got to see the country as well as meet persons of different backgrounds. The only stay which I enjoyed the most was staying in Derby with Canon and Mrs. Bolton. They were wonderful to me. I even got my coffee served

in style, before I got up, in bed by a young maid. Being young and romantic by temperament, I took a real liking to the girl who served the coffee. She too developed a feeling of affection for me. Suffice it to say, I stayed on in bed even when I was wide-awake until the coffee came!

Not far from the Canon's home there was a farm and a farmhouse owned by the Poles. They had a tennis court and I was invited to play tennis there. This I did gladly. The Poles had a daughter, called Barbara, who was a good player. I went to play there every afternoon and soon Barbara and I became fast friends and even teamed up to play in tournaments in the neighboring clubs. This even led up to a deepening of our friendship. Barbara's parents also liked me. There was the prospect of romance. This was fortunately cut off by my getting a letter from Canon Douglas that I was to go to London to serve as an honorary curate at St. Pauls' Dept form. This curacy was also a great experience. This is where I got to know the working of an English parish first hand.

Everywhere I went I made friends easy. Some of them even became fast friends and I kept up correspondence with them long after my return to India.

RETURN TO INDIA

I left for India in the middle of the war. C/E made arrangements for me and Deacon K. Philipose to travel together. Our ship along with a few other ships were convoyed by the ships of the British Navy. This was an experience. We traveled via the Cape of Good Hope, a very dangerous route. We were told that our convoy had encountered a German submarine which apparently was sunk by the British Navy. On Sunday, the ship's chaplain conducted services for us. One passenger died of natural causes en route and he was buried in the sea. (They had a funeral service and his body was slowly lowered into the sea.)

When we reached Bombay, I sent a telegram to my beloved grandfather that I had arrived. He had been deathly sick ever since I left England, not knowing what could happen to me in the midst of the war. He had been regularly offering prayers for my safety and even made offerings in different churches and gave special alms to the poor.

As time passed by, he became seriously sick and was at the point of death. But the thought of seeing me soon kept him alive. Every day he kept on asking whether "Chemmachen came?" Then at last, when I did

arrive, he was barely breathing. But he saw me, he suddenly sat up with joy and started talking. He asked me so many questions and saw some of the gifts I received, including a cross and chain given to me by the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople Athenagoras. He said, "You must wear it from now on." Then he told me "to go and have your lunch. I have asked them to prepare your favourite dishes. Then rest for a while." As I was finishing my lunch my Sister Mariamma came running to me and said, "Appachen is dying." I rushed to his bedside and took his head in my arms and put it on my lap and the priests started saying the last prayers. He died in my arms peacefully. What an experience. What a blessing that he lived that much longer to die in the arms of his beloved grandson whom he brought up with such care and affection. This Appachen is my beloved and I shall always remember him with love and deep gratitude.

Not only members of the Valiapally parish and our neighbors but even the Malayala Manorama made special mention of his death and a report associated with my arrival from England.

In those days a trip overseas particularly to England was an event and staying there was a privilege. For only 2 people from the Knanaya Community went to England for studies. Vellappally Thommachen from the R. C. Church and myself from the Jacobities.

I was also invited by many non-Knanaya groups to speak. Sometimes "Deacon" Philipos and myself jointly were invited. The Trivandrum church gave us a good reception. Justice K. K. Lukose and Mrs. Mary Lukose (Mamma) also took part in some of these meetings. Mr. Jacob Pothen, along with his daughter Sarah Pothen, and the Lukose family were particularly hospitable to me in Trivandrum.

A GREAT MAN Mr. M.K. KURIAKOSE

Among the Knanaites in Trivandrum, businessman Mr. M. K. Kuriakose was a true leader and he gave me a great deal of support. How I wish he was alive today. He truly loved his community and worked hard for the uplifting of its members, particularly the young. God blessed him with a lot of wealth and he spent a reasonable share of this for the welfare of others including the building of a hospital. Unfortunately, the leadership in the community didn't show him the appreciation he justly deserved. Otherwise he would have done much more than he did. He was the

recipient of a scholarship (loan) from Mar Severios education fund. He did his university studies with this help, and when he had established himself, he gave back several fold to the community in more ways than one. He died young. How I wish he had lived longer.

Sometimes I feel that our community is very backward in this matter of giving needed encouragement to its younger generation. Perhaps if Thirumeni had a few men of vision and stature from the community regularly meeting with him in a consultative role, this could have encouraged him many times. I also feel that Thirumeni shouldn't live there alone. He should have a few monks and deacons helping with him. When this is done, perhaps the bishop's house will also become a real religious community. Evening, morning, noon, etc. a deacon could ring the bell for prayers and all could gather at the Seminary Chapel for the prayers. I know that Thirumeni regularly says all the hourly prayers but this will be an additional spiritual witness. This was done at Alwaye by Mar Paulose Althanasius in his Aramana (Thirikkunnath Seminary) and I shall always remember participating in his prayers. This was an inspiration for me and all who went there.

I really love my Thirumeni and there isn't a thing I wouldn't do for him. He really loves me too. But somehow or other, I feel that he is not using his full potential for the growth of the community. He had been our bishop for over forty years. Is our community ready to respond to any of his positive biddings. True he is a great speaker, preacher, has great qualities of leadership. But what has he so far done for his testaments or the church. In a moment of crisis in the history of Kerala Christians he gave such a leadership. But why can't he do the same in the case of his community. I pray to God that he be given that opportunity to give transforming leadership.

Soon after my return from England, I was appointed general secretary of the Diocese by the Association. At the suggestion of Thamarappallil Achen and others, I moved to the Seminary to live in. I had a salary of Rupees 75. Only when I started living independently that I realized that Rs 75 wouldn't go very far. Sometimes I used my personal resources to make up. Most of our leaders visited me and I offered them a share of the food I had. Realizing my predicament, Thamarappallil T. O. Phip (Paruthicat) had to supplement my food supply by bringing things from his home. He and his beloved wife

really were generous and really cared for me. They did this in a subtle way by getting their son Thampy to stay with me sometimes.

During my tenure as General Secretary of the Diocese, I was privileged to do a few things. Thamarappallil Achen gave me a free hand..

- 1) I went around and collected the Anduvari (the yearly subscription for the diocese).
- 2) Wherever there had been disputes in the parishes I went and negotiated and in most cases brought about a settlement.

Sometimes, out of sympathy, for the persistent way in which I went after them, they yielded and agreed to the suggestions I would make. Mr. E. P. Mathew, Mr. M. C. Korah Mundukottakal and Mr. V. O. Markose came with me on some of the visits.

While on many former occasions, the Anduvari collection ended in overall debt, I had a good balance to show. This resulted in general enthusiasm in the community.

5

WORLD CONFERENCE OF CHRISTIAN YOUTH

Of all the people to whom I am indebted, there is no one to whom I owe so much as Dr. Tracey Strong. He is, in a sense, who discovered my potential and put me on the right track. It was he who proposed my name to become the organizing secretary of the III World Conference of Christian Youth. He invited me to Geneva and told me of this appointment. This conference was jointly sponsored by the World Alliance of YMCAs and the World Council of Churches and the World Council of Christian Education. I didn't really understand at first its full implications.

With this mandate, I came to Kottayam and confided this news to my close friends like P. E. Abraham Palampadam, N. M. Abraham Nalathara, V. O. Markose, A. V. George and a few others. They all encouraged me and supported me to the hilt. I called together a meeting of the leaders of Kottayam at the YMCA. At this meeting, all except Dr. P.T. Thomas Palampadam said that this is an honor for Kottayam and Kerala and they would support me in every way. Mammen Mappilai said, "Counting on our support 'our Chemmachen' undertook to do a big task. Our job is to support him fully." A. V. George said, "I am at your disposal with whatever resources I have." This was a remarkable day. A local committee was selected with the bishops of the various churches as its joint chairmen. There was an all Indian committee also headed by Dr. John Mathai. I was pleasantly surprised at the reactions of Dr. Mathai to head such a committee. Dr. P. V. Cherian's name was suggested as the chairman of the committee. He too accepted the nomination with pleasure. The rest was plain sailing. We had a local working committee with the Rev. K. Philipose as the chairman. Never before have I seen such a spirit of cooperation in Kottayam.

We set out to collect funds both in Kerala and outside. It was decided to put a limit of Rs 1000 for an individual donation. Money poured in. Many people offered to pay Rs 25,000 but this was thankfully refused. Some people thought that Kottayam is too small a place to hold such a world event. But the people of Kottayam rose to the occasion. Kottayam Conference was one of the best in the ecumenical history.

It is interesting to note that all our ecumenical institutions were put at our disposal. But none had the modern conveniences. But when I pointed this out, our leaders who cooperated went out of their way to install modern toilets in every institution where the delegates stayed. In fact, when I was given a farewell, after the event, one friend even declared "if nothing will remind us of Simon Chemachen, these toilets will shout out."

It is also worth mentioning that when the conference was finally over, after meeting all our obligations, we had over Rs 25,000 balance which we donated for the benefit of service institutions which needed help. The people of Kottayam were great.

The conference was held in a specially constructed pandal at the C.M.S. College grounds. Besides the delegates, the General secretaries of the U.E.S Ecumenical organizations which co-sponsored the conference, heads of all the U.S.A. churches were also present. Since Abraham Mar Clemis was the youngest bishop at that time, at my suggestion, he was invited to make the inaugural speech. He gave a good speech, but since his accent was typically Indian, some of the delegates had difficulty in understanding him. This was his introduction to the ecumenical movement.

Some of the most prominent ecumenical leaders participated in the conference. Dr. Martin Niemoller was a great hit with our people. He was perhaps the best known to the Kerala Christians.

The Kottayam people were so enthusiastic that they even organized a regular "boat race" to entertain the guests. They really enjoyed themselves. The type of boat race they had seen was like the boat race between Oxford and Cambridge. In this race, so many boats participated, including the real chundenvallam. There were 60 or 70 or even 100 people rowing.

During the weekend, the delegates were invited to the different parishes where not only they were asked to preach or speak; they were entertained in different homes. They went for walks and people greeted them enthusiastically. Some of them went into toddy shops thinking that it is like a pub in Europe. They were an uninhibited group and they really enjoyed themselves. Kottayam people never had an experience like this and it is unlikely that they will have a similar experience again.

During the initial period of the preparation, there was real concern as to whether we will be able to raise the needed money. Late one night, His Grace Yohannon Mar Thoma came home to inquire how the fund raising was going on. I was pleasantly surprised at his visit. He told me, he just came to assure me that all are behind me in this undertaking and I need not worry.

The caterer for the conference was a man from Trichinoppally called Amin Shaw. He was introduced to us by Mrs. Tara Cheriyan, wife of Dr. P. V. Cheriyan Palathinkal originally from Kottayam but settled down in Madras. He was the most prominent ENT specialist in South India. Amin Shaw was an experienced caterer and did a beautiful job of catering for the international crowd. Food was served to the delegates in the great hall of the college and Mrs. Cheriyan personally supervised the serving. Though a Tamilian by upbringing, she identified herself with the Keralites by wearing the traditional chatta and pudava of the Syrian Christians. Of course, she had the lipstick, etc. But she was efficiency personified and the Kottayam people loved her.

The conference lasted ten days. People from all over Kerala came to have a look at the people who came from all over the world. Most of the people who had cars offered their cars with chauffeurs for the use of the delegates. I had rented an old car for the occasion. Sometimes I had starting problems. But friends were only too happy to push start the car. On one occasion, Miss Hamilton (a volunteer secretary and daughter of a British ship builder) took the car out for shopping in the town. But on the return trip, she had trouble with the car. But our young people led by Varky George pushed the car all the way to our house. Miss Hamilton was an unusually beautiful young girl.

ENGAGEMENT TO THANKAMMA

I was already engaged to be married to Thankamma Abraham, the only daughter of Manimalethu Abraham (Kutty). He was a prominent

landowner of Ranny and quite an enterprising person. Mr. Abraham had four sons all older than Thankamma. M.A. Chacko, the second son of Mr. Kutty was a lawyer by education. He was a friendly person and active at the Community Student Association. He came to see me. At that time I was staying at the church quarters as my house was being renovated. He asked me quite candidly whether I was planning to go to Eranakulam any time soon. I told him, "as a matter of fact, I am going this afternoon." Then he said, "May I come with you as I also have to go there to see my sister?" So we went together. When I finished what I had to do, I went with him to St Therasas Convent and saw his sister Thankamma. We talked for a while and returned to Kottayam. On our way back, quite unexpectedly he asked me a question, "Do you like my sister?" I replied, "she is a charming girl." A few days afterwards, a proposal came from the Manimalathu family proposing Thankamma as my future wife. My uncles and other close relatives were all in favor of the proposal and this prompted me to accept it. I prayed about it and accepted this proposal as God's will. I took my closest friend Palampadam Avarachen to Ranny and introduced him to Thankamma. He was delighted. My other friends were also happy.

WEDDING

April 20th was fixed as the date for our wedding. Soon invitations were printed and sent to friends and relations. The wedding was a grand affair. Since I was friendly with H. H. the Maharaja, he was also informed about it. He sent his military secretary, Mr. J. W. Chacko of Pallan, with gifts for both of us. Thankamma was given a beautiful silk sari with a golden border and I got a gold watch. Later we were both invited to the palace for a meal. The Maharani was also present on the occasion. Since then we were invited to the palace several times. We visited them also many times when they came to Kottayam. His Highness is a very simple and sincere man and it was a privilege to be befriended by him. I am sorry that both Her Highness the Maharani and H. H. the Maharaja are no more, I had always looked forward to inviting them whenever we went to Kerala. Maharani was an unusually informed person. Actually on one occasion, she discussed the theological differences between the Orthodox churches and the R. C. and the Protestant churches.

6

TO ETHIOPIA

Soon after the conference, I was invited by His Grace Abuna Theophilos to go to Ethiopia. I came to know the Abuna during attendance at the World Council of Churches meetings. I was a delegate of the Patriarch to the WCC for over 15 years. In fact, it was at my urging that H.H. asked to get our church to join the WCC. The Catholicos group was already a founding member of WCC. H.H. Patriarch Ephraim, the predecessor to H.H Yacoub III, was for some unknown reason, prejudiced against the WCC. H.H Yacoub was more open-minded and became tolerant of the change.

When I visited Ethiopia, His Grace the Abuna took me to H. I. Majesity and soon I was invited to take over the Theological College from Abuna Marcos Davud as the director or the principal.

This was a formidable task. For the seminary had, in addition to its regular students, several monks both scholarly and non-scholarly. This director had to cater to the needs of all. But H. G. Abuna was a pillar of support. I not only took care of the academic needs of the students, but also made an attempt to teach them the dignity of labor. Once a religious leader, they felt any type of manual work was beneath their dignity. In addition to the cleaning of their own rooms, I invited them to help to keep the cathedral (Holy Trinity) next door clean. At first they resented, but I never asked them to do anything I didn't do. They relented and started enjoying the assignments they were given. Even H. I. M. came to see what the students were doing.

Once H. I. M. came to the college and sat at my desk upstairs. He told me that he signed the declaration of the abolition of slavery sitting at that desk. He also said, "see what the Jesuits have done in developing the university. I will give you even greater support in developing the

theological college. After all this is the main theological institution of the church.”

The church in Ethiopia enjoyed a very privileged position. It is the established church of the country. It owns a sizeable area of the land (according to some, almost 1/3 of the country). It has so many monasteries full of monks. The monks even perform religious dancing prior to the commencement of the services.

As in all other churches, in Ethiopia the church services were very long, perhaps longer than the other orthodox churches. People were quite used to it. H. I. M. and members of the Imperial family attended most of the services. His majesty himself was an ordained priest of the church and well versed in all the ceremony and hymns. Many a time he went to church as early as four in the morning. When HIM arrived, the bishops and priests of the church went to the main door to receive him. Her Imperial Majesty and the other members of his family also went with him to the church. This was of great interest. After the reading of the Gospel at the Eucharist, the celebrant took the New Testament to HIM to be kissed. After HIM, others also kissed the Gospel. HIM built a beautiful church in Addis Ababa as the national cathedral. It had a great dome and inside the dome are paintings of the most important events in his life. His tomb also was prepared in the Crypt under the main altar. Her Imperial Majesty was buried there. When HIM 's second son, the Duke of Harare died he was also buried there. But what an irony of fate, when he eventually met his unhappy end, his mortal remains along with the remains of his entourage were all unceremoniously dropped into a common pit. Mysterious are the ways of God. Only God knows the fate of men. While he was emperor, people prostrated before him. But some of those who prostrated were also plotting to overthrow him. And yet, most of them owed their education and position to HIM.

ETHIOPIAN EMPEROR HIS IMPERIAL MAJESTY HAILE SALASEE'S VISIT TO INDIA

HIM had a special regard for me. When HIM was invited by the President of India to pay a special visit, he sent me in advance to finalize his program in India. And when he went, I toured with him to all the places.



Wherever he went in India, he was well received, but no where did he receive the type of welcome he received in Kerala – especially the ones given by the churches. Perhaps his greatest welcome was given in Kothamangalam by the Jacobite Church. There were over 150 silver processional crosses, 4 or 5 golden crosses, over a thousand processional umbrellas, etc. There were 4 decorated elephants bearing HIM's portraits. Mr. George Thomas, the Chief Secretary to the State of Kerala was in charge. He took HIM to a specially erected platform from where he could see the entire crowd. He received such an enthusiastic welcome that he stood there and shed tears of joy. He personally told me that he had never received such a welcome in all his life. He also added, if only he was a truly rich man, he would have showered our church with valuable gifts of appreciation. HIM visited the Old Seminary as well as Valiapally (my old parish church). At Valiapally, I showed him the ancient Persian Crosses. Learning that it was my parish church, he asked me "are your parents buried here?" I said "yes." Then he asked me to escort him to the tomb of my parents and he offered a word of prayer at the tomb. This was truly a gesture of love for which I can never thank him enough.

Of all the places he visited, one stands out – the visit to the Benares Hindu University. HIM was particularly interested in this university and as a mark of appreciation, he presented the university with the most precious thing he brought with him to India – a Bible in Greek written on leather parchment. But there was a strange reaction from the Vice chancellor of the university. He came to me and said "your emperor gave a lack of respect to one of your colleges in Kerala and to

this university – a Bible!!” I was shocked at that remark. Later, I told him, if possible, a monetary donation also should be made. Before he left, he gave Ro 50,000 for Benares. In Trivandrum, the C. S. I. church that he visited had their choir sing the Ethiopian national anthem in Amharic. HIM was so pleased that he gave a gold sovereign to each of the choirboys. In Kerala, I was hoping that His Majesty could enjoy the hospitality of the Maharajah. I wired the Maharajah to be prepared. HH had his gold coated dinner set, etc. readied. But unfortunately by the time HIM came to Kerala, the government changed. Maharajah was replaced by Mr. B. Ramakrishna Rao as the governor and HH never saw HIM – to their mutual disappointment.

MY FATHER-IN-LAW MR. M.U. ABRAHAM MANIMALETHU

When the WCCY Conference was over, on April 20, 1953, I got married to Thankamma, the only daughter of Mr. M. U. Abraham Manimalethu. Abraham was a dynamic person. He took nothing from his parents and through his own efforts became one of the richest men in the Knanaya community. He expected great things from his children. When his grandson (Rejumon) did poorly in school, he ordered him to plant coconut seedlings. Rejumon had no alternative. He started digging and sweating. Then Achayan went to him and asked him “which is better? Studying hard to make something of yourself or digging like this?” Rejumon got the message and studied hard and graduated.

Achayan had great love for me too. Frequently, he visited me and supervised the work that was going on in the construction of our boundary wall. One day, he met me at Kottaryam bus station. I was a State guest since I was on a mission from the Ethiopian envoy. I had the State car and the driver was taking gas from the government pumps. But little did I realize that I had a tear on the back of my cassock. He noticed it. I asked Achayan where he was going. He was going to Trivandrum. I asked him to join me. He said he preferred to travel by public transport. Then I left for Trivandrum. Reaching there, as I was the guest of the government, I stayed at the Mascot Hotel. A few hours after my reaching Trivandrum, Achayan showed up at the Hotel with a big parcel. It contained four new cassocks. He had engaged a couple of special tailors to do the tailoring. I shall always remember this gesture

of love with deep gratitude. He was quite a man and a great father. Thankamma was his only daughter and his youngest and she was his pet. Not long afterwards, Achayan contracted cancer on his tongue and died a painful death. He was a giant of a man not in size but in character and in achievement.

Dr. P. T. THOMAS PALAMPADAM

Another person who visited me at the Mascot Hotel was Dr. P. T. Thomas Palampadam. He came straight to my bedroom and sitting on my bed (a pleasant surprise as he is not used to taking such liberties with people) asked me to do him a favor. "Cancel HIM's program at the old seminary." At that time his hatred for the Catholicose group was so intense. To this I made the only reply possible, "I am representing HIM and he is not a partisan in our church controversy. Sorry I cannot do it." He went away disappointed and angry. It is interesting to note here that a few years afterwards when he suddenly fell ill in Madras, it was the Manoramas people who looked after him. It was a gesture, which made him, and his sons, a friend of the Kandathil family, for life. His son Achenkunju even became a member of the Managing committee of the Catholicose group. Achen Kunju, being a man of few words was only a silent member. But this turn of events was significant in that the Palampadam family headed by Eapachen was the principal supporter and spokesman for the Patriarch's party.

Eapachen, until his death, remained a staunch Patriarch party man. And his eldest son, P. E. Thomas (Baby) became its lay trustee. He remains a trustee even now. But his younger brother, who is popular in the social circles and who has the real qualities of leadership, remains aloof from party politics. His only daughter Meena is married to Appu (the eldest son of Mr. P. C. Cherian). Padinjarekara people are real supporters of the Catholicos party. Palampadam people originally came from Velloor some 8 miles east of Kottayam and they have their family church there. All their family functions are conducted there and all their dead are buried in that church's cemetery. It is openly a Patriarch party church.

Although Palampadam people are staunch Patriarchal supporters, they have not hesitated to get their daughters married to Catholicos

party families. The result is that many thinking people are no longer interested in these squabbles. As things stand, only the clergy are forced to cooperate with these opposing parties. It is difficult to explain to our young the differences in our parties. I wonder whether the Patriarch is really concerned. If he is really concerned, he should also play an active role in bringing about a reconciliation. In many ways, we need all our people to live in unity for a bright future and meaningful Christian witness.

WHAT SHOULD BE THE PRESENT DAY KNANAYA ROLE IN THE KERALA CHURCH POLITICS?

We, the Knananite Jacobites, perhaps are not fully aware of the implications of the split because we are a completely united community. But we have a duty to work for the reconciliation. In times past, our leaders, like Anjilimuttill Ittythommen Kathanar and E. M. Philip Edavazikal gave strong leadership. Why not now?

During the Portuguese conquest of Kerala, all our people were forced to accept the Roman Catholic faith led by Archbishop Menezis. But soon after the domination ended, our people revolted against the Portuguese under the leadership of Anjilimuttill Ittythommen Kathanar. Assembling at Mattancherry and holding on to ropes tied on to the granite cross outside the church, they declared that they and their children would renounce Roman Catholicism and remain loyal to the throne of Antioch and its faith and traditions.

Our Roman Catholic brethren are taught inaccurate history by their present religious leaders. "Back to the old church." They mean join the Roman Catholic Church. Our people had not even heard of the Pope before Archbishop Menezis came. When he asked our people assembled at Mattancherry, "Are you under the Pope?" our people asked a counter question. "Who is the Pope?" Perhaps this was the real beginning of our struggle with the Roman Catholic Church led by the Portuguese. The majority of our people clung to their original faith in spite of all types of provocations. It is believed that in response to requests from our forefathers, the Patriarch sent a bishop named Athulla to Malankara. He was captured by the Portuguese and was killed by them drowning him in the sea.

In a historic meeting between the Pope and the Patriarch of Antioch, a covenant was signed in which they stated that they accept the validity of each others order's and the sacraments and no attempts would be made to proselytize or steal each others "sheep." But this has not discouraged the Kottayam diocese leaders from sheep stealing. Bishop Kunnesserry recognizes the Pope as his supreme head but does not believe in the ecumenical tolerance which the Pope clearly advocates.

In Ethiopia, I enjoyed a very privileged position. I was the head of the Theological College. I was close to all the leaders of the church. I had a very close personal relationship with H. I. M. and the members of the Imperial family. I was invited to all the main social functions in Addis Ababa. H. G. Abuna Theophilos, who although not officially Patriarch, then administrator of the church was like a father to me. I met him every day and had entry into his private quarters through a side entrance. I even went and stayed with him in Harar where he spent periods of time. Even when he later became the Patriarch, I had the freedom and privilege to enter his private quarters without seeking special permission.

ORDINATION AS PRIEST BY MOR CLEMIS METROPOLITAN IN ADDIS ABABA

His Grace Mor Clemis Abraham, my diocesan bishop, expressed a desire to visit Ethiopia. I communicated this wish to H. I. M. who was only too happy to invite him as his guest. He came and stayed at the Imperial Hotel and was regaled with honors by H. I. M. At this H. G. Mar Athanasius Y. Samuel also expressed a desire to come. He too was invited by H. I. M. While he was there, I was elevated to the priesthood by His Grace Mar Clemis. Since I was only a sub-deacon at the time, I was ordained to the full deacon by Mar Athanasius the previous day.

My ordination to the priesthood was a big event. For some reason, all the bishops of the Ethiopian church were in Addis and all of them along with the Greek Archbishop of Addis Ababa attended the function. Practically all the Malayalees were there and Mar Clemis, for the benefit of the Indian community, said most of the prayers in Malayalam. Mar Athanasius did not appreciate that. He came to me where I was kneeling and told me "go and tell your bishop to say the prayers in Syriac or else

I am walking out.” I got up from where I was kneeling and went up to Mar Clemis and begged him to recite the rest of the service in Syriac to avoid an unpleasant scene. He graciously complied.

His Grace Mar Clemis’ visit was a very important event in the life of the Malayalee Community in Addis. He was felicitated wherever he went.

H. I. Majesty honored both prelates and gave them suitable gifts. I was so happy that Mar Clemis came to Ethiopia. He has a magnetic personality and as such, people were greatly impressed by him.

Since I had been in Ethiopia for over 6 years, I felt the time had come for me to move on. It was at this juncture that I got the invitation from H. G. Mar Athanasius to go to the States and be the Dean of his cathedral in Hackensack. I accepted the invitation with pleasure. But when I communicated the news to H. G. Abuna Theophilos he was upset. “Why do you want to go? You have a future here. Everybody likes you.” However, I felt that the best policy was to leave while I still enjoyed the good will of all concerned. I thought of the lot of Fr. Marcos Darwood, my predecessor. He was diplomatically asked to leave.

Finally, I left Ethiopia with the blessing of all. In a farewell that was given to me, speakers pointed out that I transformed the institution, brought so much to it both in material and good will.

Though I left Ethiopia, Ethiopia never left me. I left a part of me behind. Since my departure, I have been to Ethiopia several times and I enjoyed all of my visits. Whenever I went, I stayed with His Holiness Abuna Theophilos, who became the Patriarch by then.

DEAN OF ST. MARK’S CATHEDRAL, HACKENSACK, N.J.

After a brief visit to India, I went to the U. S. A. in response to Mar Athanasius’ invitation and became the Dean of St. Mark’s Cathedral. Since the church quarters were not quite ready, I stayed a few days at the home of one of the senior members of the church – George Garabed. He was a simple but loveable man with a very able wife. He had two sons and a daughter all were well placed.

As soon as the parish parsonage house was ready, I moved into it. Parishioners were very helpful. Many of them came and helped Thankamma to decorate the house. They also furnished the house well.

Two brothers who were carpet layers put carpet on the floor and stairways. His Grace Mar Athanasius visited me almost daily.

The church paid me \$50 per week. At first, I thought that it was a tidy sum. But when I started housekeeping, I found that it was not sufficient. Since Fairleigh Dickinson University was next door, one day I went and saw the Dean of the Hackensack Campus. He then introduced me to Dr. Nazulia Fatemi the then Chairman of the Social Sciences Department. He offered me a course in World History to teach. This I gladly accepted. The stipend this brought helped me to make both ends meet. This was a one-hour class on three days of the week. F. D. U. students and the faculty liked me enough to offer a second course. I spoke about this to Mar Athanasius who didn't appreciate it. He told me that I was a full time priest of the church and must be available at all times. He also insisted on my sitting at the church office all weekday mornings. He used to come over to see whether I was in the office. People were nice to me and I enjoyed serving them. But there were cultural differences and I managed to overlook these, I learned to hold the services in Syriac. I had to make housecalls on most evenings. Since people were living scattered all over the metropolitan area, I had a great deal of driving to do. Sometimes, I returned home late at night and poor wife had to be alone. This worried me.

His Grace was nice to me in his own way. But he was a hard taskmaster. The trustees of the church granted me a \$25 a week raise. On hearing this, the bishop told me that if I needed more money I should have asked him and not the trustees. Obviously, he thought that I asked the trustees for this raise. I didn't do that.

Gradually there developed a feeling of some estrangement between myself and the bishop and one Sunday in his sermon he made some unhappy remarks about me. The parishioners were upset about his remarks and spoke to me. They wanted me to ignore his remarks and said they would all stand by me. But I had second thoughts. They are Syrians and I am an Indian. Common membership in the church alone was not enough for a harmonious stay.

At F. D. U., not only Dr. Fatemi, but also its president – Dr. Peter Sammarteno – and the Dean Heberly of the Liberal Arts liked me. They both made surprise visits to my classes when I was teaching. So to my surprise, one nice morning, I got a letter offering me a full time assistant

professors post. This I gladly accepted. This news I communicated to H. G. Mar Athanasius

Meanwhile, my second son Abraham Ronald Simon was born. On the day of his birth, I received a letter from Mar Athanasius relieving me of my Vicarship of St. Marks. Actually, he jumped the gun. Knowing that I was planning to leave, he made it easier for me! This was the best thing that happened to me. I was unburdened of a painful relationship and was left free to charter my own future.

When I left St. Mark's, a very good friend of mine, Stanley Forsythe, invited me to live in his home until I could establish one for myself. His parents were only too pleased with this invitation. I moved into his house the next day with Thankamma and the children. But in a few days, I secured a passage for Thankamma and the children on a cargo ship to go to India. That journey took a long time to reach India. But they were the only passengers and the ship's captain went out of his way to make their journey happy. Thankamma and the children were constantly invited to go to the captain's quarters for meals. They reached home safe and were welcomed by home folks.

Not long after this, Dr. Sammarteno, the President of F. D. U., and Mrs. Sammarteno were invited by the Ethiopian Embassy at my suggestion to a reception in honor of H. I. M. in New York. H. I. M. received them with pleasure Sammarteno appreciated this very much. Soon there was a vacancy in the history department of F. D. U. and at the suggestion of Dr. Sammarteno, Dr. Fatemi invited me to join the department as an assistant professor of history. I taught World History. Later I introduced history and culture into the subcontinent of India and Africa in world affairs.

After a period of three years, I was given tenure and a promotion to associate professor. I taught at F. D. U. until 1984. I had a very happy time there and all the colleagues were helpful and pleasant. Faculty members are given a sabbatical leave for six months every seven years. I took advantage of this privilege whenever it came and used the time in visiting different parts of the world — including Russia

My Russian experience was unique. Metropolitan Nikkodem who was in charge of the church's foreign affairs was my host in Russia. He arranged for my travel. I was given an official guide and a lady interpreter. I traveled throughout the length and breadth of the country and took

part in their Holy Week and Easter observances. This was a great experience. The Russian church is a living church. The Communist Government didn't dim their religious fervor one bit. I was asked to speak at the Theological Academy on the religious heritage of India. They appreciated my presentation. Many questions were also asked about Mahatma Gandhi. Later His Holiness Patriarch Alexis presented me with the "Doctoral Cross." This was a great honor, rarely given.

After Russia, I went on to the Middle East again. During my visit to the Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras he honored me by his presenting me with a beautiful cross and chain. When I was introduced to him, he embraced me and blessed me. When I sat down, I was served honey. H. H. said, "we give you honey as a symbol of our love." This was the usual custom. The lot of the Ecumenical Patriarch is not a happy one. He lives practically like a prisoner in a enclave surrounded by hostile Muslims. He is officially the head of the Greek Orthodox Church and is fully supported by his followers in the U.S.A. and elsewhere. He sent one of his assistants to escort me to all the places of importance in Istanbul. The most significant place I visited was the Ecumenical Cathedral of Constantinople, Saint Sophia. This was a magnificent church, which is now a museum. The secular government of Turkey does not keep it the way it should be kept. Yet, one cannot ignore the majesty of this church. This was built by Constantine The Great. The Greek Orthodox people still believe that, one-day, the church will be returned to them for official ownership.

I have visited most of the places in the Middle East where we had churches and people. Everywhere I was received with joy. On hearing that I was a Knanite, they felt a special bond towards me. I very much wanted to go to Urha (Edessa) from where Knanites' forefathers came. But it was not possible at that time due to some political difficulties. I hope to visit Edessa one day.

7

TO AMERICA

Meanwhile the community elected Vayala Abraham Achen and myself as the Metropolitan candidates. I appreciated this recognition. Abraham Achen, after taking his MA went to Omalloor to study Syriac. I went for further studies in the U. S. A. having been given a scholarship at Union Theological Seminary at the recommendation of Dr. Tracy Strong, General Secretary of the YMCA. Tracy Strong got to know me at Malharan (near Bombay) when I was attending an All India Y. M. C. A. meeting. I was the recording Secretary and as such had to spend some sleepless nights writing the minutes. He saw me working into the night and one-day he invited me to go for a walk with him. During the walk he asked me whether I would like to go to the U.S.A. for further studies. I said yes. Then he wrote to Dr. Pat Vandusen of Union Theological Seminary who was his personal friend. Almost by return of post, I got an invitation from Union Seminary to join. I gladly joined. My traveling expenses were met by my grandfather. Dr. Tracey Strong saw to it that I got an allowance every month for my incidental expenditures. I took my M. A. from Union.

As time went on, I received a number of speaking engagements which carried with them honorariums. Sometimes I got as much as 125 dollars. When Mahatma Gandhi died, I spoke eloquently as any Indian would. Fr. Edward Hardy, of the Episcopal Church, was a particularly good friend. He saw to it that I would receive a stipend regularly from the Episcopal Church. After my graduation from U. T. S., he arranged for me to study at General Theological Seminary, I studied there for 2 years and took another Master's degree.

HONORARY DOCTORATE FROM LINCOLN UNIVERSITY

This time I got to know Fr. Edward Plasket of Englewood. He invited me to his church. He was a black man. He took a liking to me and invited me to stay in his house several times. Then he arranged for me to give a series of talks on Indian Christianity as well as Ecumenism at the Lincoln University. Apparently, I was a hit with the Lincoln people. Before long they conferred an honorary doctorate of divinity on me on the basis of my lectures. I shall never forget Fr. Plasket.

Soon afterwards, I returned home, again taking a circuitous route. I was given a hearty reception by the community. This time Fr. Abraham Vayala was in the Middle East studying Syriac at the direction of the then Patriarch Mar Ephraim. Mar Julios Elias, the Patriarchal delegate was particularly fond of him and recommended him to the Patriarch. Since I had studied in England in non-orthodox institutions, he took it for granted that I was protestant-minded. This he told me personally at a later date. H.H. Moran Mor Patriarch Ignatius told me the same.

BISHOP CANDIDATE

In our community, the absence of a bishop was strongly felt. After Thamarappallil Achen, Purackal Thomas Corepiscopa became the Administrator. After the next association meeting, a resolution was passed that both Vayala Achen and myself be consecrated. While sending the resolution to the Patriarch, Mr. V. O. Markose and I had a talk and I offered to withdraw my candidacy and wrote a petition to the Patriarch to consecrate Vayala Abraham Achen as our next bishop. I was the first signatory of that petition. I felt happy to do so. Prior to this, I searched my heart and felt I didn't have a firm vocation for a celibate life. Patriarch acted upon this petition and consecrated Vayala Achen as our new metropolitan with the name, Mar Clemis Abraham!

MAR CLEMIS ABRAHAM CONSECRATED AS THE 3rd METROPOLITAN OF THE MALANKARA SURIYANI KNANAYA SAMUDHAYAM



Abraham Mor Clemis

I do like Mar Clemis very much. He is an extremely talented person. He has personality, health, and the command of the language and speaking ability. Knanaya Community couldn't get a better person to be its bishop. I thank God for him. The community was jubilant. It had been widowed for two long.

CONSTITUTION OF THE MALANKARA SURIYANI KNANAYA SAMUDHAYAM

While I was the General Secretary of the diocese in cooperation with Mr. V.O. Markose, V.O. Abraham, Mr. Ittyavara and Fr. P. J. Thomas, I drafted a new Constitution including a provision for a centrally controlled payment of stipend for clergy, etc. (2 1/2 % of the gross income of every parish) was to be turned over to the diocesan treasury. Of this a limited portion was to be set apart as an honorarium for the bishop. All of this was accepted by the Association. Provision was also made for the collection of a central fund.

Not very long afterwards, Mar Clemis Abraham, our newly consecrated bishop, arrived. In 1952, the community went into a frenzy and he was given a great welcome

Mar Clemis became the pride of our community and people began to expect great things from him. He is easily one of the best bishops of the Jacobite community. The community loves him ever so dearly. Yet, there are times, when people stop and think and ask the question, "What has he done so far for the real resurgence of the community?" This question mark becomes the hope and appreciation of the community.

No bishop by himself can do all the things that one needed in any diocese. He needs the cooperation and support of the people. The days of dictatorship are over. We have to persuade the people to do the proper thing by pointing out the way to go.

ABOUT KNANAYA HERITAGE & PRIDE

Knana Community takes pride in the fact that they are all equals. They do not care about the wealth people accumulate or lose. The present day wealthy came up not long ago and many not so wealthy or poor were those who lost their inheritance not long ago. Any one who prides in his present affluent position is not a student of history. Money comes and money goes. Only character counts.

Often I ask myself the question, "is there a special mission for our community?" In 345 AD, our forefathers emigrated from Urfa (Edessa) with a mission. It looks as if we have lost that vision and mission. There was a time, when members of the other communities had looked up to us for leadership. Even in the recent past, we could see the role Mr. E. M. Philip and V. O. Markase played in giving leadership. We have to recapture that role. The very unhealthy competition and backbiting, which we see in our parishes, must cease. And we must work to bring our community back to the earlier levels of leadership and character. I hope the day will again come when people will point to a Knananite and say, "here goes a real gentleman. Why don't we emulate him."

Simon Achan was appointed as the Administrator of the Knanaya Churches in U.S.A. by Clemis Abraham Metropolitan in 1982. After his assuming the office he tried his level best to consolidate the Knanaya Community in U.S and induced them to plant Churches in different cities in U.S. Consequently because of their untiring efforts and religious tenacity the Knanaya Community was able to establish about twelve Churches in different places in U.S. All these Churches are governed by Vicars supervised by the Administrator. Achan relinquished the office of the Administrator of the U.S. Knanaya Churches in 1994. While he was continuing as the Administrator he was holding the vicarship of the yonkers Church N.Y. The parishioners of the Church loved Achan and rendered him all support and assistance for his leadership and stewardship. During this time Simon Achan toured the various Theological Seminaries and different Universities on invitation and gave lectures on topics of varied subjects. He earned a reputation as an authority on Theology and world history.

His versatile personality attracted the attention of the White House and in 1979 U.S. President, Jimmy Carter and Mrs. Carter invited him at a reception to be held at the White House on Saturday October 6, 1979, So also Achan got a special invitation by William Cardinal Baum ArchBishop of Washington when Pope John Paul II paid the pastoral visit to Washington in 1979. On the whole Achan led a peaceful and happy life at the fag end of his career. He was a very loving father and an exemplary family leader. He brought up his children in such way as to lead a true Christian life. Utmost care was given to his children's education and character moulding. Achan's family is well settled in N.J.,U.S.

Achan along with his family paid a visit to his kith and kins in Keraia before his illness and in full satisfaction he went back to U.S.

8

HIS LAST DAYS

After his arrival in U.S. Achan had certain uneasiness and showed symptoms of grievous illness, which aggravated in the later times. His last days showed the greatest testimony to his greatness. Every one knew that his illness was terminal. He had decided against heroic but futile medical interventions and had stayed home at his son Ranji's house. Since the disease hit him suddenly it was a shock to all his friends and admirers. They came to see him with tears and with sobbing words. He greeted every one with his usual inimitably attractive and loving smile and consoled everyone by saying "Don't worry I am alright, even after going through the difficulties. It was inspirational. He was so calm and tranquil and full of hope. He wanted his Clemis Metropolitan to be with him and always asking "when is Thirumeni coming?". He exclaimed often "what a wonderful person our Thirumeni is!". It was touching to see such loyalty and love for his Thirumeni who was at one time his rival candidate for bishop. Achan received the last rites from Thirumeni. He peacefully breathed his last on 20th of September 1996. Mor Clemis Abraham, Chief Metropolitan of the East presided over his grand and majestic funeral services at St. Peter's Knanaya Church Yonkers and his mortal remains were buried at George Washington cemetery at Paramus.

In loving memory and in honour of Achan his well-wishers and friends decided to bring out a souvenir and it was a very attractive and informative publication. Maharashtra governor P.C. Alexander, Philipose Mor Chrysostom Metropolitan of the Mar Thoma Church and several Bishops and ArchBishops paid their tribute to Achan by sending messages to the Souvenir.

By the initiation of the North American Knanaya Diocese a Charitable Trust under the name "The Very Rev. Dr. K.M. Simon

Memorial Clergy Education Fund” came into existence and it has been rendering financial aid and assistance to the clergy students of the entire Knanaya community for the last few years since its creation with accrued interest every year. It has got its own by laws and the same is appended here below. With this let me conclude my writeup about my beloved Simon Achan.

Mrs. Thankamma Simon

**BYLAWS OF THE VERY REV.
DR. K.M. SIMON MEMORIAL CLERGY
EDUCATION FUND**

(UNDER THE NORTH AMERICAN KNANAYA DIOCESE)

PREAMBLE:

The Very Rev. Dr. K M Simon Cor-Episcopa MA, DD was the first Administrator of the North American Knanaya Diocese and one of the most prominent priests of the Syrian Knanaya Church of India. He was born at Kottayam on January 5, 1917 and died at the age of 80 in Long Island, NY on September 20, 1996. He was educated in India, England and the U.S. He served the Knanaya Church in India as its Diocesan Secretary. He has also served as General Secretary of the World Conference of Christian Youth (and organized the First World Conference of Christian Youth at Kottayam in 1952), as Principal of the Ethiopian Orthodox Theological College in Addis Ababa, Dean of St. Mark's Syrian Orthodox Cathedral in Hackensack, NJ, the founder of the first Syrian Christian congregation in New York, Member of the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches, and the Vicar of St. Peter's Knanaya Church, NY. While being proud of his Knanaya heritage Fr. Simon was an ardent ecumenist. Since his arrival in New York in 1959, Achen was considered their father-in God by innumerable members of all Christian denominations (and many non-Christians) from Kerala who used to attend services started by Simon Achen and our Bishop Mor Clemis Abraham at Union Theological Seminary in 1960 and which continued there for many years.

The North American Knanaya community in cooperation with the Indian Christian community, in grateful memory of their beloved leader and friend, has decided to establish the Very Rev. Dr. K.M. Simon Cor-episcopa Memorial Clergy Education Fund. The goal is to collect upto \$100,000.00 for the fund from members of the North American Knanaya community and other well-wishers.

ARTICLE I - NAME OF THE FUND

The name of this fund shall be "The Very Reverend K.M. Simon Cor-episcopa Memorial Clergy Education Fund" hereinafter referred to as the "KMS Fund."

ARTICLE II - OBJECTIVES

1. To provide financial assistance for students of the Knanaya diocese, who are preparing to serve as full time priests.
2. To make funds available for the continuing theological education of priests and deacons of the Knanaya diocese.

ARTICLE III - ADMINISTRATION

The administration of the KMS Fund shall be vested with the Board of Directors of the KMS Fund. The Board of Directors shall be constituted as follows:

- President : The Administrator/Episcopa of the North American Knanaya Diocese
- Secretary : Secretary of the North American Knanaya Diocese
- Treasurer : Treasurer of the North American Knanaya Diocese
- Members : Three members elected by the North American Knanaya Association
- Two members representing Simon Achen's Family or their designees.
- One member to be nominated from among the youth by the Administrator/Episcopa.

The term of the Board shall be three years coinciding the terms of the North American Knanaya Association.

ARTICLE IV - FUNDS

1. All Funds collected for the KMS Fund shall be deposited in an interest bearing trust fund titled "V. REV. Dr. K. M. SIMON MEMORIAL CLERGY EDUCATION FUND" as decided by the Board of Directors.
2. The Administrator/Episcopa and the Treasurer shall operate the funds jointly.
3. Only the interest generated from the fund shall be used to attain the objectives. No part of the principal shall ever be used.

4. Annual financial statements of the fund audited by the auditor of the NAKD shall be presented to the North American Knanaya Association yearly.

ARTICLE V - DISBURSEMENTS

1. The Clergy Council of the Knanaya Diocese with the approval of the Metropolitan shall submit the names of the applicants with their recommendation to the Board of Directors.
2. The Board of Directors shall approve the disbursements from the fund as and when needed to eligible applicants.

ARTICLE VI - AMENDMENTS

Any amendments to these Bylaws shall be approved by a two-thirds majority of the North American Knanaya Association.

ARTICLE VII - DISSOLUTION

1. A dissolution of this fund shall require three fourths majority of the North American Knanaya Association. In the event of a dissolution, all remaining assets of the fund shall be distributed equally to Mor Sevarios Education fund and to Othra Nazareth Asramam of the Knanaya Diocese.

REMEMBERING APPACHEN

My father and I were introduced on the day of my birth many years ago. He raised my brother and myself with the help of mom of course. We had a unique relationship. He would take me to a lot of places, which I never wanted to go to, and told me it was for my own good. This is because he liked me to meet people. Being a Priest and Professor, he knew a lot of influential people.

He traveled a lot, because he enjoyed educating himself. He socialized with all types of people; it didn't matter if you were rich or poor. I guess that is why he had so many friends. He enjoyed helping people. One of the things I remember is when he would get a phone call, in a matter of minutes he was out at the door with either mom or Renji and myself.

He believed in unity. In the 1960's he was the only Achen in the tri-state area. If there was a funeral, wedding or baptism, he was ready and able to perform the ceremony at a moments' notice. Appachen traveled to many places and visited a lot of churches and studied many different cultures. Appachen was respected by all denominations. It didn't matter where you were from, he associated with all mankind. He taught Renji and me to believe in ourselves and never to give up on our dreams. You need to work hard to make it in life. He helped us to believe in ourselves. I was very proud when Appachen had gone to the Vatican and met the Pope, and also back in the 1950's when he was with the Royal Family in Ethiopia. He was associated with Haile Sellassie.

Even after Appachen settled in New Jersey, a lot of distinguished people stayed with us in our house, and mom did all the cooking at a moments' notice. Where I attended college, Appachen taught History and Political Science, many of my friends had him for a professor. They all told me that he was the best teacher they ever had. He cared for his

students. If he felt they needed help, he would suggest they work together to make everything work for their advantage. They appreciated that extra care. He wanted his students to do well. As time went by when we were both getting older, our relationship grew stronger. We enjoyed each other's company. Sometimes it was just the 2 of us, we would talk and he would tell me stories of the old days. We would go for walks once in a while. He was not just a father to me, but also a friend, an advisor; he loved to listen and would give suggestions. We learned a lot from Appachen. He was very happy when Renji and I both were married and happier when the grandchildren came around. He loved it when we were all together; it brought him a lot of joy. When he was struck with this disease, it brought all of us down. I will always cherish his memories with me. I do miss him a great deal. A day does not go by when I don't see his face.

Ronnie Simon

MY THOUGHT



When settling down to compile thoughts on the most influential person in my life, it must be understood as one goes on a journey, it really is the “circle of life.”

Perceptions change with our perspectives. My early memories of Apachen are of someone very busy, always traveling from church functions and meetings of both Indians, Ethiopian or Middle Eastern or people, from all walks of life be it in the World Council of Churches or the National Council of Churches or even the Presidential National Prayer Breakfast Group, that was the official side. As a child, I was never hit nor even scolded in a loud manner. I really was raised by examples, one of honor and of dignity and in a respectable manner although I have brewed hundreds of cups of half finished tea for Apachen and his hundreds of friends whom we had as daily visitors; the likes of which we no longer see in this era.

It was rare not to have friends at least six out of seven days a week for "pot lock" dinner as Apachen would say.

Humor was punctuated in all aspects of our lives and in our more changing lives, a precious commodity. It came at no one's expense and was not of the mocking nature. Apachen was often the inspiration for his humor.

Assimilations of the necessary positive role model came naturally to him. Apachen was the spiritual leader, surrogate older trusted brother, father or uncle to hundreds of people. He became the standard in ethics where even today I find people saying when seeking the correct path what would ask them-selves what would Simon Apachen do in this circumstance.

His simple absolute faith guided an always-noble path elegantly expressed to almost shame our more shallow perspectives.

A small example of this is I had saved my money as a surgical resident and purchased a new car which my brother and I drove to show Apachen for a first drive and parked a shiny new car inches way from our garage door. Apachen got in and proceeded to drive forward closer to the door. My brother and I sat in baited breath that he may ignorantly crash the car into the garage door.

With a knowing smile, reading our minds he responded "you must first move forward rather than backward on your first voyage." It was an affirmation of the essence of Apachen.

Accentuating the positive in everyone and everything both in gesture and verbally was the quality that was ever present. People were drawn to Apachen to share all their accomplishments, academic, social or occupational. So everyone came to share their good times and be uplifted from their bad times with Apachen

Above all faith guided all, Apachen had no fear or concerns of death as the purest expression of his faith and he passed on in my arms in a grateful manner which pleased me once to have shared his journey and although nary a few hours passed that he has not been in my thoughts, they are really of joy and not of sadness

JMS:Bn3
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John M. Simon, M.D., F.A.C.S.

SIMON ACHEN THE SAINT & THE HUMAN

Jacob Chacko

I had the privilege of knowing Simon Achen from 1966 to 1996 – 30 years. I wish I had known him from an earlier age but had heard about him from 1942 about his Kottayam days and later heard about Simon Chemmachen when he visited Calcutta in 1951, where I was in charge of a large American Corporation's interests for South East Asia, with Calcutta as its headquarters.

All who knew Simon Achen knew him as almost a saint, but having known him very intimately the last thirty years of his life I knew him as man who enjoyed his life. So I plan to expand briefly on both aspects of his life.

After his Inter Arts from Kottayam College, I understood that he had gone to England during the second World War period to further his education. I had heard from the then principal – The Rev. Philip Lee - of the CMS College in Kottayam about Deacon Simon.

I myself moved from Ceylon in 1942 to Travancore to continue my studies in the Senior Intermediate class with two other Malayali youngsters. None of us knew to read or write Malayalam and the University was generous enough to offer the three of us to take an additional paper in English as our second language. So some of Achen's reputation lingered on while I was at the CMS College in Kottayam in the period 1942 –43.

After having spent two years at the Sindri Fertilizer Plant in Bihar, with the Central Government, I moved to Calcutta to head up the interests of a world renowned company as its regional representative for South East Asia.

While I was in Calcutta late 1951 and early 1952, I heard about a Simon Chemmachen who was visiting Calcutta to organize the International Youth Conference in Kottayam. He made use of this opportunity also to see very nice two young ladies at the YWCA in Calcutta!! But that was not to be !!

Later I heard from Achen himself that he had gone to see a very beautiful but very, very young girl in Ranni. The little girl was anxious to see this Chemmachen from a heavenly perspective at a higher altitude and was on top of a jack tree to get a whole view of this gentleman. According to Achen she jumped on to Chemmachen's shoulders and would not let go ever since!!

Soon after I finished my inter-science at Kottayam, I went to Madras and did an undergraduate course in Chemistry and a graduate course in Engineering. Immediately afterwards I sailed for America to do my Post Graduate Degree in Engineering in 1947 and joined Indian Government service at Sindri, Bihar for two years, in 1949 and then moved to Calcutta in 1951.

Although I used to visit the headquarters of my company in New Jersey every year since 1951, I never had the privilege of meeting Simon Achen in the States until 1966, when I was transferred to New Jersey in August of 1966.

We had taken up residence in a small town in New Jersey – by the name of Westfield – in Malayalam it is known as “Padinjare Parambu”!! Less than a week after we moved in to our house I had the privilege of a visit from Simon Achen and Bishop Samuel of the Syrian Church of Antioch – stationed in Hackensack. I believe achen got the information about my whereabouts from a common friend, Tom Mathai – Rajan.

He invited us to attend a service led by him at the Union Theological Seminary Chapel. The arrangement was for us to go to Achen's home in Ridgefield Park at 12 Edwin Street by 8.00 am on Sunday. Exactly at 8.00 am we rang the bell at his home and he was surprised. We started from Ridgefield Park at 8.30 am and reached the chapel at about 9.00 am. There was a Malayalee crowd most of whom were new to us. The service was in Syriac and Malayalam combined. Although it did not make much sense to me, my dear wife enjoyed it as she was well versed in Malayalam.

Achen organized this get-together quite frequently, at least three or four times a year for all Malayalees. But I believe his flock met every Sunday. On those Sundays there used to be either a Jacobite or Marthoma or CSI service, but it was only after the Knanaya Qurbana was over.

While the service went on, the young children made such a ruckus that at times it disturbed the solemnity of the Service and the children had to be reprimanded. However I noticed something very unusual – Achen’s two children, Ranji and Ronnie used to be in one corner and did not join the other children. They stood there very reverently, although I do not believe they understood what was going on!!

In the course of a year or so the Jacobite group – probably both parties - broke off and started their own service. So did the Marthomites followed soon thereafter by the CSI.

For me this was a big mistake committed by the various Syrian denominations. This would have been a golden opportunity for all of us to find a common ground of worship. I wish Simon Achen would have taken this matter more seriously and we could have set an example for our home churches!!

Before Achen passed away – a month or so before - my wife and I spent a whole day reminiscing the old days and how wonderful it would have been if Achen had stood strongly for this course of action.

In my book the definition of a church is a “Fellowship of Believers” What is more important: The pharisaic rules and regulations that govern each denomination or the fact that: to call ourselves “Christians” – which according to me is to accept Jesus as our Lord and Savior and commit our lives to Him.

The fruit of such acceptance is for every family to have an opportunity to gather together morning and evening and to have our individual devotions and to lead a very exemplary life that others who come in contact with us may see Christ in and through us.

I have reminded our children that God has only children and no grandchildren. The fact that we are from an ancient Church does not make us Christian. It is our acceptance of Him that makes each one of us a Christian. These were the things that my wife and I discussed with Achen before he passed away.

I wish and pray that the leaders of all our denominations see the necessity of such a course of action. We are going to see some very hard

times in the country of our birth in the near future. We can confront this only by earnest prayer and a greater solidarity among the various denominations of God's Church.

Let me bring out some personal episodes that we encountered with Achen to show the human side of his life.

Most Saturday mornings he would show up at our home and we eventually found out that he came there to avoid the noise from the vacuum cleaner which his dear wife started using in the morning or to escape from being told to vacuum the house!!!

He used to wake up quite early, but his dear wife liked to sleep a little longer. So he used to go to the kitchen to fix his own breakfast of eggs and bacon. These were forbidden for him because of his health. As his wife came down he would have either finished his breakfast or throw the eggs and bacon in to the garbage lest he got caught!!

Again because of his health, he was asked to refrain from smoking a pipe. One day I arrived at his house unannounced. The pipe that he was smoking went straight down to the carpet on seeing me. We just prevented a fire on the carpet as we saw smoke emanating from the floor!!

Once in a while I accompanied him in his car, and he would cut lanes to pass, and then he would say the guy in front does not move out for him to pass. He zig - zagged all the way.

My children once remarked that Achen's and Thankamma's two children accepted the partners the parents chose without a murmur and I tell my children: How lucky and sweet these partners are!!

Once Achen called me and requested me to pick up some family coming from India at Kennedy Airport, as he had to go to Boston. I promised to oblige him. When they arrived I met them at the exit gate and carried their baggage and walked towards the parking lot. They asked me: is there no driver or porter ?? I explained to them that I performed these two functions. Achen was asked several times by overseas guests why he took the trouble of going to the airport. Could'nt he have sent his driver??!!

Achen helped hundreds of people coming new to this country in a very selfless manner. He even provided warm clothing for them!!

I believe that one of the things that our State benefited from Achen's presence in Ethiopia was for several teachers to go there to make a better

living and also helped them later on to move westwards. Even in New Jersey, he had assisted several students to get admission to Fairleigh Dickinson University and most of them have done very well in their lives.

Where ever there was a death or sickness Achen always made it a point to be there and pray for them. This was a great source of encouragement to our people in this country when they are so far away from their loved ones.

I am sure all the good things he has done for his “neighbors”, would be amply rewarded and he could very confidently say like Apostle Paul:

“For I am now ready to be offered and the time of departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous judge shall give me at that day...”

I was surprised that at his funeral there were long drawn out prayers for his soul. No such things, in my humble opinion, are required. The Good Lord rewards his children for them to be with Him for eternity. This is the assurance we have as Christians!!

Before I close, let me give you an inkling who this old man is: My name is Jacob Chacko – closing in on almost four score years. I used to be an engineer that designed nuclear power plants and off shore platforms. I am not an Achen but a forgiven sinner continuing to live by the Grace of God.

Let me conclude by mentioning here that I still keep in touch with Thankamma, both the children and their families, who are all very dear and wonderful people.

REMEMBRANCE OF THINGS PAST

Joseph Billy Malieckal

I had heard a lot about Simonachen prior to my leaving for the US but I met him for the first time only in 1967. He invited some of us students of the Rutgers University, for dinner at his residence at Ridgefield Park, New Jersey. I remember being highly impressed by the affection shown by him and the humility and the courtesy that came naturally to him. I felt very much at home in his presence, with his offering of a level ground to us youngsters for discussions on various topics. I realized then why so many young students and immigrants found shelter in his home. Moreover with Thankamma Kochamma preparing delicious Kerala food, we all had a home away from home.

When my wife Rema and daughter Bindu came to the US, it was Simonachen who took me to JFK airport to pick them up. He took us to his house to stay there for a couple of days before moving to our apartment in Manhattan. He insisted that the suburbs were better than the big city for a young family to live. He found an apartment opposite to his house and we moved there in 1970. While living there for two years we were like one family living on opposite sides of the street. Scores of young students lived with Achen for some time to acclimatize themselves. He found them part time jobs. Young women who had found work in the Newyork-New Jersey Hospitals visited often to escape from homesickness and loneliness. Achen and Kochamma organized big gettogethers for which students from Boston, Philadelphia and the New York-New Jersey Metropolitan area came. Those who visited the US on a tour made it a point to visit Achen. I remember meeting Justice Issac, K.M Philip, Kerala minister E John Jacob, Justice Kochuthomman, Chief Secretary George Thomas, T.A Pai, K.M. Mathew and Mrs. K.M. Mathew,

Abraham Eapen Palambadam, P.C. Cherian, P.C. Abraham, Philip Mathew and Jacob Mathew, to name a few.

My father in law Barrister Thomas Vellapally had come to New York in 1973 for a Coronary bypass Surgery. Those days this operation was very rare and considered very risky. It was especially so because of Appa's very poor health. Achen was a tower of strength on those days, constantly visiting us to comfort us. He kept us all in high spirits during the long post-operative period.

On Sundays most of the Christian Malayalees attended Achen's services at Riverside Church, New York. It was a social event too when lonely immigrants who were not too many in number could meet each other and share news from the home country. This offered an opportunity for young couples, who were bringing up their children without the help of parents or relatives, to compare notes with other couples. Our own children had great company in Achen's two sons Ranji and Ronnie.

One special gettogether is vivid in memory. A surprise birthday party was organized for Achen's 60th Birthday. A big crowd had gathered in a hall. Friends and relatives had come from Boston and Washington areas too. We had all gathered in the hall and Achen was brought alone and as soon as he entered bright lights were turned on and we started singing Happy birthday. That was the only occasion I have ever seen Achen unsure of himself, wondering, as he later told me, how such a big party could be organized in his town without he knowing about it. !

When we decided to return to India for good in 1979 after living in US for 12 years Achen was very sad but he told me that the children would have the advantage of close proximity to their grandparents. Achen was like a grandfather to Bindu, Joey and Sarah and we were comforted by the fact that Achen visited India often. Whenever he came home to Kottayam we made it a point to be with him to joke and laugh. We will carry with us that smiling face of Achen for ever.

K.M. SIMON: AN ECUMENICAL TRIBUTE



Donald W. Shriver, Jr,
President Emeritus,
Union Theological Seminary in New York

Who can do justice in spoken tribute to the life of any good man or woman? And, when one intersects such a life sometimes closely and many times at a distance, how can such a one—like myself—begin to do that justice?

I was only an occasional associate of K.M. Simon, so it may seem strange that I should have been asked to speak these words of gratitude for his life. One of my reasons for accepting the invitation was spoken by Jesus in the Gospel of John: “Others have labored, and you have entered into their labor.” K.M. Simon was an early witness in my life to that great ecumenical truth, Who are any of us but contributors to a work of God that did not begin and will not end with us? As my senior by some eleven years, he was one of the persons who invited me into a larger church and a larger world than that into which I was born. About leaders like him, as well as about all those persons who inspire us with

life-stretching vision, H. Richard Niebuhr used to quote Isaac Newton: “If we have seen further than our predecessors, it is because we have stood on the shoulders of giants,”

At minimum we owe our predecessors a frequent “thank you.” The human world is never full enough of gratitude. We are always in deficit on that score. I only wish that, to the likes of K.M

Simon, I had proffered more gratitude while he lived. As second best, I am honored to offer these few tributes to him, now that he is part of the communion of saints, committed to the care of the eternal Spirit.

He touched my life in three particular times and places.

1. The first was separated from the second and third by a span of 23 years. We met in a city whose name I had never heard spoken before and which was his birthplace—Kottayam in the then-named state of Travancore in South India. In 1952, at age 24, I had heard of Amsterdam, site of the First World Conference of Christian youth in 1939; and of Oslo, site of the second in 1947. But not of Kottayam, site of the third in 1952. I was one of twenty-five young people from the United States invited to join five hundred others in that latter gathering, Its ecumenical depth and breath was to influence my life in profound ways.

K.M. Simon was the organizing secretary of that conference- along with many other young people there, this experience had in it many a “first” for me: my first crossing of an ocean, my first trip through Western Europe, Greece, the Middle East my first experience of India, its complex religious life , its equally complex politics, and—especially—its ancient Orthodox churches.

It was also among my first personal contacts with young people whose countries had been allies or enemies of my country in World War Two. Many people among the five hundred had suffered in that war from its devastation. Their suffering formed no small ecumenical barrier. Among the significant events of our two weeks together was an all-afternoon meeting between Japanese delegates and those from the Philippines. In that meeting, one young Filipino woman told of witnessing the murder of her father by Japanese soldiers. Unjust suffering and its legacy of continuing hostility we see deep undercurrents of that conference, especially as the leaders of our formal assemblies struggled to grasp Martin Niemoeller’s confession, as a survivor of seven years in Dachau:

“God is not the enemy of my enemies. God is not even the enemy of his own enemies.

To hear and to talk with the then-giants of the ecumenical movement was one of those privileges those two weeks in Kottayam: W.A. Visser t’Hooft, Philip Maury, Paul Devananden, Russell Chandran, M.A. Thomas, M.M. Thomas, and many another, including— there quietly busy in the midst of them—K.M. Simon-

I say “quietly,” for as the key administrator of the whole event, K.M, was anything but a self-promoter. Here, at age 36, he was demonstrating the ethical and spiritual commitment of a great administrator: the service of interests of other people who want to achieve something together. In retrospect, M.I. Kuriokose was exactly right when he expressed amazement at the organizational genius which K.M. Simon demonstrated there in Kottayam in 1952:

“It passes one’s understanding even today how in a daredevil fashion K.M. Simon planned to convene a world conference of such magnitude in such a small place as Kottayam where the necessary infrastructure was inadequate to accommodate (all those) delegates.”

At the time, of course, we westerners probably did not appreciate what energy, cooperation, and expense went into providing us all with that “infrastructure”: dormitory rooms, inside plumbing, clean water, three meals a day, and special care for our introduction to Indian cuisine. Added to all this was the organizing of Sunday parish visits by delegates to villages throughout Kerala, a boat tour of the backwaters, and meantime the servicing of an array of typists and mimeograph machines—those primitive predecessors of today’s photocopiers. He achieved all of this with the coordinated assistance of hundreds of colleagues, young people, neighbors, and fellow professionals from the C.M.S. College, the businesses, the newspapers, and the church members of the whole region.

We are told that “you can do a lot of good in the world if you don’t care who gets the credit.” It is a good maxim for the vocation of administration. K.M. Simon was an exemplar of that vocation, He demonstrated it in an astonishing way in the Third World Conference of Christian Youth.

I am sure that the same spirit of service to others carried him through those next 23 years, during which I never saw him. In those years, as

many members of the Syrian Christian community know better than I, he served as secretary of his home diocese in South India, with special effect upon its finances and in the preparation of its new constitution. He then rendered remarkable service to the cause of the Eastern Orthodox churches as special advisor to Emperor Haile Silassie in Ethiopia, a service climaxed in the calling of the first Ecumenical Council of those churches in Addis Ababa in 1964 and in his own work as representative of the Syrian Orthodox Church in the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches.

2. But then, in the fall of 1975, we entered each other's lives again as I became president of the school from which he had received a degree, Union Theological Seminary in New York. There he was, living across the river in New Jersey, recently Dean of St. Mark's Cathedral in Hackensack and teaching now at Fairleigh Dickinson University in Madison. Most of all, he was already at work preparing church homes for that "second Knanaya migration" which was beginning to pour into the New York region. I was witness to that work from close-up in the halls of Union Seminary. In those years he was priest and pastor to a Syrian Orthodox congregation meeting in our Lampman Chapel. I was his glad collaborator in making sure of the continued Sunday use of that chapel by the congregation, which included occasional negotiation of the rent. Eventually, of course, the congregation secured a permanent building in Yonkers; but in those late 'seventies and early 'eighties Union was honored to be the locus of a Sunday gathering for that ancient liturgy in our largely Protestant place. I will always remember leaving our apartment for Riverside Church, catching a spiritual whiff of that incense as it drifted down the hall. It gave Union one of its ecumenical flavors, and I was proud to be K.M. Simon's minor partner in making possible this tie between Protestant and Eastern Orthodox roots of ecumenicity.

I distinguish the two because over the years I have come to appreciate the special grace, the special theological conviction required of leaders of Eastern Orthodoxy as they have consented to join in witness to the "Coming Great Church" envisioned, we believe, by Jesus as he prayed with his disciples at the Last Supper. It has not always been easy for Orthodox church leaders to cast their ecclesiastical lot, even occasionally, with disputatious Protestants. Only too tempting, in all our church

bodies, has been the sense that our section of the Christian movement embodies “the real church.” No one in the modern leadership of the Orthodox churches has resisted this temptation more steadfastly than did K.M. Simon. As I was preparing these remarks, my wife Peggy, a longtime assistant general secretary of the National Council of Churches, said to me: “Don’t forget K.M. Simon’s steady participation in the affairs of the N.C.C. at a time when not all leaders of the Syrian Orthodox Church thought it necessary to keep rubbing shoulders and theologies with the Protestants who dominate the Council.”

3. As a member of the Governing Board of that Council and an occasional participant in its programs, I had my third association with him. But that very association is blended in my memory with visits to his home in Ridgefield Park, at the invitation of his wife Thankamma and him. The word “ecumenical” means “the whole household of God.” It has come to mean to me God’s determination to persuade Christians to be a home with each other. That divine intention is worth observing literally, is it not? If you want to affirm friendship with other human beings, you are likely to invite them into your home and to your dinner table. That is not easy for some cultures—I think of public-private social insulations in Japan, the caste barriers of India, and the racial barriers to social life in the United States. Jesus opened doors to the Kingdom of God on those many occasions when he sat at table with friends and with strangers he meant to befriend. K.M. Simon and his family often did the same.

From all of these associations with him, one word comes easily to mind as descriptive of this remarkable man’s life: gracious, the grace of God came into other people’s lives through K.M. Simon, and that grace abounded in certain graces in him that are implicit in what I have tried to say about him here.

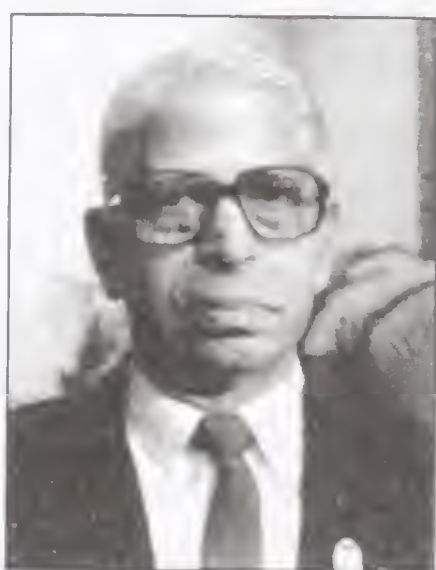
Three such graces were evident to all who had any acquaintance with him. One was his persistent fidelity to the organizational needs of the church on every level, too little honored in some Protestant church cultures but absolutely essential if the treasure of the Gospel is to have earthen vessels sufficient for its transmittal from one generation to another. He showed equal persistence in persuading his own Orthodox colleagues that the modern ecumenical movement is part of God’s work in the world, even if this “great new fact” does require some compromises

to ancient tradition. Hardly were we aware in 1952, for example, that, in order for the Third World Conference of Christen Youth to end on Christmas day, a western rather than an eastern date for that day had to be accepted. The symbols in which we seek to worship God are not to be changed carelessly, lest we become careless of worship itself; but love of the brothers and sisters remains the master-rule of the church's own integrity, K.M. Simon regularly observed that priority

And he did so in a third way that ought always to be remembered: his readiness to put that unity ahead of his own personal promotion. M.I. Kuriakose rightly remembers that in the nineteen-fifties K.M. was one of two nominees for the office of bishop along with Father V.I. Abraham. To avoid a formal polling and division of the vote, K.M. volunteered to withdraw so that the election could be unanimous. In a church that honors its bishops so intently, that was a gracious gesture, fully consonant with the lifelong witness of the man, if I were to reduce my affection for him to a single image, it would be that of a door-opener. To me and countless others, he opened doors to a wider world than I would ever have entered without his assistance and that of a few others like him. In life as a leader of the earthly church and in death now as member of the communion of saints, I see him standing on the other side of the ecumenical threshold, holding out his hand, and saying to us all, "Welcome!" In that welcoming, his grace-filled life speaks for the grace of God.

A REMINISCENCE

V.Rev. Dr. K.M Simon Cor-Episcopa



By Chev. Jacob Stephen

Gopala Krishna Gokhale the eminent freedom fighter in his farewell address at the Fergusson College Bombay said *"All parting in life is sad. Men may come, Men may go but the institution will survive"*. The parting of Rev. Dr. Simon Core-Episcopa on the 20th of September 1996 was really a very sad incident to his friends and relatives and the Knanaya community at large. This illustrious and outstanding son of the Knanaya community was born and brought up at Kottayam as the son of Kunnumpurathu Mathew and Sara in 1916. He had his education at C.M.S College Kottayam and after his intermediate course he got the opportunity to have his studies in the Kelham Theological Seminary in England. While he was a student at Kottayam he was ordained as a deacon and he was known as Simon Deacon. My association started with Simon Deacon during these times and the friendship and fraternity continued without interruption until his death. I remember still Simon Deacon was given a rousing reception, when he came down to Kerala

during a holiday from England, by the parishioners of Ranni Valiyapally at M.S. Maidan. The people who gathered at the meeting requested Simon Deacon to deliver his reply speech in the English language. He spoke in English and everybody appreciated the speech and his command of vocabulary and fluency. After his Theological studies in England he came back and served the community for a few years. The community was not financially sound and as a result of which developmental projects could not be initiated. The late V.O. Markose, M.C. Korah, K.T. Thomas and others took special interest to collect a central fund for the community and Simon Deacon played a vital role in collecting a substantial amount in those days. Thereafter he left for higher studies and spent some years in Ethiopia. During this period he maintained good relationship with Emperor Haille Selassie which paved the way for the Emperor to visit the Kottayam Valiyapally. He was ordained as a Priest at the St. Mary's Cathedral in Addis Ababa by H.G. Clemis Abraham Metropolitan. In 1952 Simon Achan rendered meritorious services as the organising secretary of the World Christian youth conference which was held at Kottayam in 1952. This was a spectacular achievement in his life. Another important assignment he successfully and faithfully performed was that he represented H.H. The patriarch of Antioch and all the East in the W.C.C for a pretty long time.

Rev. Dr. Simon's life in the United states is an open book to every Knanayite who is staying in USA. I don't think there is any necessity of elaborating the details of his life in USA. As an administrator, as a priest, as a leader of the family, as a friend and as a man of great integrity he stands at the top unsurpassed. Rev. Dr. Simon was one of the best conversationalists I have ever seen. He was not only a successful public speaker but also a brilliant speaker and teacher for small groups. My self and my wife have had the privilege of enjoying the wonderful hospitality of Rev. Dr. Simon and his wife in 1980 when we visited them in New Jersey.

Rev. Dr. Simon was a positive thinker. There are three kinds of motivation. The first is stimulated externally by fear or some other factor. The second kind of motivation is stimulated by incentive. The third kind of motivation is stimulated by internal factors, the habit pattern change through a learning process. This is from the heart. This speaks of love so special that it forgets self and points only to others. Marcus

Aurelius the great Roman said “ *A man’s life is what his thoughts make him*”. Norman Vincent Peale the positive thinker said “ *change your thoughts and you can change your world*”.

Our mind is like a garden. In a garden if you plant beans you will get beans. If you plant potatoes you will get potatoes. Whatever you plant comes up multiplied. If we plant negative thoughts in our minds we will get negative crops. If we plant positive thoughts in our minds we will get a positive crop. The thinking of Dr. Simon is fully illustrated in the above statements. Rev. Dr. Simon was a master mind in the full plenitude of his resourcefulness and sense of humor. Actually others are fascinated by his magnetic attraction and magnificent personality.

His transparent simplicity, sincerity of purpose, a cultured beauty in all his words and deeds while within his inner core there is strong fibre, a firm foundation of religion and spirituality, which shapes and supports his convictions, the suavity of his manner’s he endears himself to all in all respects.

Rev. Dr. Simon and his gracious wife Thankamma during their visit to Kerala in early July 1996 came to Ranni Valiapally and I extended them an invitation for a dinner at my residence. Simon Cor-Episcopa and Thankamma gladly accepted the invitation and participated in the dinner alongwith Shri. M.A. Thomas and his wife Molly, Manimalethu. Even though Simon Achan was not as jovial as before, he talked with certain reservations and limitations. There was some symptoms about his illness. I think Simon Achan left Kerala within a couple of days to U.S.A. and I believe Achan’s last visit was to my residence.

I conclude this article by quoting India’s greatest philosopher Dr. S. Radhakrishnan. He said “ *Light is good in whatever lamp it may burn. Rose is good in whatever garden it may blossom*”. Rev. Dr. K.M. Simon is a shining beacon to the Knanaya Community around the world. He is the fragrant flower of the garden of Knanaya community. Dr. Renji Simon and Mr. Roni Simon will definitely follow the footsteps of their great father in imparting the ideals and ideas to the community. Let us pay our homage to this great leader who left us one year back but living immortalised in our hearts.

THE VERY REV. DR. K.M. SIMON COREPISCOPA: SOME REFLECTIONS

by M.I. Kuriakose, Murikanadyil

“Remember your leaders, those who first spoke
God’s message to you; and reflecting upon the
outcome of their life and work, follow the example
of their faith.”

Hebrews 13:7

(Please note: With all due deference to my dear and respected Simon Achen’s memory, I request the esteemed readers to bear with me kindly for referring to Achen only with his initials “KMS” in the course of this article, omitting all his clerical and other honorific titles, for the sake of brevity and convenience. Since this article is only about Achen, his name will have to be mentioned hundreds of times, and the repetition of the titles every time will have a disconcerting monotonous effect.)

It is a year since our friend, philosopher and guide, the Very Rev. Dr. K.M. Simon Corepiscopa, has been called to his heavenly abode by his Lord and Master whom he had followed and faithfully served for almost eight long decades. It may be an opportune moment for us to pause and reflect on his long chequered career, his accomplishments and services and the legacy he has left for the generations to come. We have all indeed been missing his gracious presence, his jokes and anecdotes, gentle admonitions and humorous repartees, his wise counsel and guidance.

RELIGIOUS VOCATION

A careful survey of his life would reveal divine providence guiding him and his activities all through the years of his existence.

Born and brought up in a respectable Christian family in the small town of Kottayam in Kerala, he was fascinated by the many churches in

the vicinity of his house. The feasts and festivals of the churches and the nearby temples and mosque caught his imagination early in life. It was no wonder that growing up in such a deeply religious atmosphere like his, KMS was called early to a religious vocation. He was ordained a Deacon of the Syrian Orthodox Church (Jacobite) in 1930 by his Diocesan Bishop Mar Dioscorus and Moran Mar Ignatius Elias III, Patriarch of Antioch, then on a visit to India. As a young Deacon with an attractive and melodious voice, he was everybody's favorite in those days.

EDUCATION

As a competent and active student in the C.M.S. College, Kottayam, he received the attention of and encouragement from the teachers and the management. He took an active part in games and public speaking.

The real religious training of the Deacon started at Kelham Theological College in England, where he spent the formative years of his diaconate undergoing rigorous training in religion and spirituality. The Kelham period was followed by years of higher studies in the University of Columbia, General Theological Seminary and Lincoln College in the USA, where he earned the Master's and the Doctorate degrees. He had the rare distinction of being the first Knananite to go abroad for theological studies and earn several degrees including the degree of Doctor of Divinity.

KMS AND KNANAYA SAMUDAYAM

On his return home with honourable distinctions KMS was warmly felicitated and offered the Secretaryship of the Diocese. He took up residence in the Mar Ephraim Seminary, the Diocesan headquarters, and embarked on a program intended to strengthen the Diocese and put it on a strong and stable foundation. Two areas needed urgent and immediate attention.

a. A Diocesan (Central) Fund

KMS realized the need for a strong economic foundation for the development of the community on an all-round basis. Accordingly he initiated a program for the collection of funds to form the nucleus of a

Central Fund for the diocese. Along with persons like M.C. Korah Mundukottackal, V.O. Abraham Vathakkattu, nominated by the Malankara Knanaya Association, KMS visited our various parishes to collect funds. The Diocesan Central Fund which is today the mainstay of the finances of the diocese was the fruit of KMS's far-sightedness.

b. Modernizing the Constitution

The other major contribution of KMS to the Samudayam at this period was the preparation of a modern Constitution. The Malankara Knanaya Association had commissioned him to do so in cooperation with Mr. E.P. Mathew and Mr. K.M. Ittyavirah (and at a later stage with Mr. V.O. Markose. The Constitution-making for the Samudayam started as long ago as 1882 when the first Knanaya Committee and the Knanaya Association had been framing rules and regulations for the orderly conduct of the affairs of the Samudayam as and when the need arose in diverse situations. The constitution making was thus an ongoing process stretching over three quarters of a century beginning from 1882, engaging the best minds of our thoughtful, far-sighted and sagacious forefathers who had spared no efforts to attune the constitution to the demands of the times.

The Constitution thus framed through the long and arduous labors of the committee with KMS as Convener was presented to the Knanaya Association on 8th December 1944. It was prepared on the basis of the rules, regulations and practices evolved in the community over the past six decades, and on a comprehensive and comparative study of constitutions prevailing in other similar or sister churches in India and abroad. The newly codified constitution containing eight chapters with 180 articles took months of study and cooperative effort. It was printed and circulated in printed form among the members of the Knanaya Association. It was again scrupulously studied by the Association and its selected sub-committees, and discussed article by article in the meetings of the Knanaya Association before adopting it with necessary modifications. The constitution was finally brought into force throughout the Samudayam with effect from 1st Varisehikam 1123 (1947) under

the authority of the then Administrator the Very Rev. Abraham Cor-Episcopa, Thamarappallil.

Even when KMS was still a Deacon, with the foresight of a pragmatic visionary he devoted his energies to lay the foundation of a strong and stable community which could stand on its own both economically and constitutionally. The pivotal nature and relevance of our Constitution became quite clear and pertinent in the unfortunate litigation in the Malankara Church, as pointed out by the Honorable Supreme Court of India recently.

NOMINATION TO EPISCOPAL ELECTION

Bearing in mind the competence, the qualifications and the services of KMS, the Malankara Knanaya Association proposed his name also along with that of the Rev. Fr. V.I. Abraham (now Mar Clemis) for consideration for Episcopal election. But to avoid polling and a division and to make a unanimous election possible, KMS voluntarily withdrew his candidature in favour of the Rev. Fr. V.I. Abraham. It may be noted that KMS gave his wholehearted support and unreserved cooperation to his newly elected Diocesan Bishop Mar Clemis until the very end of his life.

THE WORLD CONFERENCE OF CHRISTIAN YOUTH

A significant achievement of KMS in those days was the holding of the Third World Conference of Christian Youth at Kottayam from December 12 to 25th, 1952. About 500 delegates from various countries of the world representing (1) The World Alliance of YMCAs, (2) World YWCAs, (3) World Students Christian Federation, (4) The World Council of Churches in association with the International Missionary Council, and (5) World Council of Christian Education and Sunday School Associations attended the conference. It passes one's understanding even today how in a daredevil fashion KMS planned to convene a world conference of such a magnitude in such a small place as Kottayam where the necessary infrastructure was inadequate to accommodate the delegates or hold the various conferences. But as in

Napoleon's dictionary, the word 'impossible' was non-existent for KMS too. Banishing all doubts and diffidence from his mind the optimist that he always was thought only of the possibilities of achievements. Perhaps he might well have shared the sentiments of the poet Robert Browning:

Ah, but a man's reach should exceed his grasp
Or what's a heaven for?

KMS sought and got the total support of the people of Kottayam and elsewhere in the State, the religious and the lay leaders, businessmen, planters, newspaper managements and the energetic youth of Kottayam. They all worked together as a team, and the World Conference of youth went on as scheduled, for the first time in Kottayam, without a hitch. KMS received universal praise for his organizing skills and thanks for his untiring efforts.

CELEBRATING CHRISTMAS TOGETHER

Incidentally it may be interesting to note that as a result of the Youth Conference in Kottayam, the Orthodox Churches in India agreed to celebrate Christmas on the 25th of December along with their brethren of the Western Churches according to the Gregorian Calendar.

IN ETHIOPIA

(A) The Theological College of the Holy Trinity

Another landmark in KMS's career was his service in Ethiopia. The Ethiopian Orthodox Church which is almost as old as Christianity itself has the largest Orthodox population next to USSR (before the disintegration). Although strong in faith and numbers, the Church steeped in its traditions and rituals, has remained rather stagnant for various reasons without the benefit of modern theological training for its clergy.

Realizing the importance of modern education side by side with the traditional training for the clergy, Emperor Haile Sellassie of Ethiopia and Abuna Theophilos, Deputy Patriarch invited KMS to head the Theological Seminary in Addis Ababa and turn it out into a center of modern training. KMS took up the challenge in right earnest in 1953 and laid the foundations of a modern Theological College. He did his

best to reform the educational program of the Seminary and organize the theological training courses.

(b) Emperor's State visit to India

KMS's services were highly valued and appreciated by the State and the Church in Ethiopia. His inclusion with a high warrant of precedence in Emperor Haile Sellassie's entourage during his state visit to India in 1956 speaks for the great esteem in which KMS was held by the Ethiopian government and the Imperial Court.

(c) Ecumenical Council

It was in 1956 that KMS urged the Emperor, in a memorandum submitted to him, to summon an Ecumenical Council of the Oriental Orthodox Churches to revive and rejuvenate our dormant churches which had not met in a council since the days of Chaleedon in AD 451. KMS convinced the Emperor that he alone was in a position to perform the historic task as Emperor Constatine did in AD 325 at Nicea.

It was this great idea of KMS that eventually resulted in the Emperor holding the Ecumenical Council of the Heads of the Oriental Orthodox Churches in Addis Ababa in 1964. The heads of all the Oriental Orthodox Churches - Alexendrian, Syrian, Armenian (Antelias and Etchmiadzian), Ethiopian and Indian - attended the Council with a few Bishops and theologians from each Church. It is matter of credit for us to remember that one of our own priest-KMS _ was the originator of that historic event.

(d) Priesthood

KMS who had perhaps set a record as the longest serving deacon Chemmachan was ordained as a full-fledged priest of the Orthodox Church in 1957 at the Patriarchal Church of St. Mary in Addis Ababa in 1957 by the Diocesan Bishop Mar Clemis, assisted by Mar Athanasius Y. Samuel of America. The ordination ceremony was graced by the presence of the Patriarch of Ethiopia, Bishops and clergy, ministers and other dignitaries of State and almost the entire Indian residents in Addis Ababa and suburbs.

The ceremony was made possible by the visit to Ethiopia of our two bishops after participating in the election and installation of His

Holiness Moran Mor Ignatius Yacob III as the Patriarch of Antioch in Damascus.

KMS thereafter ministered to the spiritual needs of the a Indian congregation in Ethiopia in cooperation with Rev. Fr. K.V. Koshy.

IN THE UNITED STATES

(a) Dean, St. Mark's Cathedral

During his visit to Ethiopia Mor Athanasius invited KMS to the US and offered him the Deanship of St. Mark's Cathedral at Hackensack, New Jersey. It was an enticing invitation, but it put KMS in a fix. It was a hard time and an extremely difficult decision to make. To leave or not to leave Ethiopia: was the question. He genuinely loved Ethiopia and Ethiopia badly needed his service and he had a mission to fulfill. But a call to serve his mother Church (Syrian Orthodox) was not something he could mindlessly spurn. After months of reflection, consultations and prayers he took the bold and decisive step - to serve the Syrian Church in the USA. It was a turning point in his life as later events proved.

KMS stood by Mar Athanasius, worked hard for the comparatively new Syrian diocese in America in the early years of its growth.

(b) Cor-Episcopa

In recognition of his services to the Church, the Patriarch of Antioch bestowed on him the title and honours of a Cor-Episcopa of the Church.

THE WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES AND ECUMENISM

KMS was privileged to be a member of the World Council of Churches Central Committee for several years representing the Syrian Orthodox Church. In that capacity he was able to associate himself with hundreds of church leaders of all faiths and denominations the world over and to visit scores of countries. Even while he was studying in various theological schools he was able to meet and mingle with lots of theologians and church dignitaries and exchange ideas with them. His wide contacts and vast experiences made him a true ecumenist. Despite all that he remained a firm believer and a staunch supporter of his mother Church. He was always a proud champion of the Knanaya traditions and heritage.

He maintained and emphasized that the Knananites have a vital role to play in the history of the Church.

FAIRLEIGH DICKENSON UNIVERSITY

Some years after KMS arrived in the States, he joined the faculty of the Fairleigh Dickenson University where he taught Social Sciences until his retirement a few years ago.

(Hereinafter I am only making a passing reference to the many roles he played as it is recent history well known to all our people in USA)

RELIGIOUS SERVICE

The regular Sunday worship KMS organized at the Union Theological Seminary Chapel brought the Malayalee Christians together and helped their spiritual life. This was naturally followed by the desire to build their own places of worship.

The acquisition of St. Peter's Church at Yonkers, New York by the Knananite community led by KMS was the first of the developments. Congregations in other cities also followed suit. Churches were bought or built in places like Boston, Hartford, Houston and Dallas and so on. KMS gave the lead and all the members of the community whole-heartily supported him. The result was a leap forward and tremendous growth. For his leadership he is sometimes affectionately referred to as the 'harbinger of the second Knanaya Migration'.

KMS was a truly great leader, but he led unobtrusively, never imposing himself on others. An essentially good man at heart, a caring pastor and loving family man, he led a simple guileless and unpretentious life. As a humble servant of God he faithfully fulfilled his mission. We can only thank God for giving us a man like KMS to live among us to guide and inspire us.

REMEMBERING THE VERY REV. DR. K. M. SIMON

Simon Achen whose memory we cherish on this first anniversary of his death was a man of the 21st century but who lived in the 20th century working as a priest of a Church of the 19th century, While remaining fully loyal to his Church and its teachings he was always engaged in promoting good relationships with all Christian Churches. His words and deeds all through his ministry had this one goal, He breathed ecumenism. He was an active member of the World Council of Churches and served on its Central Committee for several years,

Achen strived all his life to bring about a reconciliation between the two parties in the Syrian Orthodox Church in India. He was directly involved in this effort, travelling to Damascus and India several times to meet the Church leaders. These efforts might have contributed to ease the situation to some extent. Perhaps if he were sitting on the Synod he could have achieved more!

Now there are Malayalee Christian congregations in almost every major city in the United States. It all started with a single congregation in New York City at the Union Theological Seminary some forty years ago and it was started by Simon Achen. It was a service attended by Malayalee Christians in the metropolitan area and from Philadelphia - Jacobites, Marthomites and all. When the numbers grew and more priests came from India, more congregations were started, Achen led the way. Those of us who attended the first services always recall the special warmth and the camaraderie among us, Simon Achen was our priest, our friend and our counselor.

In the '60s and '70's Achen's residence 12 Edwin St., Ridgefield Park, NJ was home base to so many of us; that is where we went when we had some news to share, problems to discuss or when we were just

plain home-sick. On any given day you might run into students from India, a prince or two from Ethiopia, a bishop, an ambassador, doctors, engineers and people from all walks of life basking in the unstinting hospitality, the affectionate teasing, and laughter that pervaded the air. Achen used contacts he had to help all of us: fixing up a place for one to stay, finding a job for another, helping with the choice of the first car, easing each one through the first days of settling in. He made every one feel like a special friend. Those of us who knew him and Thankamma from our days in Ethiopia felt a closer kinship to them.

We were in Trivandrurn when we learned about Achen's death. As we grieved, the above thoughts went through our minds. We will always miss him. He was a priest of the people and a prince among priests.

Pomano Beach
Florida

**George C Verghese &
Rajamma**

TOGETHER WE STRIVED

Achan and I met in Ernakulam at St. Theresa's College for the first time. My brother Chackochan and Achan came together to see me and we chatted for some time. Both Achan and I did not know this was a marriage proposal. Any way within a couple of weeks everything was fixed, and our marriage took place in April 1953 at Kottayam Valiapally: I was still in college. Achan went to Ethiopia three months after the wedding. I joined Achan a year later. We lived in Ethiopia for six years and we had a wonderful time there. Everything was catered and pampered for us, it was really a luxurious life.

Achan was the Director of the Theological College. His Majesty Haile Sellassie was very fond of Achan. So was the Ethiopian Patriarch Abuna Theophilos. We were often invited to the Palace for parties, and banquets and other important occasions. The Royal family was very close to us including their children and grandchildren. We have so many wonderful memories of Ethiopia. Princess Ruth was a frequent visitor in our home when she was a student at Columbia University.

Our son Renji was born in Ethiopia. Soon after that Achan was ordained as a priest. When Renji was three years old Achan got me a scholarship in Birmingham, England. I was there for a year and returned to Ethiopia. The same year we came to U.S.A. After coming here we had our second son, Ronnie. Both grew up here, educated in U.S.A. itself. Our residence was in Ridgefield Park then. In those days very few Indian families were here. Everyone was so happy to see each other, we spent more time together and it was a happy time. Achan loved our community and our Thirumeni and had great respect for him. He was a happy humorous person. Always he had an optimistic view in his thinking and looked at the bright side of everything. He had the wonderful quality of treating people equally and with respect.

He nurtured me and looked after us well. He was my teacher, mentor and my guide. I owe everything to him. We had 43 wonderful years together. I thank God for that. Nevertheless I am proud to say I stood behind him, always in good and bad times, in health and happiness and sickness in our life together.

I miss him very much.

Thankamma Simon

THE VERY REV DR. K. M. SIMON
COR-EPISCOPA
MY ENCOUNTER WITH AN ECUMENICAL ICON
(Dr. P.S. Samuel Cor-Episcopa)

The Rev. Dr. K. M. Simon was first introduced to me by H. G. Geevarughese Mar Philoxenos (also known as Puthencavil Kochu Thirumeni) in 1950 at Bethel Chengannur. Dn. Simon was specially invited by Thirumeni to be the chief convention speaker that year during the Parumala Thirumeni's perunal held annually at Bethel. He had just returned from U.S.A after his theological studies at General Theological Seminary, New York. He was highly regarded and was in great demand as an eloquent speaker and a rising star in the Church and had established a world-wide reputation as a very promising young deacon and an ambassador for the Malankara Church. I found Dr. Simon to be charming, affable, approachable, courteous and humble.

In the fifties, only a very few had the good fortune to go abroad for higher studies. There were big send-offs when some one went to USA or UK and great welcome awaited for the "US or England returned" after successfully completing studies and earning a chain of degrees. Receptions were held to honor them and Mangala Pathrams and felicitations were offered wishing them success in their chosen field or vocation to serve the Church and the community. Dr. Simon was specially invited so that Kochu Thirumeni could recognize and congratulate him on his successful completion of his studies abroad.

Kochu Thirumeni introduced me to Dn. Simon, "This is Dn. Samuel, my chemmachen. He is desirous of going to the United States for his theological studies. I would like you help him. He will discuss the matter with you after your speech." I was thrilled at the prospect of being assisted by such a distinguished person. After his speech, we spent some time together. Dr. Simon wrote a letter of recommendation to the

Very Rev. Lawrence Rose, the Dean of the General Seminary in New York, on my behalf. Thirumeni also wrote to the Dean. Sure enough I was admitted at the Seminary in 1951 with full scholarship for my Master of Divinity degree. The deep reverence and friendship that started at Bethel had continued till Cor Episcopa Dr. Simon's demise

Dr. Simon was a leader and I always looked up to him for guidance and advice. He was a man of pure heart and was broadminded with an ecumenical vision and outlook. He encouraged youngsters to serve the Church in whatever capacity they were able to and willing.

As the organizing Secretary of the 19th centenary celebrations of the arrival of St. Thomas in India, held at Kottayam in 1952, he earned a reputation as a great organizer and received wide acclamation from the Churches belonging to the St. Thomas tradition and from the W.C.C. Dr. Simon was a theologian and a professor. He had assisted H.H. Patriarch Moran Mor Ignatius Ephraim in the publication of the English version of the "Shorter Catechism of the Syrian Orthodox Church." The preface to the third edition of this book (1950) states, "In this connection I wish to express our thanks to the Rev. Deacon K. M. Simon of our Church of India in this country (U.S) for his assistance."

Deacon Simon was a classmate and a close friend of Fr. Zakka Iwas at the General Theological Seminary; N.Y. Fr. Zakka is the present Patriarch of Antioch in Syria, H. H. Moran Mor Ignatius Zakka I Iwas.

Dr. Simon was instrumental in establishing the first Malankara Orthodox parish in New York at the Lapman Chapel of the Union Theological Seminary, N.Y. and was the first vicar for many years. He was a distinguished pastor and shepherd, loved and accepted by all in the Indian and other communities irrespective of denominational difference. He was an ecumenical icon.

I was a younger brother to him and was a welcome guest at his home. Kochamma was a perfect hostess for friends and visitors from Kerala and other places. I remember the joyous occasion when I had the great honor to preside over the public meeting in New Jersey when he was felicitated on his 70th birthday along with the 60th birthday of Rev. Dr. A.T. Abraham.

Cor Episcopa Simon has been blessed with a loving, caring beautiful family. Like Simeon of the New Testament he was permitted to see his blessed grandson. He baptized him and celebrated the Holy Qurbana

on that glorious occasion and then God called him to his eternal home in peace and in true Christian faith and hope. A few days before his demise some of us priests, led by H. G. Mathews Mar Barnabas, the Metropolitan of the American diocese visited him at his Long Island home where he was resting peacefully surrounded by his beloved family. He was conscious that his end was near. We found him full of cheer and he appeared to be totally prepared to face the last enemy, death. We spent quite some time with Him and were struck by the serenity, the confidence, true Christian hope and total submission to the will of God. He was truly a great man, a dear friend and brother, a good and faithful servant of God, true shepherd, loving husband and beloved father and grandfather. He was a rare, kind, and noble soul.

May his intercession be a fortress for us all. Live on trusted and faithful servant of the Almighty among the cloud of witnesses forever.

A SIMPLE MAN WITH A LARGE HEART

Abraham, a giant of the Bible, but a humble, God fearing, obedient father to generations belonging to three monotheistic religious groupings - Jewish, Islamic, and Christian – however, did not receive the credit he deserved as a religious innovator. He was indeed an inter-faith superstar. Very Rev. K. M. Simon, a humble, God fearing, simple hearted, unassuming Keralite was a God father or Patriarch to Keralites of all walks of life who came to the U.S. A. for studies, for jobs, or for settling down from early nineteen sixties onwards. Regardless of their religious persuasions or denominational backgrounds, the home of the Simons' - #12 Edwin Street, Ridgefield Park, New Jersey was an open home for every one. It was a 'home away from home' to all including my family. Jesus sought to create a direct link between God and human kind. The love of one's neighbour and the tolerance which Jesus taught unfortunately have been replaced by self-righteous, rigidly dogmatic beliefs. The true and living faith is being eroded from the Christian community. Very Rev. K. M. Simon was a pioneer in inter-faith celebrations in North Eastern United States in *the early sixties and seventies*. *The old timers* who participated in these, I am sure will not quarrel with me if I say that Rev. K. M. Simon was an inter-faith superstar in his own rights. The seeds of ecumenism was evident in all that he said and did. Although, he was a Cor-Episcopa in the Orthodox Knanite tradition, he had a broad ecumenical vision and he always saw himself first as a child of God, then as a genuine Christian. He was a *small* man with a giant heart.

It was not his priesthood, or priestly collar or attire that attracted people to him, but it was a majestic radiance of humaneness, humility, kindness, love, compassion, and the childlike sense of humour that emanated from him. He was a simpleton, so young at heart and he had

the capacity to interact spontaneously with people of any age level by transforming himself instantly to the age level of the other person with whom he is conversing. He was a person who has spent almost his entire lifetime, atleast from his teen years, abroad, and educated there and had his professional career there, and yet, was a Keralite and a typical Malayalee to the core.

Our family had a close and special relationship with the Simons'. The Fenns and the Simons had children approximately of the same age group. We were among the first few who initiated the organisation of the 'ecumenical prayer group of Teaneck' which started functioning in early 1973 and Rev. Simon, was a regular participant at its monthly gatherings until the Lord called him. We worked together in a number of other voluntary organisations. The house warming ceremony of our homes, both in Teaneck and *Princeton* were conducted by him and *we had the most unusual* privilege of having our house in Kottayam blessed by him during his last visit to Kerala which was just a few weeks before his death.

He was always fondly remembered by those who were close to him as 'our Simon Achen'. I cannot forget the time we visited him in the hospital after his 'great fall' from the top of the stairs. He was lying with bandages all around his head, almost like a turban and he made us all laugh describing the manner in which he fell.

His soul departed without hurting much of his physical body and I am sure, he has become an added feather in the heavenly bliss. But, we both - Kamala and I lost a true friend and brother, and our children - Jiku/Bina, Jeenu/Thomas, and George lost a fatherly figure who had a very large heart with a child like content. May his soul rest in peace.

Joseph Fenn

Chunangattu Thoppil, Muttambalam, Kottayam / 20
Journey Lane, Glenmont, NY 12077

MY RELATIONSHIPS WITH SIMON ACHAN

By T.V. Philip, Ph.D.

Our very beloved Simon Achan, the Very Rev. Father Dr. K. M. Simon, Cor Episcopa left us all in September 1996. I consider it a great privilege to be asked to write a few words about my relationships with him, as an addendum to his autobiography.

I first knew of him as Simon Chemmachan (Deacon Simon) when he was assisting the priest at the Kottayam Valiapally. When I was a young boy, especially during the school summer vacations, I and other members of my mother's family in Thazhathangady. Kottayam used to go to that church for Sunday services. But I really came to know him only in this country, in the early 1960s, After the birth in Philadelphia, PA of my eldest son, I wanted to get my son baptized and I heard of a "Simon Achan" living somewhere in the greater New York City area. At that time there were only a handful of Kerala Christians in and around Philadelphia and a few in the greater New York City area also. I enquired about Simon Achan through a relative of mine living in Baltimore, MD. The next thing I knew was that Simon Achan, Thankamma (Kochamma) and their two very young boys were visiting us in the afternoon of a weekday in the summer of 1962. Somehow Simon Achan had heard that I was wanting to meet him. Achan's introduction to us was most hilarious. When they first arrived at our apartment at 4900 Pine Street in Philadelphia, he asked my wife Marykutty to describe him to me as some "unknown person" who "came into the apartment from the street and would not leave!", and she did just that. When I returned home after work, I met the unknown visitors wondering, who were these "strangers" in our apartment. When Simon Achan let me in on the joke, we all laughed and laughed. That was the beginning of our friendship.

Since that memorable visit, our lives became mote and mote connected. Simon Achan baptized my older son Georgie (now George Philip, M.D.) at the Columbia University chapel where Achan was regularly conducting his Sunday services. We started to go at least one Sunday a month to his services at that chapel. After the service, we always spent the afternoon at his residence at 12 Edwin Street in Ridgefield Park while Thankamma (Kockamma) always prepared a delicious and sumptuous lunch. In their hospitable home, we also met many newcomers from India, like the late Tom Mathai.

Although, there were only a few Kerala Christians in Philadelphia at that time., I wanted to have a monthly Malayalam Sunday service in Philadelphia. Simon Achan graciously volunteered to come and conduct a service on the first Sunday *of every month*. Achan conducted the first Malayalam Sunday service (Qurbana) in Philadelphia in our living room at 4900 Pine Street. Subsequently through the help of the late Dr. K.C. John, arrangements were made to have the monthly service at the Asbury Methodist Church chapel. For several years Achan drove to Philadelphia with or without his family *on the first Saturday of every month, stayed overnight with us, and conducted the service the next day at that chapel*. I was his altar boy until Dn. T. J. Zacharia came to this country. Later Dn. V .K. Thomas (today Fr. V.K. Thomas) moved to Philadelphia from New York and helped with the service also. Simon Achan never took any remuneration for conducting the services, not even for his gasoline expenses.

Although, few in number, Kerala Christians of all denominations in and around Philadelphia attended his services. Even some Hindus joined us. After the services, everybody would meet for lunch at our apartment at 4900 Pine Street *and we all had a good time*. Achan continued to conduct his monthly service in Philadelphia until Orthodox priests who came from Kerala and were living in New York or New Jersey became available for the service. Even then., Simon Achan continued to come to the Philadelphia services on occasions.

Although Simon Achan was an ordained priest of the Knanaya Church, his love for people knew no boundaries. Among the Indians, he cared for Christians of all denominations as well as Hindus and others. Of course, he also had many close friends among non-Indians. Achan was an extremely unselfish, person, who liked to help others in every

way possible. The few Kerala Christians in Philadelphia in the 1960s were of different denominations, but we needed to have a Sunday service. This *need was met* by a monthly Orthodox Church service, as conducted by our very gracious, loving and unselfish Simon Achan. In the 1970s, the Kerala Christian community in Philadelphia significantly increased in number and split into the different denominations. Each denomination then started to have its own church and service. The formation of the first Malankara Orthodox Church (St. Thomas Church) in Philadelphia was greatly facilitated by the prior existence of the monthly Orthodox Church service and the credit for this goes to Simon Achan. Today there are many Orthodox and other churches of the Kerala Christians in Philadelphia, but the history of each of these churches can be traced back to those early *interdenominational* services (*including Jacobites, Marthomites, and CSI members*) led by our generous Simon Achan.

Simon Achan's generosity included his readiness to travel, not only from New York to Philadelphia every month, but also even *further for our special needs*, and always without any monetary compensation. Simon Achan traveled to our new home in Reading, PA for the baptisms of my niece and my daughter, Neena, and even drove the many miles to Pittsburgh, P A. for the baptism of my nephew. Around that time, at my request, Achan came again to Reading for the special purpose of conducting our service in English (with Malayalam songs) for the benefit of the same Episcopal church where Neena was baptized. This Episcopal (American) congregation appreciated the unique chance to witness our service. This was certainly in line with Simon Achan's prior ecumenical work, such as with the World Council of Churches and other organizations. More recently, my son Georgia (who *was* the first child baptized by Simon Achan in this country) wanted to be married only by him, and Achan performed that service also here in Reading at a Greek Orthodox church in 1989. He conducted every one of these services out of the goodness of his heart.

It is quite evident that Simon Achan and I and our families became very close friends even though I am not a Knanaya Church member. The two families have spent many 'weekends together, either in my house in Reading or in his house at 12 Edwin Street, Ridgefield Park and later at 12 Dogwood Lane in Ho-Ho-Kus, NJ. Simon Achan was my best friend in this world. *To* me, he was like my older brother and I

sought his counsel and advice on many occasions. There were several more topics in my mind which I wanted to discuss with him for his advice. I am really sorry that I did not get a chance to do that due to his unexpected departure from this world. Now there is no one else I would like to go to for such advice. I really miss him. Although he is not physically among us now, our families are still very close and friendly. I am sure that in the Lord's second coming, Simon Achan will be on His right side and I pray that we join him there.

T.V.Philip 516 Snyder Road Reading, PA

THE LATE VERY REV. DR. K.M. SIMON

The late Simon Achen is someone who is difficult to be described in words. He was one of the greatest sons of Kerala enjoying the care and affection and respect from a very wide circle of friends throughout the world. His achievements in various fields of human endeavour are manifold and I am not certainly going to attempt to list all his achievements in this small tribute. I therefore, write only about some of the events and instances in his life which I have personally known.

Simon Achen was appointed as the first general secretary of the world Christian Youth Movement. In 1947, Simon Achen decided to hold their International Conference in Kottayam, which was a prestigious event and was to be held for the first time in Kerala. Even though he was only a deacon, he was able to rally the entire Christian community of Kottayam to help him to hold this Conference and he won universal praise not only from the Christian leaders of various Churches in Kerala and India but also from many international Xian groups who attended the Kottayam Conference. The genius of Simon Achen was in convincing and involving important leaders of the Church to be part of this conference.

My late father K.C. Mammen Mappililay was so proud of "Simon Chemmachen" that he had no hesitation in accompanying Chemmachen to meet anyone he wanted and generally assisting him in creating a support organization in Kottayam.

After successfully holding the Youth Conference, the next major achievement of Rev. Simon was in Ethiopia where he became the principal of the Theological Seminary. He also became the close friend and confidant of the Emperor. The Emperor's first visit to India was arranged by Simon Achen and he accompanied the Emperor all over India even though the official hosts were the Government of India.

I knew Simon Achen as a child. However, it is only after he organized the Youth Conference that we used to meet more often. I had settled down in Bombay and whenever Simon Achen was passing through Bombay, he used to call on me and we used to meet. Our friendship deepened only after I first went to the USA in 1959 to try and obtain collaboration from foreign tire manufacturers to start a tire factory in India. This was my first visit to the USA and I had very few friends in the country. The moment Achen knew I was in New York, he came to the hotel and took me home and chided me for staying in a hotel instead of at his home. I was moving from place to place in the USA and negotiating with five tire companies for the collaboration for over a month. I had long periods of disappointments, frustration, and utter helplessness in these negotiations. However, whenever I went to see Simon Achen and narrated my difficulties, he had no doubts about the eventual success of my mission. He will always tell me “how can you fail? You are the son of Mammen Mappillay.” Though I did not share his supreme confidence then, I am happy to state that not only did I get collaboration for starting the tire factory exactly on the terms I wanted but was also able to obtain the entire foreign exchange finances from the export-import Bank of Washington in record time and on very favourable terms.

After that first visit, I was often in the USA and Simon Achen made it a point to spend the time with me every time I went there and at that time the Patriarch of the Orthodox Church was in the USA and Simon Achen took great pains and effort to bring both of us together. I remember on one occasion when the churches of New York and New Jersey gave the Patriarch a reception which was attended by over 12 bishops, the Patriarch insisted on my speaking at this huge gathering and he was very happy and proud when I mentioned that this was the first and only occasion when a divided church has been united into one in Kerala by the Patriarch and over two million members in India acknowledge the Patriarch as the supreme head. The Patriarch was immensely pleased with me and hoped the peace established in the Orthodox Church in India will last forever. However, this was not to be but I am hopeful that there are every sign of this hope being accomplished

in the near future. Simon Achen longed, hoped and prayed for this peace.

Simon Achen belonged to the Cannaite Section but when he began his Parish work in New York, all Syrian Christians - Orthodox, Jacobites, Marthomites and Anglicans used to attend his Sunday services. Simon Achen was universally respected as their own priest by everyone who knew him. I can only hope one day, in the future, such a situation will develop in our Kerala Church when Simon Achen will be remembered as the one who worked for this ideal.

In later year, I became even closer to Simon Achen and his entire family as well as our family has shared this friendship for the last 40 years. There are very few people born into the world like the late Simon Achen. I remember his greatest quality was that he opened not only his house but his heart too, to all his friends and acquaintances who came to New York.

Simon Achen's kindness and his love was so deep, that it was not at all surprising that when he died, his funeral was attended by a large section of people from every community.

My prayer is that his friends and admirers appreciate his wonderful contribution to the society in teaching us to love and respect one another. Let us all now adapt this ideal into our own life as a tribute to this noble soul who has left us for his eternal rest. May his soul rest in peace.

Bombay

10/20/1997

K.M. Philip

APPENDIX A - MESSAGES



ܩܘܪܝܢܘܨ ܕܩܘܪܝܢܘܨ ܕܩܘܪܝܢܘܨ ܕܩܘܪܝܢܘܨ ܕܩܘܪܝܢܘܨ ܕܩܘܪܝܢܘܨ
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ARCHDIOCESE OF THE SYRIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH FOR THE EASTERN UNITED STATES
PATRIARCHAL VICARATE

ARCHBISHOP MOR CYRIL APHREM KARIM
Patriarchal Vicar

October 7, 1997

Mr Abraham V. Abraham, Convener
Very Rev Dr K M Simon Souvenir Committee
419 Howard Street
Northboro, MA 01532

Dear Mr Abraham:

Thank you for your gracious letter of September 14, 1997, requesting a message to be placed in the special souvenir publication to soon be published in remembrance of the late Very Rev Corepiscopa K.M Simon. It is a joy to recall the Very Rev. Dr. K.M. Simon and his years of tireless efforts on behalf of our Holy Church. He was indeed a pioneer in establishing the first congregations of our Malayali faithful in this country and in bringing together our families who had come to the United States from their homeland in Kerala. His dedication and faithfulness inspired many to follow in his footsteps, and his deep sense of Christian love and service won for him the respect of countless individuals. In this regard, we especially recall his efforts as the first Dean of St Mark's Syrian Orthodox Cathedral in Hackensack, New Jersey. He likewise was an early champion of ecumenism, working with his many talents to further the cause of Christian unity and the brotherhood of all faithful.

Though we unfortunately only knew Very Rev. Simon a short time, we did come to respect and admire his true commitment to Christ and the Holy Church. His passing has been a great loss to us all, and we know that his many efforts and labor on behalf of Christ's Church will bear abundant and lasting fruit for years to come. We join with all of you in extending our prayerful regards to Mrs Thankamma Simon and to her children, Dr Renji Simon and Mr. Ronnie Simon. His was a loving soul that is now at rest in the Lord, having served in Christ's vineyard for so many caring years as a truly good and faithful servant of God.

In closing, we extend to the dear family of the late Very Rev. Dr. K.M Simon our sincere prayers and fatherly benediction, and bestowing upon all of you our paternal blessings, we remain,

Faithfully in Christ,

Mor Cyril Aphrem Karim,
Archbishop

49 Kipp Avenue Lodi, New Jersey 07644 Tel: (201) 778-0638 Fax: (201) 773-7506

MALANKARA ORTHODOX SYRIAN CHURCH
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PRESIDENT
HIS GRACE MATHIWS MAR BARNABAS
EXARCH METROPOLITAN



OL 54/97

September 16, 1997

To

Mr. Abraham V. Abraham
Souvenir Committee Convener

Blessings to dear brother in our Lord,

We are glad to hear that you are publishing a souvenir and starting a memorial fund, in connection with the first death anniversary celebration of the late Very Rev Dr. K.M. Simon Corepiscopa

We had close contact with Achen, only towards the end of his life. We had great appreciation for his character. He was a friend to every one. He helped all as far as he could. He helped many to come to America for theological studies and other purposes. He was having good relationship with other christian denominations also.

Another important aspect of his life was his dedication to and trust in God. He did not have any complaints or anxiety even when he knew that he had an incurable disease. On the other hand, he faced the sufferings cheerfully and maintained a peaceful attitude till his death, setting a good example to all of us.

Let us follow the good qualities in his life.

May the Lord continue to bless him

With prayers & best wishes

Mathiws Mar Barnabas

Mathiws Mar Barnabas Metropolitan



DIOCESE OF THE ARMENIAN CHURCH OF AMERICA
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Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate

PRIMATE'S MESSAGE

The Reverend K.M. Simon of the Syrian Orthodox Church of Malabar will be remembered as a priest who felt at home in any true church. He was learned, and having traveled widely in many continents, he had contacted and befriended many churchmen on the World Council of Churches level. His humility, sense of humor, friendliness, and particularly his love towards his native land and family were his distinctive traits. Father Simon will be missed whenever the Oriental Orthodox clergy congregate at the Diocesan Center of the Armenian Church of America.

May God grant eternal rest to his soul and may He bless the many people who benefited from his pastoral care.

With prayers,

Abp. Khajag Barsamian

Archbishop Khajag Barsamian
Primate

September 15, 1997
New York City

MAR THOMA CHURCH

PHILIPSE MAR CHRYSOSTOM
METROPOLITAN

POOLATHEEN,
TIRUVALLA 689 101,
KERALA, INDIA.

Rev. Dr. K. M. Simon was a name ringing in the years of the youth of Kerala when I was a young atchen. He was one of the few people who took a Doctoral degree from America in those days.

He proved his ability in organizational capacity and leadership in, organizing the World Youth Conference at Kottayam. It was the first event of its kind in Kerala. Kerala was reverberating for months with the preparation for the Conference. Atchen did a good job and became an ecumenical religious figure.

He was the host of almost all people who reached America for studies and work. His house was a home away from home for many.

He took the initiative to gather together the Kerala Christians under one banner and organise worship in Malayalam. The present diocese of different religious traditions of Kerala all will trace their American origin to the devoted ecumenical outlook and action of Simon atchen.

He had the openness to accept and accommodate all without persuading them to leave their valuable religious heritage.

Atchen's throughout had an ecumenical vision and involvement. In America in those days he represented the Kerala Christians in all areas and associations. His pleasing manners helpful nature and ability to articulate his ideas made him an acceptable leader.

He succeeded to forge an understanding between tradition and reform, between east and west. He was a friend and benefactor of all.

Kochamma was carved to be his wife by God. She welcomed his way of life and gladly shared his mission.

I thank God for atchen and his services. He was a good friend of many atchens and all the bishops of the Marthoma Church.

28.9.2002

**PHILIPSE MAR CHRYSOSTOM
MAR THOMA, METROPOLITAN**

The Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church

AMERICAN DIOCESE

140 EAST 71ST ST
NEW YORK, N.Y. 10021
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140 EAST 71ST ST
NEW YORK, N.Y. 10021
TEL: 695-1111

DR. THOMAS MAR MAKARIOS
BISHOP METROPOLITAN

OCT 19 1981

Mr. [Name]

Dear Sir,

I am pleased to hear that you are well and hope this letter finds you the same.

I am sure you are enjoying the fall season.

I am glad to hear that you are still in good health.

I am sure you are enjoying the fall season.

I am sure you are enjoying the fall season.

Yours faithfully,

[Signature]

[Signature]

[Signature]

Yours faithfully,

[Signature]

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The American Diocese
OF
The Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church, Inc.
80-34 Commonwealth Blvd., Belierose, NY 11426

PRESIDENT
Mathews Mar Barnabas
Metropolitan

Phone: (718) 470-9844
Fax: (718) 470-9219

Very Rev Simon Cas Episcopa
(Mathews Barnabas Metropolitan)

I am glad to hear that a book is going to be published in the name of Simon Cas Episcopa Achan. I consider it an honor to write about them.

Only after my coming to the U.S.A. about ten years ago, I had close contact with Achan. From what I have known, he was the most precious gem of the ancient Kananaya church. When I think of Achan, I am reminded of the words of our Lord about Nathanael "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile" (St. Jn. 1:47). Nothing can be said against him while totally loyal to the Patriarch of Antioch and the Kananaya church, he loved and respected the ~~Orthodox~~ group of the Malankara church. He was a friend and well-wisher of all Christian denominations. There was not an atom of persecution in him. He was the spiritual father of all the Malankara Christians when the services were started in a Union Chapel, Manhattan in New York. He never came for money and fame. May His spirit inspire all of us. brotherwilliam

ܕܒܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܩܘܣܐ ܕܩܝܫܬܐ ܕܩܝܫܬܐ ܕܩܝܫܬܐ ܕܩܝܫܬܐ ܕܩܝܫܬܐ
St. Mark's Syrian Orthodox Cathedral
260 ELM AVENUE, TEANECK, NEW JERSEY 07666

Archbishop
MOR CYRIL APHREM KARIM
Patriarchal Vicar

VERY REV. JOHN P. MENO
Pastor
263 Elm Avenue, Teaneck, NJ 07666
Tel: (201) 928-1810

August 30, 2002

The Family and Friends
of the late Very Rev. Dr. K.M. Simon

Dearly Beloved in Christ,

It is a great joy for me to address these few words to you on the occasion of the remembrance of a very dear and beloved brother, the Very Rev. Dr. K.M. Simon. It was my privilege to have known Very Rev. Simon for twenty-five years and to have learned from his many years of faithful dedication to the Holy Church and his example of service and Christian brotherhood. He was both a predecessor of mine, having served as the first Dean of St. Mark's Cathedral, then in Hackensack, from 1959 to 1961 as well as my father confessor on the day of my ordination to the sacred priesthood in 1972. We also had the joy to work together as representatives of our Holy Church at various meetings of the National Council of the Churches of Christ and as fellow members of the Standing Conference of the Oriental Orthodox Churches in America. On these occasions, Very Rev. Dr. Simon revealed a deep insight into the ecumenical life of the Church and the need for all faithful to strive for the realization of Christian unity. Not just a scholar, Very Rev. Simon was a person who continually gave of himself in the service of the Lord and his brothers and sisters in Christ. Through his many efforts, he did much for the Malayali community in North America. He was an outstanding representative of our Malankara faithful, especially concerning the Kananaya community.

On the day of my priestly ordination, Very Rev. Dr. Simon impressed upon me the importance of all clergy being mirrors of Christ, always reflecting the Lord's loving care. In a word, the Very Rev. K.M. Simon was such a mirror, continually reflecting in his life God's love and concern for the wellbeing of all His children. May the Almighty grant his good soul eternal peace and rest in the heavenly Jerusalem, and may the Lord bestow His blessings and loving care upon all the members of Very Rev. Simon's family and their beloved ones.

Sincerely in Christ,

Very Rev. John P. Meno

Very Rev. John P. Meno,
Cathedral Dean

Tel: (201) 907-0199 • Fax: (201) 907-0551

The late *Very. Rev. Dr. K.M.Simon* was a memorable person in many respects to all who knew him. I have known him from my student days at Princeton as a very good personal friend and a loyal church leader. Achan was a spiritual father to many Malayalee Christians who migrated to the east coast of U.S.A in the early 50's and 60's when there were no formal church denominations and designated priests of Kerala churches in the U.S.A. He shepherded all the flocks irrespective of church denominations with love, care and concern. Achan was a good link between the Church and the society and many were happy to adhere him

I cherish very good memories of meeting with Achan and sharing numerous thoughts and concerns regarding the Church – local and universal – as well as the community from Kerala and in the U.S.A. He had a strong footing in Syrian Christian traditions and Malayalee Culture. He was very particular to establish and maintain firm bond of fellowship and friendship with people of all faiths and cultures. He was a bridge for the incoming new immigrants from Kerala to the new world of America. For many, Achan's presence was a support and comfort when they were away for the first time from their homes.

The ecumenical leadership rendered by Achan could keep people of *St. Thomas tradition from Kerala* as one community. He upheld a clear and high vision about church, family and the Indian community in the U.S.A. His service to our people would always be remembered as a *great contribution in molding and evolving the present Malayalee Christian Community in the north eastern part of U.S.A.*

As we remember the late Rev. Dr. K.M.Simon through the pages of these memoirs, let us cherish the ideals he stood for and the goals he set forth which are worthy of emulation.

May God's blessings be upon all of us.

The Rt.Rev.Dr. Zacharias Mar Theophilus

The Hon. Mr., P C. Alexander
Governor of Maharashtra State
Bombay, India

Your Excellency:

I am writing in behalf of the Committee to publish a Souvenir on the occasion of the first death anniversary of the late V. Rev. Dr. K.M. Simon Corepiscopa who passed away on Sept. 20, 1996. As you may have heard, his funeral service took place in New York with His Eminence Abraham Mar Clemis Metropolitan as the Chief Celebrant, assisted by other bishops, a large number of priests and the participation of hundreds of his friends and admirers.

The first death anniversary will be observed on Sept. 20, 1997 at St. Peter's Knanaya Church in New York and we are planning to publish the Souvenir containing messages and articles about our beloved Simon Achen on Sept. 20 or soon after that. We believe that a message or article from Your Excellency will be of great value for the Souvenir in honoring Simon Achen's name and I request you to send by fax or mail either a message or article at your earliest. I know that Mrs. Thankamma Simon as well as Achen's children, Dr. Renji Simon and Mr. Ronnie Simon will also thank you for your contribution.

You will be pleased to know that a memorial fund has been set up in Simon Achen's name to promote clergy education and ecumenical contacts.

Looking forward to hearing from Your Excellency and thanking you in anticipation,

Yours sincerely,

Abraham V. Abraham, Managing Editor, Knanaya Abroad and
Convener, Souvenir Committee
419 Howard Street
Northboro, MA. 01532, USA

September 9, 1997



P. C. ALEXANDER

11/9/97
No. 1489
IPS/16/97

RAJ BHAVAN
MALABAR HILL,
BOMBAY 400 035

11 September 1997

Dear Mr. Abraham,

I have received your fax message of 9 September. I am enclosing herewith a message for the Souvenir that you propose to publish in honour of the late Simon Achen.

With regards,

Yours sincerely,

(P.C. Alexander)

Mr. Abraham V. Abraham
419, Howard Street,
Northboro, MA, 01532 USA

Fax : 508 393-3214 OR 508 632-0600



P. C. ALEXANDER

RAJ BHAVAN
MALABAR HILL,
Mumbai - 400 035

11 September 1997

M E S S A G E

I had the privilege of knowing the late Very Rev. Dr. K.M.Simon Corepiscopa very closely from my student days. The first occasion I met him was when my home parish of Mavelikara organised a reception in his honour and in honour of Deacon K.Philipose (now Metropolitan Mar Theophilos) on their return from the United Kingdom after completing their theological studies. It was very rare in those days for priests from the Orthodox Church to go abroad for higher studies and therefore several such receptions were organised in their honour in different parishes of the Church. I, a student then, was a speaker at that meeting. Since then we had kept ourselves in close touch and developed a very warm friendship with each other.

It was during my stay in New York during 1963-66 as a U.N.Civil Servant that I had the opportunity for coming into very close contact with him. He was the Vicar of our Orthodox Parish in New York and we had the highest admiration for his unstinted devotion to the church and the inspiring leadership he gave to the Orthodox community. His genial temper, warmth of affection and ever willing disposition to help others had won the esteem of the entire Indian community in New York. He was incapable of pettiness or rancour and always rose above narrow boundaries of groupism and factionalism. I will describe him as one of the finest of gentlemen I have come across in my life.

My wife and I join all friends of Simon Achen in offering our respectful tributes to his memory.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "P.C. Alexander".

(P.C.ALEXANDER)
Governor of Maharashtra

DONALD W. SHRIVER JR.,

*President of the Faculty and William E. Dodge Professor of Applied Christianity,
Emeritus Union Theological Seminary in the City of New York*

29 December 1997

Mr. Abraham V. Abraham
Managing Editor
Knanaya Abroad, 419 Howard Street
Northboro, MA 01532

Dear Mr. Abraham:

Later than I hoped and than you may have desired, here is a text of my tribute to Father K.M. Simon in October.

I was honored to be asked to undertake this assignment, and I enjoyed the event. It was for me an important occasion for reflecting on all the people who, from decades back, have had important parts in my life. Surely K.M.Simon was one of them.

If you have any questions about this text, do not hesitate to get in touch with me by phone or letter at the Riverside Drive address below. Thank you for all the work you did to convene the Souvenir Committee in honor of three of your church's outstanding leaders. You made it a real ecumenical event.

Yours sincerely,

Donald W. Shriver, Jr.
440 RIVERSIDE DRIVE, APT. #58, NEW YORK, NY 10027-6830
TEL.& FAX: 212/222-5112, 247 REED ROAD, CHATHAM, NY
12037-3111, TEL&FAX 518/392-2511, DS241@colimbia.edu

Subj: Fwd: Death of Fr. Simon
Date: 96-09-23 11:51:23 EDT
From: grjosep@ces.clemson.edu
To: habeeb99@aol.com

Sorry to hear about Simon achen.

This is a message I got from the person who maintains the Knanaya catholic Page.

Dear Rajiv,

Following is a message broadcasted to Knanaya Discussion Forum (KDF) members. Please accept out deepest condolences.

Joe Ellankil

Date: Sun, 22 Sep 1996 00:26:23 -0700
From: JOE PATHYIL <jpathyil@interlog.com>
Organization: PATHYIL CONSULTANTS

Subject: Death of Fr. Simon

You must have heard about the passing away of Fr. Simon, the leader and founder of the Knanaya (Jacobite) Community in North America. He had come here in the early sixties, after having worked in Ethiopia for many years as a trusted advisor to the Emperor (Haile Salasi). Simon Achan was instrumental in getting jobs for hundreds of our people in Ethiopia when the conditions there were excellent in the fifties and in the sixties. Fr. Simon's name was mentioned as the possible bishop of the Knanaya Jacobite Samudayam. After he came to New York, he was involved in many of the activities of the Knananites - both Jacoba and Catholics. He had taught for many years in the Theological College, and he was a member of the World Christian movement. He was a very close friend of our people both in Kerala and in North America.

He had retired some time ago. Cancer had been the cause of his debility. Mar Clemes (The Bishop) visited him recently, gave him the last rites and on Friday, Sept 20, at 9.45 p.m. Simon Achan went to his reward. The wake is on Saturday (5 to 9 pm) and Sunday, same time. The funeral services will be at 10 am on 23 Sept. at St. Peter's Knanaya Church, Yonkers, NY. (914 476 9846.

A very good friend and well-wisher of the community. Our condolences to the family and the community.
Joseph Pathyil --

----- End Included Message -----

----- Headers -----

From grjosep@ces.clemson.edu Mon Sep 23 11:50:46 1996
Return-Path: grjosep@ces.clemson.edu
Received: from eng.clemson.edu (eng.clemson.edu [130.127.200.5]) by
emin12.mail.aol.com (8.6.12/8.6.12) with ESMTTP id LAA11737 for
<habeeb99@aol.com>; Mon, 23 Sep 1996 11:50:44 -0400

From: grjosep@ces.clemson.edu
Received: from tiger.eng.clemson.edu.eng by eng.clemson.edu (SMT-8.6/SMT-4.1)
id LAA07052; Mon, 23 Sep 1996 11:46:15 -0400
Date: Mon, 23 Sep 1996 11:46:15 -0400
Message-Id: <199609231546.LAA07052@eng.clemson.edu>
To: habeeb99@aol.com
Subject: Fwd: Death of Fr. Simon

T. P. Abraham B. A.

(Thamarappallil)

Venus Plywood Company

Phone

Office : 225

Res : 344

Nemmara P. O.

Palghat Dt.

Date..... 30-6-1999

It is seen from the "Kananaya Deepam" that you have invited articles about Rev. Dr. K. M. Simon. I am forwarding a very small article about him while he was a Decon as I had close contact with him for about two years when we were young.

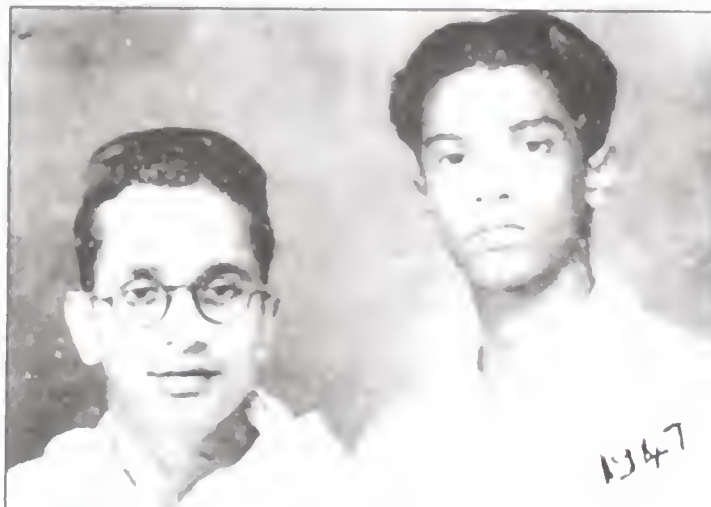
Dear Mr. Abraham

Since i have not seen you before hand I have to introduce myself as the elder brother of Dr. T. P. Thomas Thamarappallil New Jersey and I am at Nemmara in Palakkad (Dist) for the last 47 Years. I am also forwarding a photograph of Rev. Dr. Simon and myself taken in the year 1947 while we were staying together.

Hope you are all doing fine.

Yours Sincerely

Thomas



Abraham M. Abraham
 128 Lincoln Ave.
 Clifton, NJ 07011
 U.S.A.

9-16-1980

രണ്ടാം ക്രമാനുഭവത്തിൽ ഒരു
 അദ്ധ്യക്ഷൻമാർക്ക് കൂടിയിരിക്കുമ്പോൾ അദ്ദേഹം
 ഒരു ക്രമാനുഭവങ്ങൾ ഉണ്ടായിരുന്നു. അദ്ദേഹം
 മറ്റാരുമല്ല, നമ്മുടെ സാമ്പത്തികമായി നന്നായ
 അദ്ധ്യക്ഷൻ. ഒരു കാലഘട്ടത്തിൽ കൂടിയിൽ
 തിരഞ്ഞെടുക്കൽ സെമിനാരികളിൽ മാറ്റം
 അദ്ധ്യക്ഷൻമാർ വിശുദ്ധ കർമ്മങ്ങൾ അദ്ധ്യക്ഷ
 കൂടി അതിനുമേൽ മാറ്റംവരുത്താൻ നന്നായ
 ജീവിത അനുഭവ കലകൾ ചർച്ചയ്ക്ക് ചിരി
 ചിരികളും ചിരികളും ചെയ്തിരുന്ന
 ചർച്ചയ്ക്ക് മാറ്റം അദ്ധ്യക്ഷൻമാർക്കോടൊപ്പം
 അദ്ധ്യക്ഷൻമാർക്ക് മാറ്റംവരുത്താൻ
 അദ്ധ്യക്ഷൻമാർക്ക് അദ്ധ്യക്ഷൻമാർക്ക്.

Abraham M. Abraham
 Malattuesseil
 128 Lincoln Ave
 Clifton, 07011
 U.S.A



ABRAHAM M. ABRAHAM GRACY ABRAHAM 128 LINCOLN AVE CLIFTON, NJ 07011		55-1387472 08-679233	1268
DATE 1-25-1999			
PAY TO THE ORDER OF	Abraham V. Abraham	\$ 100.00	
One hundred and 00/100		DOLLARS	
 <small>PLEASE OFFER YOUR BEST CLIFTON, NEW JERSEY 07011</small>			
MEMO	1268		

Tel. 0477-75313
0478-51659

From

K. K. Kurian (Kaji)
Thyparampil. House
Veliyaradu. P.O, City - 689590.

To. Abraham. v. Abraham
119, Howard St.
Northboro. MA
01532. U.S.A

Dear Dr. Jovanovich,

I am sending an article titled
"Spermatid". Please go through it and if it
is publishable in the journal, which you
are going to publish on sept 13, do the needful.

Regards.

K. K. Kurian

K. K. Kurian

Thyparampil
Veliyaradu

Veliyaradu
30-6-99.

പുരോഗതികൾ

പുരോഗതികൾ എന്ന പദം അർത്ഥം വർദ്ധനവ് എന്നാണ്. ഇതിന്റെ അർത്ഥം ഇതാണ്.

- 1) മനുഷ്യന്റെ ചിന്തയുടെ വികാസം
- 2) മനുഷ്യന്റെ ശാരീരിക ശേഷിയുടെ വികാസം
- 3) പുതിയ സാങ്കേതിക വിദ്യകളുടെ ഉൽപ്പാദനം.

പുരോഗതികളുടെ അർത്ഥം

രാജ്യങ്ങളിൽ പുരോഗതികൾ എന്ന ഒരു പ്രത്യേക വിഭാഗം ഉണ്ടാകുന്നുണ്ട്. പുതിയ വിഭാഗം ഉണ്ടാകാൻ അനേകം കാരണങ്ങൾ ഉണ്ടാകാം. അതിൽ ചിലത് നിലവിലുള്ളവയുടെ വികാസം ഉണ്ടാകാൻ കാരണമാകുന്നു. ചിലത് പുതിയ സാങ്കേതിക വിദ്യകളുടെ ഉൽപ്പാദനം കാരണമാകുന്നു. ചിലത് പുതിയ സാങ്കേതിക വിദ്യകളുടെ ഉൽപ്പാദനം കാരണമാകുന്നു. ചിലത് പുതിയ സാങ്കേതിക വിദ്യകളുടെ ഉൽപ്പാദനം കാരണമാകുന്നു.

രാജ്യങ്ങളുടെ അഭിവൃദ്ധി

രാജ്യങ്ങളുടെ അഭിവൃദ്ധി എന്നാണ് ഇതിന്റെ അർത്ഥം. അതിന്റെ അർത്ഥം ഇതാണ്. അതിന്റെ അർത്ഥം ഇതാണ്. അതിന്റെ അർത്ഥം ഇതാണ്.

ഈ രേഖയിലൂടെ നോക്കാം

ഈ പുരോഗതികൾ മനുഷ്യന്റെ ചിന്തയുടെ വികാസം ഉണ്ടാകാൻ കാരണമാകുന്നു. ചിലത് പുതിയ സാങ്കേതിക വിദ്യകളുടെ ഉൽപ്പാദനം കാരണമാകുന്നു.

കുറിക്കുന്നു. ദുരിതപര്യന്തി ബലി, നിത്യമംഗ

മദ്ധ്യമംഗം.

മൂന്നരത്തരം മദ്ധ്യമംഗം ചട്ടയനിയമ
ത്തിൽ കാണുന്നു.

- 1) രാജാവിന്റെ
- 2) ചരോഹിതന്റെ
- 3) പ്രവാചകന്റെ

ഇവ മൂന്നര തന്നിൽ സമന്വയിച്ചിട്ടു
കിട്ടി. നിത്യനായ വചനം പ്രവാചകന്റെ
ത്തിന്റെ ചട്ടങ്ങളിൽ. മനുഷ്യജാതിയെ
തന്നിലേക്ക് ആയിക്കുന്ന ജൈലിന്റെ
രാജാവിന്റെ ചട്ടങ്ങളിൽ. അതു
മദ്ധ്യമംഗംനാകയാൽ ചരോഹിതന്റെ
ചട്ടങ്ങളിൽ.

ഈ ചട്ടങ്ങളുടെ ഭാഗം ആകയാൽ
ദോഷം കിട്ടുന്നതിനും വിളിക്കപ്പെട്ടിരിക്കുന്നു.
ബലിയും വചനങ്ങളുടെയും ആണ്
ചരോഹിതന്റെ ചട്ടങ്ങൾ.
മനുഷ്യാവതാരത്തിൽ ഇവരണ്ടും
ജൈലി നിവഹിക്കുകയും ചെയ്തു ചരോഹി
കളുടെ മദ്ധ്യ മഹോവയുടെ രാജി
നെതിരിക്കുന്നതും നിലയാല ആയിരുന്നു
ഇസ്രായേലിന്റെ രാജ ചരോഹിതം.
മനുഷ്യാവതാരം ആയിത്തീർന്നു
സഭയുടെതാണ്. അതുകൊണ്ട് സഭ
രാജാവിൽ ചരോഹിത വ'ളം ആയി
ഭവിക്കുകയും ചെയ്യുന്നു.

Kochi

30-8-97

My dear Mr. Somasundar

കോച്ചിയിൽ നിന്നും എഴുതിയ Mr. M. I. Kural
 ന്റെ Article കണ്ടു. അത് വളരെ ഉപയോഗ
 പരമാണ്. നിങ്ങളുടെ പത്രത്തിൽ അത് പ്രസിദ്ധി
 കരണമാക്കി ഉൾക്കൊള്ളണമെന്നു അപേക്ഷിക്കുന്നു.
 അത് ഉൾക്കൊള്ളാൻ തയ്യാറാണെന്ന് ഉറപ്പാക്കി
 അറിയിക്കുന്നു.

This article was written under
 one very strict condition, and I
 had to guarantee that to say
 either you publish it in total
 - without any editing whatsoever
 or don't publish it at all. I gave
 him the guarantee that I will
 make you aware of it. - It is
 an "either or" situation. It is
 in his original envelope -

I did not even read it.

അമ്മയുടെ കയ്യെഴുത്തുപുസ്തകം
പുസ്തകം വായിച്ചു കിട്ടിയിട്ടില്ലെന്ന്
മനസ്സിലാക്കണം.

എല്ലാ ലിംഗ്വയിൽ നടന്ന
കാലം കേൾക്കുക, അമ്മ
ജോൺ, രാജൻ, കുഞ്ഞു
കൊടുമുടി. അമ്മ
കേൾക്കുക കേൾക്കുക.

കാൽ ഫോൺ 484-323590
കേൾക്കുക tax ഗവൺ - same #. മുടി
എന്നിവയ്ക്ക് Fax On Company
Tissy Neil, Janani കുഞ്ഞു
Warm regards

Janani
Grandpa!

DONALD W. SHRIVER, JR.

President of the Faculty and William E. Dodge Professor of Applied Christianity. *Emeritus*
Union Theological Seminary in the City of New York

29 December 1997

Mr. Abraham V. Abraham
Managing Editor
Knanaya Abroad
419 Howard Street
Northboro, MA 01532

Dear Mr. Abraham:

Later than I hoped and than you may have desired, here is a text of my tribute to Father K.M. Simon in October.

I was honored to be asked to undertake this assignment, and I enjoyed the event. It was for me an important occasion for reflecting on all the people who, from decades back, have had important parts in my life. Surely K.M.Simon was one of them.

If you have any questions about this text, do not hesitate to get in touch with me by phone or letter at the Riverside Drive address below. Thank you for all the work you did to convene the Souvenir Committee in honor of three of your church's outstanding leaders. You made it a real ecumenical event.

Yours sincerely,

Donald W. Shriver, Jr.

440 RIVERSIDE DRIVE, APT. #58, NEW YORK, NY 10027-6830, TEL. & FAX: 212/222-5112
247 REED ROAD, CHATHAM, NY 12037-3111, TEL. & FAX: 518/392-2511. email: DS241@columbia.edu

The Malankara Syrian Orthodox Theological Seminary

(Reg. No. ER 111110)

Rev. Dr. Adal Jacob
Principal
SYRIAN ORTHODOX THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
KALAMANGALAM, KERALA



for:	Principal	Rs. 10000
	Steward	Rs. 10000
	Hostel	Rs. 10000
	Convict	Rs. 10000
	Prize	Rs. 10000

Date 27 06 2001

Ref. No. -

Subj. -

To,

Rev. Dr. Plampanumpil P. Philip
Administrator, North American Knanaya Community
2238 Belvidere
Carrollton TX 75006
U.S.A.

My dear Achan,

Received your Fax and we are sending the list of students from the Knanaya Community and the fees for a student for one year.

The actual expense for a student for one month is Rs 1500. The seminary is giving subsidy of Rs 800 for each student. Therefore the monthly fee of a student for food, accommodation, tuition fee and all other expenses like electricity, water etc is Rs 660. Each student has to pay fees for 11 months and thus the fee for one year is Rs 7260. From a total number of 27 students 20 students are from the Knanaya community for 20 students we need Rs 726 x 20 = Rs 1,45,200 for one year besides exam fees and practical work expenses.

We are collecting Rs 5,00,000 to 1,50,000 from each diocese to the expenses of the day today affairs and running of the seminary. We expect One lakh Rupees from the Knanaya community also. The list of students are attached here with.

WELLD

Rev. Dr. Jason Scaria
Rev. Dr. Joseph M.
Rev. Dr. Jimun K. Punnose
Rev. Dr. Kunakose M. Philip
Rev. Dr. Sano Markose
Rev. Dr. Santhosh Markose
Rev. Dr. Sano Abraham

Principal Rev. Adal Jacob
Website of the church: www.malankara.org

E-mail: adaj@mal.mal.org
(mal)@mal.mal.org

The Malankara Syrian Orthodox Theological Seminary

(Reg. No. KM 1369/90)

Rev. Dr. Adal Jacob
Principal
UDAYAGIRI, VETTICKAL P. O.
MULANTHURUTHY 682314
BAPAVILAK, PRAJAP.



Fax : 0484-748079
Tel: Principal : 748079
Bursar : 748081
Postel : 748072
Comptrol : 748408
Phone : 748407

Ref No:-

Date: _____

Sub -

LBD

Mr. Binoj Kunakose
Rev. Dn. Thomas Abraham


LBD

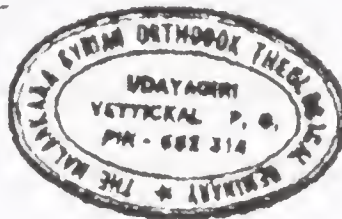
Mr. Abey Zacharia
Mr. Bino Philip
Mr. Jinu Mathew
Mr. Kochumon Thomas
Rev. Dn. Kunakose
Mr. Sherin C

Orientation

Mr. Biby K Abraham
Rev. Dn. Jiji Purnose
Rev. Dn. Immanuel K T
Mr. Thomas T Mathew
Rev. Dn. Mathew K K

*With all best wishes and thanks
Yours in Christ*


PRINCIPAL
Rev. Dr. Adal Jacob





Fairleigh Dickinson
University

Edward Williams College

Office of the Dean

110 North Main

Edison, NJ 07030-3760

Tel: (908) 291-1000 Voice

Fax: (908) 291-1000

February 18, 1998

MEMORIES OF DR. K.M. SIMON

Recently, a colleague who was teaching a "Core I - Perspectives on the Individual" course at Fairleigh Dickinson University requested me to speak about Eastern Religions and their impact on the World View. As I led the discussion of adult learners and traditional age students on a Monday evening about India as the birthplace of three of the World's major religions - Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism, memories focused on an Indian Cultural History class that was taught by Dr. K. Matthew Simon more than thirty years ago. As a priest from the Syrian Christian Community of Kerala, India who studied and traveled all over the world, Dr. Simon provided a marvelous international perspective for his students.

Dr. Simon became my academic advisor and mentor as part of the Fairleigh Dickinson University Honors Program in 1967. For the next two years, we worked very closely together on many projects. In addition to our student-teacher relationship, we became very close friends. Dr. Simon was a scholar, a clergyman and an outstanding teacher. He was able to promote the educational growth of his students and to inspire them to attain excellence. Dr. Simon possessed exceptional communication skills and a fine sense of humor. He was demanding of his students but everyone respected his commitment to learning. He was honest, dedicated and spiritually pure.

On many occasions, Dr. Simon and his wife, Thankamma who was and still is a member of the F.D.U. Library Staff, invited students for dinner at their home in Ridgefield Park. Students would marvel at the friendliness of the Simon family. Many times, Mrs. Simon would demonstrate the preparation of Indian cuisine by having the students participate in making Lamb and Beef Curry and various types of desserts.

Dr. Simon and I remained close friends when I became a faculty member and administrator at Fairleigh Dickinson University in 1970. He delivered grace at my Wedding Reception, and my wife, Karen, always appreciated his sincerity and dedication. We kept in touch, and he had a major influence on my administrative career. It was my privilege to offer some educational assistance to Dr. Simon's youngest son, Ronnie.

Dr. K.M. Simon was a wonderful teacher and professor, a priest with international ecumenical vision, a proud husband and father, and my personal friend. His influence will continue through the many students that he taught at Fairleigh Dickinson University who will share and communicate the values that have become his legacy.

Kenneth T. Vehrkens
Dean
Associate Vice President
Fairleigh Dickinson University



The Author Rev. Dr. K.M. Simon Cor Episcopa



The father of Rev. Dr. Simon, the late K.C. Mathew





Rev. Dr. Simon and Thankamma with
Mar Clemis Abraham, Metropolitan



Rev. Dr. K.M. Simon



Dr Simon's father-in-law and mother-in-law.
Mr. M.U. Abraham and his wife Chinnamma Abraham, Manimalethu



Rev. Dr. Simon and Thankamma with their grand daughter, Thangom



Rev. Dr. K.M. Simon was ordained as a priest by
Mar Clemis Abraham in Addis Ababa.



Rev. Dr. Simon with Chev. V. O Abraham and
Mr. M.A. Thomas and Ron(Son)



The Author's family group



Mrs. Thankamma Simon and Rev. Dr. Simon



The author with his family



Tha family of Mrs. Simon



Sister of Rev. Dr. Simon, Mariamma Abraham, Chengalavan



Rev. Dr. Simon's sister Mrs. Annamma Abraham, Malloosseril



Rev. Dr. Simon and family with Mr. & Mrs. K.M. Philip



Rev. Dr. Simon chats with Consul general in U.S. Sri Parthasarathy



Rev. Dr. Simon with H.G. Alexander, Mar Thoma Metropolitan



Rev. Dr. Simon Family with Abraham Eapen, Palampadom



Rev. Dr. Simon with His imperial majesty Haile Sellase I, Emperor of Ethiopia and Abuna Theophilos Patriarch of Ethiopian Orthodox church



Rev. Dr. Simon with Pope Paul VI at Vatican



Rev. Dr. Simon with Patriarch Alexy of Moscow and all Russia



The author with Charles Parctin, Secretary W.C.C.



Rev. Dr. Simon with the crown Prince of Ethiopia at St. Mark's Cathedral, New Jersey.



Deacon K. M. Simon



Rev. Dr. Simon with the Patriarch, H.H. Moran Mar Ignatius Yacoob III and P.C. Mathew I.C.S, former chief secretary of Tamilnad Government.



Rev. Dr. Simon Principal of Holy Trinity Theological College Addis Ababa
and Staff members



Rev. Dr. Simon with Patriarch H.H. Ignatius Yacoob III and Metropolitan Mar
Poulouse Gregorius at the Drew university receiving Dectorate.



Simon Achan & grand daughter Divya



Memorial Service in Boston
V.Rev. Dr. Abraham Thomas, Dr. Shriver & Dr. P. M. John

APPENDIX C - NEWSPAPER ARTICLES

Thursday, February 1, 1966



FIG. 3. DR. LUDWIG EDLER (left) shows a framed picture given him by the Directorate of Epigraphy and Museum and the President of the Republic of Peru. The picture is a portrait of a young man, a gold-colored, unadorned character from the same family, and a small portrait. The picture is a portrait of the National Museum of Peru, a portrait of Dr. Edler by J. Bartolomé, which is given with his wife and two young sons.

Globetrotting Cleric Tells of Russian Visit

When Dr. E. Matthew Simon of Ridgefield Park returned from an eight-week trip around the world, he brought home more than just memories.

Dr. Simon, a priest of the Syrian Orthodox Church of India in Hackensack, made the trip at the invitation of religious leaders in a score of countries.

When he returned recently he was carrying a package of priceless religious treasures from the countries he visited.

Among his mementoes are a gold communion chalice encrusted



Dr. E. Matthew Simon

with amethysts, a gold plated cup, paten and spoon, vestments, a gold and enamel icon and crosses and other luxurious items.

On College Faculty

Dr. Simon, a member of the faculty of the Syrian Orthodox University in Toronto, made his trip in response to repeated invitations extended in Ethiopia, where he visited from 1953 through 1954.

A professor of the Syrian Orthodox Theological Institute in Kottayam, South India, he has been organizing meetings of the World Conference of Christian Youth in Asia with headquarters in London.

2 Weeks in Russia

As a representative of the Syrian Orthodox Patriarchate and other organizations, Dr. Simon has journeyed to almost every part of the globe to attend meetings.

His recent voyage included two weeks in Russia and one in Romania as well as visits to Yugoslavia, Turkey, Syria, Lebanon, India, Singapore, Hong Kong and Japan.

He said he received "top carpet treatment" in both Russia and Romania.

"I was impressed by what I saw of church life in Russia," he said. "Obviously there is a resurgence of the Church."

Converted Into Museums

The "resurgence" included full church attendance, freedom to publish religious magazines and to train priests, structural programs and participation in world council affairs, he said.

"Quite a number of the most beautiful and most historic churches have been converted into museums by the Soviet Government," Dr. Simon said. "The Church is not unhappy about this, since the edifices have been beautifully restored."

"They are now national monuments and are open to all people. And like all monuments in the Soviet Union, they are being crowded."

Urges Cooperation

"The good will that Russians and Arabs have for each other should be put to work," Dr. Simon said. "At present, each is giving economic and technical assistance to other countries, but in a spirit of competition instead of cooperation."

Dr. Simon lives with his wife and two children at 12 W. 12th St., Ridgefield Park.

Church Resurgence Seen in Russia



SACRED ARTICLES. Dr. K. M. ... a member of the ...

FDU Faculty Member-Priest Comments on 8-Week Vis

... the Soviet Union ...

... the church in that part of the world ...

... with the steps ...

Einstein Study Group To Discuss Buddhism

... study group ...

PTA Seeks Answer To Youth 'Kicks'

Panel of State Congress to Look 'Behind Their Scenes'

When Guests

... the ...

Colombettes to Celebrate 50th Anniversary Dinner

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World churches propose new fund against racism

By PHILIP TRUCKENBROD
Star-Ledger Correspondent

CANTERBURY, England — The central committee of the World Council of Churches received "An Ecumenical Program for the Elimination of Racism" from its executive committee which proposes establishment of an ecumenical fund to assist organizations struggling for racial justice.

The proposal was assigned for further study to a reference committee after only brief debate on the floor. It will be brought out of committee for a vote in the second week of the central committee's meeting here.

"Racism is not an unalterable feature of human life," the program states. "Like slavery and other social manifestations of man's sin, it can and must be eliminated."

The program centers in a five-year plan which would send international teams of inquiry into racially troubled areas, a plan to "correct the racial imbalance" on the WCC staff, and the fund for groups fighting racial injustice.

PART OF PROBLEM

The report of the original London consultation was submitted to the central committee as information. It said in part, "The identification of the churches with the status quo means that it has remained part of the racial problem and not a means of eliminating it."

"If the churches are to have any relevance in these critical times, it is imperative they no longer concentrate their attention on the individual actions of individual Christians who are fighting racism. It is

necessary that racism be addressed as a group."

Failing more normal means, the churches should support resistance movements, including revolutions which are aimed at the elimination of political or economic tyranny which makes racism possible," said the consultation report.

"This consultation endorses the principle of reparation," the report stated, urging that "religious institutions divest themselves of their excessive material wealth by immediately allocating a significant portion of their total resources, without employing any mechanism of control, to organizations of the racially oppressed."

LEADERS' OPINIONS

In private conversations before the presentation of the report several church leaders gave their opinions on the issue and how it might be handled by the central committee this week.

Very Rev. Dr. K. M. Simon of Ridgefield Park, N.J., representing the Syrian Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch on the central committee, said the report should not have concentrated exclusively on white racism, but should also have dealt with the frequent injustice of black for black, etc.

"I don't exonerate the racism of the whites — it is a sin which must be expiated, but the problem is not that simple," he said. "Christianity is undergoing a revolutionary rethinking right now."

Rev. Dr. Eugene Carson Blake, a Presbyterian from the United States who is General Secretary of the WCC, said the problem of racism is worldwide.

"One of the values of the WCC is that countries like Holland and the Scandinavian countries which have no im-

yet begun to hear and see this reality," said Dr. Blake.

Miss Jean Fairfax, a Negro committee member from the United Church of Christ in the U.S., said she had discovered that "when we blacks and Asians identify ourselves with Christianity, other blacks will regard us as part of the oppressive power structure."

"I know, because the black militant group from the United States disrupted the London consultation while I was serving as chairman," she said.

A black committee member from Africa said the report was "passing by the time



Dr. K. M. Simon
Frequent injustice

problem" by its concentration on white vs. black. "In Africa we have tribalism, which is opposition of one black group against another," he said, "and I call that racism also."

V. REV. DR. K.M. SIMON COR-EPISCOPA

His Life and Times

A SYNOPSIS

Kunnumpurathu Mathew Simon was born at Kottayam, Kerala. He had his schooling in C.M.S. High School and his higher education in C.M.S. College, Kottayam. He was ordained as a deacon at the age of 14 at Kottayam Valiapally by Metropolitan Mor Thomas Dioscoros. He took his Theological Diploma from Kelham College, England. He was chosen as the General Secretary of the Third World Conference of Christian Youth at Kottayam in 1952. He took his Master's degree from Union Theological Seminary, U.S.A. He had another master's degree from General Theological Seminary. Deacon Simon married Thankamma, the only daughter of the late Mr. & Mrs. M.U. Abraham, Manimalathu Ranny in 1953.

He spent a few years as the principal of the Holy Trinity Theological College, Addis Ababa. He was ordained as a priest by Mor Clemis Abraham Metropolitan at Addis Ababa in 1956. He represented the Syrian Orthodox Church in the W.C.C. During his life in the United States he was a teacher in the Fairleigh Dickenson University until his retirement in 1984. He was the first Administrator of the Knanaya Churches in U.S.A. He was called to eternal rest on 20th september 1996. He led a devoted and dedicated christian life which shed a lustre on the societies he served.