

ar**ORTHODOX SYRIAN SUNDAY  
SCHOOL ASSOCIATION OF THE  
EAST**



**Thabore Division**

**Class XI**

(English)

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## Preface

Education is a continuing and refreshing endeavour which attempts to train and equip kids and the young people for a spiritual, active and successful life; and hence it is an 'investment' for today and tomorrow. The myriad possibilities of education have encouraged religion, countries and ideologies to adapt it for furthering their objectives and long term aims. In the Christian tradition "Christian education' is a ministry of the Church.

Secular education programme in every situation and country has undergone enormous transformation through the years. More and more study and research is going into the philosophical base, content, techniques of teaching and learning, learners' participation, technique of evaluation etc. So it is only natural that 'revisions' happen from time to time.

"Christian Education", for which the Sunday School lays the foundation and prods nurture, is never intended to be a carbon copy of what happens in the world of secular education. Christian education has its unique aim and objectives, philosophy, ethics and vision. However, it is not irrelevant to learn from the relevant and successful 'techniques' available and adopted in the secular front. But we must be constantly careful, never to slip away from our firm Orthodox foundations!

It is highly commendable that the Orthodox Syrian Sundayschool Association has taken the bold step to completely revise the whole curriculum, trusting in God, who loves children. Every lesson and every detail is prepared after a pretty long stretch of study, discussion, correction and revisits by a team of people who have the interest and expertise to engage in this exacting and time-consuming exercise. Provisions are made to give proper guidelines and direction to teachers. All this study materials are being prepared in Malayalam and English simultaneously. The regional schools, especially, those outside India, shall adapt these basic materials to suit local situations, linguistic and cultural variances; and aptitudes of children but keeping the broad structure and basics intact.

These revised study materials are dedicated to the Church, with the fervent expectation that all those who love the Church, and our children who are dear to our Lord Jesus Christ, shall certainly welcome this venture.

Devalokom  
20-10-2012

Yakob Mar Irenious Metrapolitan  
*President, OSSAE*

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## Introduction

We are living through a period of rapid changes. The educational sector reflects these changes to a great extent. Secular education is undergoing a lot of revisions and children are greatly influenced by secular education. Therefore Sunday School Curriculum also requires to be revised according to the new learning methods. The comprehensive revision of the curriculum is undertaken in the light of this reality.

We have no notion that just by implementing the secular methodology of learning, we can reform the character of our children. The fundamental principle there should be the teacher-student relationship modelled on the love between Christ and his disciples. The method of presentation followed in this book would help teachers and students alike in the transaction of the topics discussed.

This textbook comes as a product of the strenuous efforts of the Curriculum Revision Committee headed by H.G. Dr. Yakob Mar Irenius, President, OSSAE. The contributions of those who wrote various units are invaluable. This textbook, on its completion, owes much to all members of the curriculum committee, especially H.G. Mar Irenius, President OSSAE and executive editor Sam V. Daniel. Suggestions to improve this book are welcome.

Let me pray for this New Curriculum to inaugurate a new age of Spiritual Enlightenment in Sunday School education. Let me also place on record the gratitude to all those who worked for it. We are highly obliged to Prof. Jose K. Philip for preparing this English edition.

Devalokam  
20-12-2012

Fr. Dr. O. Thomas  
*Director General*

Dear students,

We are undertaking a comprehensive revision of the Sunday School Curriculum. The period of learning from Preschool to Class XII is divided into 5 stages.

1. Bethlahem	Preschool class	Upto Age 5
2. Nazreth	Class I to III	Age 5-7
3. Galilee	Class IV to VII	Age 8-11
4. Jerusalem	Class VIII to X	Age 12-14
5. Thabore	Class XI and XII	Age 15-16

The two year learning programme in the Thabore category is titled 'Orthodox Vedapraveen Diploma'. A Diploma certificate will be issued on successful completion of this course. In the second year lessons topics like learning psychology, teaching methods and Evaluation are included. Hence those who complete this course will also acquire the eligibility to become Sunday School teachers. Therefore, learn this course diligently and with enthusiasm. The lessons included are very useful to you. They are prepared in such a simple manner as to promote self-learning.

The textbook for the first year contains 28 lessons in 7 units. Besides another book titled. 'The Holy Eucharist: A Study' will be the supplementary reader. There will be a unit each in all textbooks of the lower classes devoted to the study of the Holy Eucharist. The supplementary Reader of Class XI is specially designed by incorporating the important ideas that require detailed study. Above all, a simple project is suggested as the practical activity of this class.

A topic related to the first year syllabus (Class XI Syllabus) should be selected for the project. The project report should be submitted to

the headmaster through the class teacher. You can seek the help of teachers, parents and the vicar in this regard.

### Structure of the Project Report

1. Project Title
2. Introduction
3. Significance and relevance of the study
4. Methodology
5. Analysis of Data Collected
6. Findings/Inferences
7. Conclusions
8. Reference

You can select a topic of your choice as the project. For example you may choose the topic 'The exemplary life of St. Vattasseril Mar Dionysius' based on the lesson 'Church Fathers'. Available books and published articles can be collected and read, and interviews with scholars can be conducted for collecting the data. Consolidate the information thus collected and prepare the report. Arrange the consolidated information according to the structure given above. The report should contain at least four pages.

Take care to learn the lessons systematically. Attend Sunday school classes without fail. Attend the worship in the Church and pray regularly.

Above all, you should pray for all Sunday School students and teachers. The service rendered by our Sunday School teachers in imparting spiritual training to the growing generation and confirming them in right faith and right worship is invaluable. Full co-operation of all students and teachers is essential for the successful implementation of the New Curriculum. Since the new system is different to a large extent from the old, teachers should handle the new curriculum and methods of learning carefully and diligently.

Be kind enough to let your valuable suggestions and encouragement known to us. Let there be abundant blessings of the Benevolent God on this righteous endeavour of Sunday school teachers and other authorities for the sake of the Holy Church.

Dr. Sam V. Daniel  
*Executive Editor*



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# Unit 1

## Bible Studies

### Chapter 1

### The Perspective of Orthodox Church regarding The Holy Bible

The Holy Bible is the authoritative text of the Church. It is the source of the faith and rituals of the Church. The Bible has been composed under the inspiration and help of the Holy Spirit. Apostle St. Peter, reveals this truth of composition thus: 'For prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1: 21). St. Paul states 'All scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable...' (2 Timothy 3: 16-17). Word is the medium through which God has revealed His will and work. Therefore the Bible is the word of God. It can be viewed as the message given for the salvation of mankind.

God was making use of certain individuals to write this message completely and without errors. He gave them inspiration and light. They were not merely mechanical tools for scribbling. Like any other writer, they too were subject to the influence of spatial and temporal conditions in which they lived. They got the gift to present God's message without errors or oversight while retaining their cultural, social and literal peculiarities. Thus the message of God got documented in the words of man. The Holy Bible is error free in the facts connected with God and human salvation.

The Bible is not a text of science. We can't find knowledge of physical sciences in it. However, the Bible contains no facts contrary to scientific knowledge. It presents the history of salvation and suggests the path of salvation.

## Orthodox Church and the Protestant Bible

The Protestant Bible contains only 39 books in the Old Testament. But there are forty six books in the Old Testament recognized by the Orthodox Church. How can we account for this difference? In the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC there were a number of Jewish migrants living in Egypt. The second generation of these migrants knew only the local Greek language. The Greek translation of the Bible was done in Alexandria for their use.

This happened at the end of 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC. The translation was done by a team of 72 scholars and hence it came to be known as Septuagint (LXX).

This translation contained seven additional books when compared with the Bible used in Palestine. The reason for this difference is that the Biblical canon was not established at that time. Since Hebrew had become a mother tongue and Greek was the universal language, even the Jewish community recognised the Septuagint. The early Christian Church followed that tradition and used only the Septuagint. St Paul and others used to quote from this Greek translation and not from the Hebrew Bible.

The Rabis of Judaism convened a council at Jamnia to prevent the growth and progress of the Christian church. One of the decisions of this council was to reject the Bible used by the Christian community. Instead they approved of only 39 books used in Palestine as canonical books of the Old Testament. Then the Christian church called these additional book in the Septuagint as 'Deutro canonical' books. These books are Tobit, Judith, Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus, Baruch and I and II of Macabees. (Besides, the appendices to the books of Esther and Daniel belong to this category)

The Septuagint Bible and its translations were used in the Christian church till Protestant reformation. The Protestant scholars decided that only 39 books of the Hebrew canon would constitute the Old Testament. That is why all Catholic and Orthodox churches other than the Reformist churches accept the Old Testament containing 46 books.

The Peshitta translation used in the Syrian Church is based on Septuagint. Hence it has 46 books. The Malayalam translation of Peshitta Bible is done by Fr. Kurian Kaniampambil.

### The Book written 'by the Church, for the Church'

We have seen above that the Holy Book is the word of God and it was written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. But we should also know the role of the

church in constituting and consolidating it. The Old Testament evolved in the background of Jewish worship. Similarly the New Testament evolved in the background of worship of the Christian church. The books are consolidated in such a way that they can be used in worship and utilized in its teachings.

Several other books and writings existed in those days. It was the Church that decided which of them should be included in the Holy Book. We can say that the Holy Spirit led the church in the consolidation of the Holy Bible. Hence we can say that the Holy Book was consolidated in the church, by the church, for the church. It is this Book that helps in defining and controlling the creed, and shaping the rituals of the church. Hence we should view and evaluate the Holy Book only in the light of our relationship with the church.

St Augustine declared: 'I would not believe in the Gospel were it not for the authority of the church. The church is to teach, the Bible is to prove.' St. Paul confirms that 'the house of God is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth' ( 1 Timothy 3:15). This statement clarifies the position and importance of the church.

It is dangerous to attempt an independent interpretation of the Bible separating it from our relationship with the church. That is how many new generation churches have come into being. When each attempts to interpret the Bible on his own, wrong inferences and thoughts may come up. Hence the study of the Bible should be taken up only in the light of our relationship with the church and the teachings of Church Fathers.

Orthodox church doesn't share the protestant view that the Holy Bible is the only source of authority of all doctrines, rituals and practices of the church. The Holy Book is an important and authoritative resource. Along with it, the teachings of Holy Fathers of the Church and the decisions of Holy Synods are also considered. It is important to know how the Church Fathers understood and approved the Biblical truths. We need to know how the preceding generations understood and accepted the Holy Book which was written two thousand years ago.

### Conclusion

1. We recognise the Holy Bible as the authoritative text of the church.
2. We should include the teachings of Church Fathers and canons of Synods in Biblical studies.
3. The Syrian Bible (Peshitta) recognised by us differs from the Protestant Bible in the number of books in the Old Testament.

4. We do not believe in sole scripture or the belief that the Holy Bible is the only basis of all doctrines of the church

#### Activities

1. What is the reason for difference in the number of books in the Protestant Bible and the Bible recognized by the Orthodox church?
2. The Holy Bible should be interpreted only in the light of our relationship with the church. Explain.
3. Prepare an essay on the topic: 'The features of the Holy Bible in the Orthodox perspective.'

## Chapter 2

# The Relationship between the Old and the new Testaments

Some people say that they don't read the Old Testament and they would read only the New Testament. The explanations given by them are:

1. The Old Testament is the Holy Book of the Jews. It consists of laws and the practice of laws. They are not relevant to those who believe in Christ.
2. The dominant emotions reflected in the Old Testament are those of revenge, violence and punishment. They are contrary to the spirit of the Gospels.

There might be several people who hold this view. Therefore it is very important for us to understand the relation between the Old Testament and the New Testament. St. Augustine's statement regarding this is very relevant and meaningful. 'The New Testament is concealed in the Old the Old is revealed in the New'. It is a clear statement of the relation between the Old and the New Testaments. The knowledge of the Old Testament is inevitable in any proper study of the New. The events and teachings of the Old Testament are fulfilled in the New Testament.

We do not forget that there are differences between the Old and the New Testaments in many aspects. But what attracts us is the congruity and unity between both.

1. Both of them speak about the same God. It is the same God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob who speaks through Christ in the New Testament.

The God who worked out salvation through Jesus Christ is the same God who liberated Israel from Egypt and brought them to Canaan and who spoke through His prophets. The same God who did the Act of Creation operated through Jesus Christ also. 'For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.' (2 Corinthians 4:6). God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets has in these last days spoken to us by His Son. (Hebrews 1:1).

2. Both the parts speak about the chosen people. The Old Testament speaks about Israel, the chosen people of God-their origins, history, victories and defeats and their ultimate goal. They are delegated to fulfil the mission of God.

In the same way, the Christian church is the people chosen by God in the New Testament. This is the New Israel. It is the continuation and fulfilment of the Old Israel. The new society centred on Jesus Christ has become God's chosen people and a holy generation. (Exodus 19:6; 1 Peter 2:9). They are designated to continue the salvific act of God.

3. The incidents in the Old Testament are examples, models and prototypes of those in the New. Numerous incidents in the life of Jesus Christ and in the experience of Christian Church find their prototypes and signs in the Old Testament. The writers of gospels point out that the return of child Jesus from Egypt, His forty days fast in the desert and His subsequent temptations had been suggested in the experience of Israel. Similarly several experiences of the church are also foretold in the Old Testament (*See* 1 Corinthians 10: 1-13)
4. Numerous prophecies and psalms of the Old Testament are fulfilled in the New. All authors of the New Testament uphold this view. The Gospel of St. Matthew uses quotations from the Old Testament throughout, to explain each incident in the life of Jesus Christ as a fulfillment of ancient prophecy. In other gospels also we find many references to the Old Testament, though not as profusely as in St. Matthew.

St. Paul was a scholar of the Old Testament. He uses quotations and references from the Old Testament in his epistles, in order to clarify his ideas. Eg. St. Paul proves that the theory of 'righteousness of the faith' was not his new teaching but was revealed in the life of Abraham in the Old Testament. He quotes Genesis 15:6 to prove his point (Romans 4:22).

The authors of the New Testament used quotations from the Old Testament not to prove their Old Testament Scholarship. Instead they wanted to prove that the Christian church was not a movement out of the blue, and that was formed as result of long preparation and a well thought out and dependant project of God. The Old Testament expectations and desires bore flower and fruit through the life of Jesus Christ and His work in the New Testament.

How should we understand St Paul's statement that "We are not under law but under grace" (Romans 6:15). Does it mean that the law of Moses is not relevant to Christians? Laws and doctrines make up a significant portion of the Old Testament. If they are not relevant to us, how can the Old Testament become acceptable to us? This issue is profound and deep and can be summarised as follows.



1. Old Testament laws related to rituals and practices are not relevant to us as such. Eg. The categorisation of animals and fishes into pure and impure and hence edible and non-edible as per the law of Moses is not relevant to us. Some notions of purity are not acceptable to us. Eg. Christian faith doesn't share the belief that touching a corpse or a leper makes us impure. (Numbers 5:2) The commandment that we should observe the Sabbath (on the seventh day) is not applicable to us. Instead we observe Sunday, the day of Resurrection and the first day of the week. Sabbath has become irrelevant to us.
2. St. Paul states that we cannot accept that God's kingdom can be attained by observing laws and principles. We can't believe that God's kingdom (salvation) is attained through human efforts. In this regard we say that we are not under the law. It is impossible for the sinful man to attain the perfection defined in the laws however he tries. God realized this limitation and send His own Son to wash off our sins. When we recognize ( in faith) that Christ has saved us from our sins, we become acceptable before God. The basis of this acceptance is grace. Hence we live not under the law but under grace. We lead a moral life because God has given us the status of His children and brought us into the experience of salvation. The moral and ethical laws we got from Moses and other prophets are relevant to us. However laws connected with rituals and practices became irrelevant through Christ.

When we consider the inseparable relationship between the Old Testament and the New Testament, the tendency to neglect the Old Testament cannot be justified. We should view the New Testament as a fulfilment of the Old and should preserve the right relationship between both. We should view one as shadow and the other as essence.

#### Activities

1. Prepare a list of at least ten Old Testament quotations used in the Gospel of St. Matthew.
2. How was St. Paul's concept of 'righteousness of faith' revealed in the life of Father Abraham?
3. Find out the Old Testament practices that are irrelevant to us today.
4. Explain the similarities and differences between the Old and the New Testaments.

## Chapter 3

# The Gospels and the Epistles of St Paul

The word 'gospel' is a translation of the Greek word 'euangelion' which means good news. It contains the good news for the whole of mankind. The gospels are centred on Jesus Christ who acted in history (Romans 1: 1-2, 2 Timothy 2:8). The gospels reveal who Jesus Christ was and what his preachings and activities were, in the light of the New Experience received through Him.

At first the gospels spread orally. No one tried to record them. The aim of the apostles and the evangelists was to propagate them not in writing, but through speech and preaching. As they expected the second coming of Christ in near future, they didn't feel the need to record them for future generations. The eyewitnesses to the words and works of Christ delivered those facts faithfully to others. (1 John 1:1-2, Acts 2:42, Luke 1:2)

### The circumstances of writing the gospels

The period of Apostles who were eyewitness passed off quickly. As opportunities to listen directly from them decreased, people felt the need to record their words. Moreover, as the Church grew and expanded the Apostles and their colleagues found it impossible to reach everywhere. Moreover there was a feeling that the second coming of Christ might not be as imminent as they had expected earlier. All these factors prompted the recording of gospels. The preachings and works of Jesus Christ were written as either memoirs of the apostles, or creed of faith of the community or as handbooks of spiritual instruction. All the four gospels came into currency by the end of the first century.

### Are there four gospels?

It is in fact wrong to describe the gospels as four in number. There is only one gospel and it pertains to Christ, the Son of God. What we find in the four gospels is four perspectives or four different presentations. They developed from traditions

that were handed down according to differences in time and place. The live traditions of the Church forms the background of the gospels. Each writer consolidates and presents the traditional facts after understanding his needs and conditions and by adding his own evaluation and analysis. The statement 'Gospel of Jesus Christ, according to St. Matthew or St. Mark or St. Luke or St. John' given in the English version of Gospels reveals this fact.

### The differences between the Gospels

Eventhough the four gospels contain the teachings and works of Jesus Christ, we find many differences among them. The first three gospels are quite similar. But they are totally different from the Gospel of St. John. Because of the close similarity among the first three gospels (St. Matthew, St. Mark and St. Luke) they are described as Synoptic Gospels or 'Gospels of the same perspective'. The important differences between them and the gospel of St. John are given below.

#### 1. The public ministry of Jesus

The Synoptic Gospels or 'gospels of the same perspective' record the span of ministry as about one year. But the descriptions in the gospel of St. John span over three years. St. John describes Jesus as participating in three Pass Overs (St. John 2:13, 6:4 and 12:1). According to him, Jesus visits Jerusalem several times.

#### 2. Difference in the style of preaching

The Synoptic Gospels have numerous real life parables. In St. John's gospel we don't have any parables but only long and complicated speeches. The themes are also different. When the Synoptic Gospels emphasize the Kingdom of God, St. John's gospel reveals who Jesus Christ is and His relationship with God the Father.

#### 3. Miracles and signs

Synoptic Gospels are full of miracles and heroic acts. St. John selects only seven of them and describes them as signs. He reveals the truths of Christ's Person through them. We do not find any exorcisms in St. John.

### Epistles of St. Paul

The epistles of St. Paul occupy almost one fourth of the New Testament. They are next in importance to the gospels. We come to know about St. Paul's personality and theological insights through these epistles.

There are certain general observations to be made regarding the epistles of St.Paul.

1. All epistles are not available to us. We have to think that some of them are lost to us.

For example, in the first epistle to the Corinthians there is a reference to another letter which he had send them earlier. (1 Corinth 5:9). Similarly in 2 Corinth 2:4 it is said that he had written out of much affliction and mental anguish. The reference here is definitely not to the first epistle. Scholars point out that chapters 10 to 13 of 2 Corinthians may be this letter or a part of it.

In Colossians 4:16, there is a reference to an epistle send to Church of the Laodiceans. This epistle also is not available to us.

2. Many epistles are considered to have undergone editing later. It is evident that 2 Corinthians have undergone such editing . The section from 2 Corinthians 6:14 to 7:1 is quite unrelated to the parts before and after it. At the same time there is continuity of ideas if we read 7:2 after 6:13. Similarly, Chapters 8 and 9 of 2 Corinthians give the impression of being compiled from different sources. Repetition of ideas and lack of coherence in presentation are evident in them.
3. Each of these epistles is written in a specific context. They are not products of inspiration and creativity. Moreover they are not written as spiritual texts for all people to read. They are meant to provide guidelines to churches in various places in the light of their specific needs and problems.

The epistles of St.Paul are responses to the problems that arose in each church. Hence if we want to understand the contents of the epistles correctly we should learn about the problems faced by each church and their contexts. However we have only the epistles of the apostle to rely upon in this regard. We can understand the context by reading between the lines of these epistles. Then we can learn about the manner in which the apostle gives directions.

The problems of different churches were different and the apostle wrote his epistles accordingly. If he could pay a personal visit to this church community, there would have been no need for the epistles. The opinion that, had there been telephones in those days, there would have been no need for these epistles is meaningful. The impossibility of direct contact had necessitated the sending of the epistles.

If these epistles are written as solutions to the problems of specific local churches, how do they assume universal significance. Two things can be pointed out. Firstly the problems of those days reappear in one form or other these days also and hence the message of the apostle is relevant even today. Secondly these epistles

didn't originate from more superficial thinking or intellect. They are inspired by the Holy Spirit and hence have spiritual message and relevance. They are relevant to all people in all places and all times. Even though they were meant only for temporary circumstances they contain eternal spiritual truths.

4. The apostle also follows the model of the epistles that existed in ancient days. But he makes certain modifications according to his genius. We have also got some ancient writings which help us to understand the model of the epistles prevalent among the Greeks and the Romans. The apostle's writing also follow this model.

The epistles were sent through faithful messengers. They would read them in the respective church and give necessary clarifications. See Ephesians 6:21-22 and Colossians 4:7-8

#### Activities

1. Find out the differences between Synoptic Gospels and Gospel of St. John.
2. Pick out evidences to prove that we haven't got all epistles of St. Paul.
3. Read the epistle to the Corinthians and find out the problems in their church.
4. The epistles of St. Paul are written in the light of the specific needs and problems that existed in various places. Bring out how they have got a universal significance.

## Chapter 4

# The importance of Holy Bible in Orthodox worship

The fundamental mission of the Church is worship of God. The spiritual enlightenment received through worship empowers the Church's witness. There is an inseparable relationship between worship and the Holy Scriptures. The Old Testament originated in the background of the worship of Jewish community. Similarly the New Testament originated from the worship of the Christian Church. The truths revealed through the scriptures inspire the various components of worship.

Orthodox Church, which is a very old church accords a very important position to the Holy Bible. We can understand this when we examine the liturgical structure and liturgical organisation of the church. Every believer who enters the church for worship finds the Holy Book kept specially encased on a table in the Alb (choir). All believers disperse after kissing this Holy Book at the end of worship in the church. This is done not only to show respect to the word of God, but also to commemorate the scriptures as lamp to their feet and light to their path.

In the Madbaha (Holy of Holies) we find a decorated altar and another decorated lectern. The Holy Bible is kept on that lectern. Whenever incense is burned before the altar which is the Throne of God, it is also burned before the lectern for Holy Book. The former contains the Incarnated Word whereas the latter contains the Word of God. In all processions in the liturgy a cross will be carried at the front followed by the Holy Book This proclaims that the Word of God is the guiding light of the faithful.

The Holy Eucharist is the most important form of Orthodox worship. Observance of the Eucharist is mandatory on all Sundays and Mora Naya festivals. The Holy Eucharist is the fulfilment of all other sacraments. All other sacraments are administered along with the Holy Eucharist. Thus the Holy Eucharist has Supreme importance and reading the Word of God in it is given a prominent position. The Holy Eucharist can mainly be divided into two parts. The first part is from the

beginning of Public worship till recital of the Creed of the Church. Till then the priest will not step on the elevated position (step) just in front of the altar and prays by standing just below it. The second part is called Anaphora. Then onwards the priest mounts on the step and prays. The first part of the Holy Eucharist has two names. It is called (1) Ministry of the Word and (2) liturgy of the catechumens. It is called Ministry of the Word because it contains specified readings from the scriptures and the preaching based on them. The second name originated from catechumens (or people learning faith to receive baptism) of the early church. They were permitted to attend only the first part of the liturgy and had to disperse after it. The second part (Anaphora) is exclusively for the baptized believers.

The first part of Ministry of the word is modelled on the worship in the synagogue. There, readings from the scriptures and the books of prophets and singing of psalms are followed by preaching. In the Holy Eucharist we read both the Old Testament and the New Testament. Now a days, readings from the Old Testament are done at the end of the prayers preceding the Holy Eucharist. Earlier it was not so. The scriptures include both New and Old Testaments. Now a days we have three readings from the Bible. The third reading is from the gospels which are the roof and crown of all scriptures. The gospels are carried in a procession to be read. The Holy Book is raised, incense is burned before it and is carried forward in a procession accompanied by lighted candles on both sides. In other Orthodox Churches this procession is a spectacular one. Now a days it is the priest himself who carries the Holy Book westward. Before reading the gospels, the priest speaks about the glory of the gospels through the following introductory words: 'It is the living Word of God which gives life and Salvation to the World.'

In the liturgical structure, preaching should follow the readings from the gospels. Earlier it had been done in this manner. But now a days preaching has been shifted to the time of '*Kukiliyon*' and it cannot be liturgically justified. The readings from the Bible have been selected to aid the believers in their meditation and studies. For this, one year of worship is divided into various periods and passages related to Incarnation and ministry of Jesus Christ, His Second Coming and Final Judgement are apportioned suitably.

Readings from the Holy Bible, especially those from the gospels and epistles of St. Paul, are an inseparable ingredient of other sacraments like Baptism, Marriage and Ordination as well. They are included in the Books of Services. Readings from the Old Testament are also included in the funeral services (However they are not read these days). On special occasions like Yeldo (Christmas), 'Danaha', Palm Sunday, Good Friday and Day of the Pentecost there are special Church services meant to drive in their respective significance and blessings. In all those services relevant and

suitable passages from both Old and New Testaments are read out. It is evident that the Church Fathers who compiled these services were good scholars of the Bible.

When we examine the Daily prayers and prayers of the Passion Week commemorating the tribulations of Jesus Christ, we will become convinced that Biblical truths are either mentioned or quoted in them. The '*Prumiyons*' and '*Sedras*' used in the prayers of the Passion Week are full of prophetic statements from the Old Testament.

The biblical enrichment of the Orthodox liturgy and sacraments deeply impress the believers when they participate meaningfully in them. Moreover in the Family prayers, the canonical prayers are said after reading the Holy Bible. This practice teaches the youngsters that meditation of the Word of God is part of Worship.

In some dioceses, the prayer meetings held within the parish are known as 'Readings'. We should understand how this name originated. The believers would assemble in various homes for readings from the Holy Bible. Such prayer meetings have systematic readings from the Old Testament and the New Testament.

Let us end this chapter with the authoritative statement given by St. Paul regarding the scriptures. 'All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.

That the man of God may be complete thoroughly equipped for every good work." (2 Timothy 3:16, 17)

#### Activities

1. What is meant by Incarnated Word?
2. Prove that preaching has an important role in the Holy Eucharist.
3. When does the 'Anaphora' section of the Holy Eucharist begin?
4. Prepare a project report on 'The importance of Holy Bible in Orthodox Worship.'



**Unit 2**

**Orthodox Worship**

**Chapter 1**

**Spirituality**

**An Orthodox Perspective**

Spirituality is not an added phenomenon to human nature rather it is an essential part, or the crux of it. That is the reason why manifestations of spirituality are plenty in human nature and behaviour. Human being is not only a physical body; but is a compact whole containing body, mind and spirit. Since man is created by God and was found good, spirituality comes natural to humans. It is the rule and influence of the Holy Spirit that the physical body and the unseen mind are governed by the spirit.

Humans are created in the image and likeness of God, so says the Bible, which means there are areas of similarity between God and the created man. Man has the native capacity and potential to love, forgive, serve, and make sacrifices like God. The 'Fall' of man, when he disobeyed God and assumed that he could exist by himself without depending on anyone outside himself, including God, effected an enormous transformation on him. After the Fall, he is condemned to die and disappear into 'the absence of God.' The genre of man's life is from God; and it is self deception to assume that man became like what he is either by his own will or by some physical or scientific phenomena.

Spirituality is at the heart of every great religion. Ancient religions like Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism all share in this. There seem to have a complementarity of religion in the basic idea of the fundamental spirituality of human beings.

Spirituality in the Orthodox faith and tradition is a state in which there is a constant attempt on the part of man to free himself from the shackles of materialism and sin and regain the blessed state of being the image and likeness of God in its fulness.

Strictly speaking, spirituality deals with the operations of the Holy Spirit in us. Spiritual progress is not measured by man's constant effort alone. Ultimately it is the grace of God that makes us to 'will' towards purity and perfection. Thus it is not wrong to assume that spiritual progress is a gift of God, but at the same time, it demands to constant and sincere preparation and effort on our part to climb up the ladder that elevates us step by step in to heights of spirituality, where we are transformed and translated into the holiness and perfection of the Lord.

We find some very strong examples and images in the Bible which speaks a lot about spiritual upliftment of humans. Genesis accounts give us the story of Jacob, son of Issac, who is shown a ladder that reaches up to heaven, in a dream. The image of the 'ladder of ascent' is a powerful image, simply because Jacob is at the bottom of the ladder, and he finds God standing at the top of the ladder and talking to him endearingly. Gospel accounts record a teaching of Lord Jesus that if anyone wants to follow Him, he must deny himself, take up his cross daily and follow Him. Actually it was for the 'following', ie. to follow faithfully the footsteps of the Lord, that He 'called' his disciples. St. Paul claims that he was taken upto the heights of heaven in a trance (2 Cor. 12-2-3).

Another significant factor is the emphasis on 'transformation.' On Mount Tabor, on top of which Jesus was Transfigured, teaches that the ultimate destiny for us is not just to have a 'darsan' of the glory of God; but to get transformed in ourselves and share in his nature and glory. Moses went up mount Zion as commanded by God. As he was descending the mountain, his face shone brightly that Israelites could not look at his face. Spirituality talks about the transformation of the individual through continuous dissociation with sin and evil and attempt at association with God and His grace.

It is wrong to assume that only a select few-the saints—who can advance in spirituality. In fact, every human being is called to their unceasing process of transformation and spiritual ascent. However it is not achieved in a day; there is the demand for strenuous preparation, humility, self sacrifice and unconditional love for all.

The Desert 'Father' and 'Mothers, who present before us eternal models of spiritual transformation, exhort us to completely obey and put into practice the twin commandments of 'love of God' and 'love of man'. They bear witness to the fact that spiritual transformation and progress calls for enormous and continuous struggle, in which one needs to be steadfast and longsuffering. Yet it must never for a moment forgotten that spiritual ascent and growth is not achieved without the flowering of the grace of God in us.

The monks of the Desert tradition adopted 'flight from the world' as a primary condition for their spiritual warfare and progress. The cardinal principle was that attachment to the 'world' and 'flesh' were the real impediments to spiritual advancement. The two words, 'world' and 'flesh' signified for them passions and tendencies in humans which work against the dominance of all things which are Godly and rights. They practiced 'renunciation' of the world, not just for individual salvation, but to defeat the Devil, the enemy of all good things, who tempt human beings renounce God and the goods. They always warn that the ways of the demons are subtle and stealthily accomplished.

The two genuine models for Orthodox spirituality are the martyrs and the monasteries of old. They provide perennial examples as to how to struggle against the forces of evil, which always attempt to defeat us in the subtler manner possible. Sometimes they appear like angels of light. The enemy had dared to tempt even Jesus when he was hungry, after the forty days fast in the wilderness. So one needs to be constantly vigilant to identify and defend against the designs of demons.

Fighting the demons is only one part of the schedule of spiritual growth. Humility was the cardinal virtue which they valued. At the same time they spared no toil, in nurturing and developing virtues in them. The life, and teachings of these spiritual stalwarts inspire us to raise and answer issues like • What is the goal of spiritual life

- What are the means to reach the goal
- What factors help us to reach the god
- What factors hinder spiritual development
- How to measure spiritual growth
- What are the fruits of the spirit?

Anyone who would wish to take to the path of spirituality and spiritual progress may have to ponder on these questions and seek for answers in themselves.

As pointed out earlier, it is the conviction of the Orthodox, that the way of spirituality is open to all, and not just to a chosen few. Unless there is spiritual progress, Christian life runs dry, and slowly opens the door for the enemy to enter and work. The Western view of spirituality says that the ultimate destiny of the spiritual person is 'vision' beautiful or the vision of God.

However the Eastern Orthodox Churches hold a different view. They affirm that spiritual progress is an 'unending growth.' The idea is that the spiritual person is not satiated, at any point in his life, about the progress he has attained. He always, moves forward with further spiritual exercises with a kind of 'divine discontent.' St. Gregory of Nyssa is the great exponent of this idea. While the unending process

of transformation and transfiguration is reckoned as the destiny of the person, the path to this goal is identified as 'asceticism' or life of spiritual discipline. 'Flight' from the world of passions, silence, fasting, vigils, spiritual reading, manual work, meditation, self sacrifice are considered as the means or 'spiritual exercises' to reach the goal of spirituality. These exercises are to be constantly resorted to by the seeker. The exhortation of St. Paul 'Pray without ceasing' (1 Thess 5:17) was taken seriously by the Eastern Orthodox monks, mystics and spiritualists. One way to realize their goal, according to them, was to repeat the 'Jesus Prayer' or 'Prayer of the heart' constantly at heart. This was to be done linking the one sentence prayer to breathing and every heart beat. This is the prayer.

"Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner." This became a kind of 'mantra' for the Eastern monks and mystics.

The ultimate aim of spiritual progress, in the Eastern Orthodox view is described as "Theosis" or "Divinization". This goal certainly contains the essential idea of transformation of individuals and communities and the grace granted to humans in partaking in the 'nature of God.' We are created in the "image and likeness" of God, and God has blessed us with the will and wisdom to freely choose the good and be on the road to being like God. This exactly is the route leading to 'Theosis' or 'Divinization.' We need to discern that the Orthodox concept of 'Theosis' transcends the idea of 'imitation' and 'vision of God' stipulated by Western Churches, as the goal of spirituality.

In fact we are created as spiritual beings, and as St. Augustine said we never find real rest until we rest in God. Speaking in practical terms, we as Orthodox Christians, fasting, vigil, reading and meditating on the scriptures and serve the poor and needy. Although these are "obligatory" on our part, it is the benign grace of God that transforms us steadily from the level of worldliness to the blessed state of Theosis. However much we practice 'self-disciplining' we never qualify for God's grace. But God is loving, kind and gracious enough to grant us the opportunity to regain 'the image and likeness' of God.

The soul of the 'process of unending growth' prescribed for spiritual growth, is always anchored on the substance of all commandments—of loving God and man. Just as Upanishads present the sum and substance of the Vedas, the twin commandments' contain the soul of all spiritual endeavours.



## Chapter 2

# Features of Orthodox Worship

The word 'Orthodox' means 'right faith' or 'right worship'. In early periods this word was translated as 'having corrected faith.' The oriental churches assumed the name Orthodox in the sense that they follow right faith and right worship in contrast to the heretics. The perception of Orthodox Fathers is that right faith is the basis of right worship or in other words, right faith gets expressed through right worship. Therefore there are several features that distinguish Orthodox worship from the worship of other churches. Marthoma Church which splitted away from Orthodox Church in the last period of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century and Malankara rite (part of Roman Catholic Church) Church which splitted away in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century basically follow the Orthodox liturgy.

Worship is an enlivening experience in which the Heaven and the earth merge. The entire creation is raised in Spirit towards the Creator and the heavenly experiences through worship. Simultaneously God in Heaven establishes His tabernacle on earth with man and other mundane objects, dwells in it and communes with man. "Behold the tabernacle of God, is with men." This statement in the Book of Revelation is quite meaningful with regard to Orthodox worship. (Revelation 21:3)

### Local language

One feature of Orthodox worship is the active participation of people. The Orthodox churches use local language for worship in order to ensure this participation. During the time of the apostles, the language used in Palestine was Aramaic. Eventhough the worship in towns like Jerusalem and Antioch were in Greek, the prayers were translated into Aramaic for the benefit of people coming from rural areas. Eventhough Greek was the liturgical language of Antioch in the early period, it was later replaced by Syriac as the importance of Greek dwindled. Malankara which accepted the Antiochian liturgy used Syriac during the early period. However all these services were later translated into Malayalam. As the Church

spread to other states, all services including the Holy Eucharist are getting translated into other languages. The translation of Holy Eucharist into Tamil, Kannada, Konkani, Hindi, English, German have taken place during the later half of the preceding century. Yet, as Syrian Christians we retain certain Syriac words in our liturgy even today.

### Participation of the laity

The tradition of Orthodox Church insists that if the Holy Mass is to be said there should be at least the deacon and one layman representing the faithful, present in the church. Throughout the liturgy, there are arrangements for all those who participate in Public Worship, to worship God using all the five senses. Our liturgy provides opportunities to see (the decorations of Madbaha (Holy of Holies) and vestments), hear (music), smell (incence), touch (exchange of peace) and taste (Holy Communion). With the advent of the choir, the believers are sometimes relegated to the position of mere spectators in modern times. This is a wrong trend. The aim of choir should be only to lead the believers in worship. More number of melodious prayers are included in the worship in order to ensure the collective participation of the believers. But in order to understand the meaning of the songs used in worship, the people and the priests who lead them should act in tandem. Only then will a heart rending worship become possible.

### Worship is not individual centered

The community rather than the individual is more important in Orthodox worship. The Church worships God as one community. We have modelled our prayers on Lord Father in heaven. 'Usages like I, my and mine are very rare in Orthodox worship. However Orthodox worship may seem distasteful for communities which like to pray, 'Give me my daily bread' instead of 'Give us our daily bread'. Only such selfish people can leave this 'right worship' and migrate to other fellowships.

### Instruction of faith through worship

Orthodox fathers perceive worship as the most important medium of instructing the right faith. This is because theology is something that should not be learned through intellectual and logics thinking. Faith should be learned through worship with the help of Holy Spirit. We can understand that 'Sedra', 'Prumeyon' and songs contain studies in faith. The song 'The tree that bore the wonderful fruit' is a fine example. How sharply does this song react against those heretics who spoke against

St. Mary! The 'Sedras' used in Services on the Pentecost are in depth studies and expressions of our faith in the Holy Trinity.

### Rich in biblical passages

We have seen earlier that Orthodox liturgy is rich in biblical passages. (Unit 1 Chap. 4). We will understand this only if we part take in worship with diligence and concentration. Just like in learning faith, the church has grounded meditation of the Holy Bible also, on the liturgy. Readings from Old and New Testaments and from the Gospels are part of our liturgy. Plenty of psalms are included in each hourly prayer. Besides biblical passages are included in several songs and prayers. The prayer cycle called 'Kukiliyon' which is very important in Orthodox liturgy always begins with the singing of a psalm. Those who attend the worship meditatively will undoubtedly be surprised at the biblical scholarship of our Church Fathers.

### Intercessory Prayers

Just as we don't focus on personal and selfish needs in our prayer, another aspect in which we take special care is in praying for others. There are two types of intercessory prayers in our liturgy-we pray for others, we seek refuge in the intercession of Saints. Our liturgy has plenty of prayers for the living as well as the departed. The intercessory prayers known as 'Thubden' are examples. The songs known as 'Hymns of Eucharistic Devotion' are also intercessory prayers. Here we seek refuge in the intercession of St. Mary and other saints and remember them and the departed as well in God. One prayer in the preparatory prayers for the Holy Eucharist is notable. 'By virtue of this Eucharist of Thanksgiving placed before us, we verily remember Adam, Our Father, Eve, our mother, St. Mary, Mother of God, prophets and apostles'

The incorrect school of thought that prayer is seeking favours from God for personal needs existed since ancient times. Orthodox liturgy is a correction of this notion altogether.

### Prayer to the Holy Spirit

Prayer to the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Giver of Life to all is an important component of Orthodox liturgy. Orthodox theology states that the Holy Spirit is the Giver of Life to everything and the one who fulfils everything. That is why prayers to the Holy Spirit are given so much importance.

In sacraments like Holy Eucharist, Baptism, Ordination and Consecration of the Mooron there are special prayers invoking the Holy Spirit. (Kroithode Rooho).



In all such occasions the deacon would proclaim the importance of the occasion to the people. (My Beloved, the living Holy Spirit condescends from the heights of Heaven above and broods...) The duty of we believers on such occasions is to pray for the advent of the Holy Spirit in us in order to guide us, just as He had condescended on the Sacrament.

### Use of the Icons

Orthodox church decorates the places of worship with pictures of Saints to suggest that Saints and Departed believers are with us in worship. Icons which reveal theological truths are more meaningful than mere pictures. It is in the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries that icons gained an important place in Orthodox worship. Icon drawing requires the total disciplining of fasting and prayers and hence most of the iconographers are monks. Icons are drawn by controlling artistic techniques through indepth mental and spiritual disciplining. The Church has accorded the same importance of the Word of God to the icons. Some of our churches and 'Dayaras' (monasteries) give much importance to icons. However icons have not gained currency in the Church. In many places ordinary pictures are used instead.

### Worship that provides an Ecological consciousness

There are plenty of songs, 'Sedras' and portions from psalms in Orthodox worship which help in providing ecological consciousness to people. Today, all churches discuss about the environment and take steps for environmental conservation. But our church fathers had, right from the beginning, tried to develop an ecological aptitude through the atmosphere of the liturgy itself. We can see references to earth, sky, air, water, trees and plants etc. at several places in our liturgy. For example look at the song 'There rose light in darkness to the righteous...' given in the morning prayer.

### Importance of music in Orthodox worship

Our liturgy was originally composed in Syriac. Before the relationship with Antioch, the liturgy was in Chaldean Syriac. The Syriac language is generally musical. Orthodox liturgy reflects this feature of the language. As there are a lot of poetical passages included, the parttakers enjoy greater participation and pleasure. Moreover it pacifies the hearts of the listeners. Many Syriac musical notes are timeless. Songs composed in Syriac musical notes make our worship different from other types of Christian worship. Most of the songs used in our worship can be sung in eight different notes. Our Fathers have made this arrangement to avoid the monotony of



listening to the same musical note everyday. The book containing the basic principles of this musical arrangement is called 'Eckhara'. The word Eckhara means 'basis'.

#### Activities

1. Find out the psalms in the 'Kukiliyons' used in the Holy Eucharist.
2. Compare the song 'Give Good word Oh mind...' sung in the sacrament of blessing the rings, with verses 1-3 of Psalms 45.
3. Discuss the lacunas in our worship habits that need to be rectified.
4. State the importance of intercessory prayer in Orthodox liturgy.
5. Find out prayers to the Holy Spirit used in the Holy Eucharist.

#### For Further reading

1. In Spirit and Truth—Fr. Dr. B. Varghese
2. Light of Freedom—Dr. Paulose Mar Gregorios
3. Holy Eucharist: A Meditative study—Bishop H. Pecken Ham Walsh
4. A Meditative study of Holy Eucharist—H.G. Mathews Mar Barnabas

## Chapter 3

# Orthodox Liturgy

Worship was in existence since the beginning of mankind. Sacrifice, which is the epitome of worship, also existed since the beginnings. However there weren't well organised liturgies in the beginning. Worship was conducted in the manner suggested by tribal heads. But by the time of Moses, special priestly class and definite forms of worship emerged according to God's commandments. During Solomon's period God's temple and spectacular systems of worship developed. It is quite natural that practices of Jewish worship influenced Christian worship when Christian church originated. Liturgies, in their infancy, took shape in Jerusalem, which was the mother of all Christian churches. As the church spread across the world, Church life and liturgy developed, assimilating the culture and traditions of the respective places.

### Liturgy of Malankara Church

There are no proofs regarding the liturgy that existed in Malankara before the advent of the Portugese. It is a historical truth that all the liturgical books of the native Church were destroyed in connection with the Synod of Udayamperor. After the Oath of Koonan Cross, members of Malankara Church who stood away from the Portugese independently, sought ecclesiastical help from various foreign churches. Finally they established relationship with Church of Antioch and Western Syrian liturgy became widespread in Malankara. Today most part of this liturgy have got translated into Malayalam. Yet the form and content of our liturgy is the same as that of Western Syrian liturgy. Hence certain technical words of Syriac are still retained in our Holy Eucharist.

In Orthodox liturgy, the Holy Eucharist is the epitome of worship. However, the believers are compulsorily obliged to say Hourly prayers at the designated Hours of the day.

### Prayers of Canonical Hours

Eventhough prayers can be said at any time, it is mandatory for an Orthodox believer to say prayers seven times (at seven specified hours) a day. The church has

permitted the believers to say prayers of these seven canonical Hours at two times a day. In the oriental tradition, a day begins with vespers. The seven Canonical hours are Evening, Late Evening, Midnight, Morning, Third watch, Sixth watch (Noon) and Ninth watch. The church has permitted to conduct the prayers of Ninth watch, Evening and Late evening together as evening prayer and the rest in the morning. The seven canonical hours are often correlated with the seven stages of Christ's Passion. However we can understand from the Psalms that the practice of praying seven times existed since the Old Testament period. King David says "Seven times a day I Praise you because of Your righteous judgements." (Psalms 119:164). During the lent and the Three Day's Fast, we have the practice of saying the prayers of the seven specified Hours as three times. On Saturdays and Sundays of the lent, the prayers of ordinary days have to be followed.

### Actions or Gestures that accompany prayers

In prayers, the body, soul and mind participate together. "For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." (Romans 8:26). Prayer is the time when the mind communes with God concentratedly. But in the Oriental tradition, our body also becomes a participant in worship.

All our prayers begin with the recital of 'Kauma'. The word 'Kauma' means 'standing up'. It is called Kauma because such prayers are said by standing up. The Orthodox practice is to stand up in God's presence while saying the prayers.

Crossing oneself and genuflecting are important components of Orthodox worship (Exodus 4:31, 12 :27). The Church insists on genuflecting at the specified hours of prayer except on Sundays, 'Mora Naya' festivals and days from the Resurrection to the Pentecost. The liturgies of Three days Fast and the Lent are arranged in such a manner that there are forty genuflections after the prayers at noon. Ten of them are made by reciting 'Kuriye lison' another ten by reciting 'Oh Lord, have mercy up on us,' yet another ten by reciting 'Oh Lord, Benevolently have mercy up on us and the last ten by reciting "Oh Lord Answer us by having mercy upon us'. In the days of Communion, we do not genuflect till evening.

### The components that make up worship

All Hourly prayers in Orthodox church begin with praising the Holy Trinity. If the Priest is present, the Hourly prayers usually begin with the Syriac verse 'Shubaho Labo Ulabbrowala Rooho Kadisho' which means "Glory to Father, Son and the Holy Spirit". Similarly all Hourly prayers begin and end by reciting the 'Kauma'. The 'Kauma' and the Creed of the Church are the pillars of worship and the Orthodox

church never eschew them in worship. Similarly reading of the scriptures is also part of all services. The reading of six passages from the Holy Bible, including three readings from the Old Testament books is a unique feature of Orthodox liturgy.

The components of Orthodox liturgy include 'sloosoe' or the preliminary prayer used in Canonical Hourly prayers and services, 'Prumeyon' or Introductory prayer, 'Sedra' or chain of prayers, 'Hoosoyoe' or prayer of Absolution, 'Ethrow' or Prayers using incense, and 'Hoothowmo' or concluding prayer. Among these 'Hoothowmo' alone are sometimes recited as songs.

### Kukiliyon (Intercessory Recitals)

Kukiliyons are a kind of worship that have influenced the Orthodox liturgy very much. This word means cycle of prayers. All Kukiliyons begin with a passage from the Psalms. At the end of it, we will have a praise of the Holy Trinity. ('Shubaho..MenaO'lam' meaning praise to Father, Son and Spirit, Right from the Beginnings and for ever). The succeeding passage is called 'Ekbo' (This word means step or stair). 'Ekbos' end by saying 'Sthaumen kalos' meaning "we should stand befittingly upright." This is followed by songs called 'Kolos'. They are a cluster of two or more songs composed in the same musical note. There will be praise of the Holy Trinity in between. 'Kolos' end with the recital of 'Moriyo Rahem Melainu Adarein' (meaning 'Lord, Help us by having mercy upon us). This is the time of praying with incense. There are a lot number of worships arranged in this fashion in the church. The Kukiliyons generally used in the Holy Eucharist are titled Mother of God, Saints, The departed Priests, The Departed and The Cross. We can see the presence of 'Kukiliyons' in the liturgies of Baptism, Marriage, Blessing of houses, etc.

### Canonical Offices (Sheema Prayer)

Orthodox church insists that all members of a family should say morning prayers and vespers together at home everyday. For this the synod has recognized and published a book 'Book of Family worship.' The Canonical Hourly prayers of Ninth watch, evening and late evening are meant to be said in the evening and those of Night, Morning, Third watch and midday are meant to be said in the morning. However the book of prayer followed in seminaries and 'Dayaras' (monasteries) are Canonical Offices (Sheema prayer). Here the topic of prayer for each day will be different according to the importance of that day. Sunday is the day of commemorating Christ's 'Kyemtha' (Resurrection). Monday and Tuesday are days of repentance. Wednesday is the day commemorating Mother Mary (It is the prayers for Wednesday in the Canonical Offices that we use as 'Sleeba' prayer on Sundays).

Thursday is the day commemorating the Apostles, Malpans and Episcopas. Friday commemorates the Passion of Christ. Saturday commemorates all the Departed.

The Hourly prayers said during the Lent, Three Day Fast and the Passion Week are different from Ordinary prayers.

### Incense burning prayers

Submission of incense is an integral part of Orthodox liturgy. There is an important place for incense burning in Hourly prayers, Holy Eucharist and other sacramental practices. Burning of incense had great importance in the worship during the Old Testament period. There was a separate table for burning incense in the tabernacle of Jehova. (Exodus 30: 1-10). There are several suggestions in the Book of Revelation regarding the burning of incense. St. John here says that the prayer of the Church which is the New Israel is like the golden bowl full of incense submitted in God's presence (Revelation 5:8). Burning of incense is a symbol of total submission before God. Burning of incense has a symbolic meaning too. Just as fragrance of incense fills the House of God, the life of the believers too should be filled with love and goodness. Incense removes the foul smell and the wastes in the atmosphere. Burning of the incense is also a symbol of the cleaning of time and space through worship of the church.

#### Activities

1. Conduct a sample survey among Sunday school students and find out the percentage of homes saying family prayer both in the morning and in the evening.
2. Analyse and study the significance of various parts of the bowl of incense.
3. Find out the passages from psalms used in the 'Kukiliyon' of funeral services.
4. Write a brief account of the prayers to be said in homes during morning and evening.
5. Describe the seven specific times of worship and their characteristics.

#### For further reading

1. The System of Church Services-H.G. Yoohanon Mar Severious
2. Worship and rituals of the Orthodox church-H.G. Joseph Mar Pachomios
3. 'Abba Father'-Rev. Dr. B. Varghese
4. For a detailed study of the Holy Eucharist which is the epitome of worship refer to 'Holy Eucharist: A meditative study' by H.G. Mathews Mar Barnabas.

## Chapter 4

# Festivals of the Orthodox Church

Orthodox church gives great importance to community worship along with worshipping God as individuals and families.

Our Church Fathers thought that the more the members of the Church could assemble in one accord for community worship of God, the more will be the benediction. This led to the increased importance of festivals in the church. During the Old Testament period, the Jews observed a number of festivals as per God's commandment. During the major festivals like the Passover, the Pentecost etc. Jews assembled in the temple of Jerusalem and prayed.

The word festival means 'Great day'. Therefore all festivals of the church are connected in one way or other with Jesus Christ. Festivals are conducted to commemorate the important events in the life of Jesus Christ or in the Church founded by Him (Eg: Festival of the Cross) and also to observe the memory of Apostles, Church Fathers and Saints. As far as a parish is concerned, festivals are observed on the day of laying its foundation stone or on the day of commemoration of the Patron saint of that parish.

### Moranaya festivals

The word 'moran' means 'of our Lord'. All Sundays are moronaya days, the festival commemorating Christ's Resurrection. Besides, the days commemorating the important events in Christ's life are also Moranaya festivals. Annunciation of Mother Mary, Christmas, Christ's temple entry, Baptism, Transfiguration, Resurrection and the Pentecost belong to the category of Moranaya festivals. (Among them Resurrection and the Pentecost fall on Sundays and hence are not accounted in the list of Moranaya festivals).

Besides these, the days of commemorating people connected with Christ's incarnation are also observed as Moranaya festivals. Important among them are festivals connected with Mother of God (Shoonoyo or Assumption of Mother Mary). The Church has also commanded the observance of some festivals in the same

status as Moranaya festivals. The commemoration of Apostles of Christ and Martyrs who suffered and died for Christ belong to this category. The commemoration of St. Peter and St. Paul on June 29 and St. Thomas Day on July 3<sup>rd</sup> (Or December 21) are Moranaya festivals in Malankara.

### How should Sundays be observed?

On this day we should keep away from worldly work and undertake spiritual works like partaking in the Holy Eucharist, reading of the Holy Bible, Prayer and singing Hymns. We shouldn't idle away our time indolently. ('Principles of Religious Instruction'). The Church doesn't permit genuflection or fasting on that day (Read Isaiah 58: 13, 14). Eventhough Moranaya festivals are to be observed in a similar manner, the church doesn't place a compulsory insistence on them due to the limitations of living conditions in the modern age.

### The utility and usefulness of observing Festivals

By commemorating the important events of Christ's incarnated life at different times of the year, we experience a contemporaneity with Him. When we observe the memory of Saints, we can imitate their exemplary life, steadfastness of Faith and love for Christ in our lives. We would get God's grace and blessings through their intercession. Moreover the festivals are occasions to praise God for the benefits showered on the Church and the world, through the saints.

### The Greatest festival

The greatest festival for a Christian is Easter. Christ who died on the cross got resurrected. This historical truth distinguishes Christian religion from all other religions of the world. That event which enabled our salvation gladdens us most. That is why we celebrate all Sundays as festivals. However unfortunately, believers attending Easter services are reducing in number and this tendency should be corrected.

### Special rituals associated with festivals

We shall note that the rituals associated with the observance of festivals are suitable to the nature and content of such festivals. The ritual of bonfire in Christmas service, is symbolic of the glorious light seen by shepherds on the night of Christ's birth and the light that rose over the world which was in darkness. We put frankincense in the bonfire commemorating the shepherds who came to submit their gifts to child Jesus and the three wise men who presented gifts of gold, myrrh



and frankincense to Him. When we do so, we can meditate on our own submission before God. This ritual is conducted at the end of midnight prayer before the Praise of the Angels.

On 'Danaha, or Christ's baptism the ritual of consecrating water commemorating Christ's baptism is done. When the Holy Trinity arose in Jordan, St. John the Baptist, revealed the One who baptizes in fire and soul to the world. Hence this festival is called festival of arising or 'Denaha'.

The important section in the festival of Resurrection is the Proclamation of Resurrection. The priest declares 'Our Christ has resurrected from the Dead and has defeated His enemies'. The believers reply that 'We believe and verily confess that He has truly risen from the dead'.

The present services on the festival of the Pentecost are quite lengthy. The service of the Pentecost has three parts—those addressing the Father, those addressing the Son and those addressing the Holy Spirit. The consecrated water is sprinkled over the faithful after each of these services. The believers who got baptized in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, get a renewal of their baptism through the service of the Pentecost.

### 'Hawd Maalakhe'

The celebration of the Holy Cross known as 'Hawd Maalakhe' is a pattern of worship included in all special services of the Orthodox church except in the service of the Pentecost. This is the practice of reciting a 'Kauma' elaborately with ceremony and revelry. Normally the words of response are 'O! The One who got Crucified for us...

But in festivals the words of response are changed according to the occasion. It is a heavenly worship in which the Church praises God jointly with the Nine choirs of angels in heaven and with all living creatures above, below and in between. The celebration of the Holy Cross is done on Christmas, mid Lent, Good Friday, Easter and Ascension and on occasions of consecrating the church, and wayside chapels. 'Hawd Maalakhe' is celebrated on the festival of Danaha along with consecrated water, on palm Sunday along with consecrated palm and in consecration of 'Mooron' along with 'Mooron'.

### The unnecessary luxuries in festivals

The festivals of saints who lived and died for Christ have today become occasions for unnecessary luxuries. We celebrate the festival of a saint to glorify the name of Christ and to imitate his path of sanctity in our lives. Instead many festivals have



today dwindled into luxuries and commotions. Our upcoming generations should raise their voice against such practices. When we celebrate festivals of martyrs (like St. George, St. Thomas, St. Peter and St. Paul) we should think and meditate over why they embraced death eschewing the world. We should avoid celebrations which do not have any connection with their lives. When we celebrate the festivals of the saints of Malankara like St. Gregorios of Parumala, and St. Dionysius we should meditate on their practices in life and try to imitate their lives. These festivals should help us in praising God who gifted them to the Church.

#### Activities

1. Prepare a list of the festivals of the Jews
2. What are Moranaya Festivals? Find out their dates.
3. Discuss the non-Christian practices associated with festivals conducted in various churches.
4. Attempt a study of the unnecessary luxuries and spendthriftness in connection with festivals.

#### For further reading

1. The worship and ritualistic practices of Orthodox church-H.G. Joseph Mar Pachomios
2. 'Nirlepam' (Chp 5)-H.G. Geevarghese Mar Ivanios
3. In Spirit and Truth (Chapter 5, 6)—Fr. Dr. B. Varghese.

## Unit 3

# Church History

### Chapter 1

## Milestones in Church History

A comprehensive and synoptic history of the Christian Church from 1<sup>st</sup> century AD to the twentieth century is given below. Only the important events which can be described as milestones of church history are discussed here.

1. The Pentecost and Baptism of the Church
2. The selection of deacons and the conversion of Saul
3. The Council of Jerusalem-AD 50
4. The tribulations of the Church
5. Constitution of the Holy Bible.
6. Milan proclamation AD 313
7. The Great Councils and Divisions of the Church
8. The origin and development of monasticism
9. Crusades
10. Reformation
11. The Ecumenical movement

### The Pentecost and Baptism of the Church

Jesus Christ who resurrected on the third day, appeared to his disciples and some women and affirmed them in faith. He breathed Holy Spirit on his selected disciples and entrusted them with the evangelical mission. (St. John 20: 19-23, St. Matthew 28: 18-20)

He also commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father which they had heard from Him (Acts 1:2-5).

As they were awaiting to be filled with the Holy Spirit, they elected Matthias in place of Judas who had been removed from the apostolic fold because of his transgression of betraying Christ. (Acts 1: 15-26)

On the Day of the Pentecost all the disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke in other tongues. (Acts 2:1-4). About three thousand people among those who listened to St. Peter's speech got baptized and joined the Christian church (Acts 2:14-42). The Holy Bible thus records the beginnings and baptism of the Christian church. Christ's passion, Crucifixion, Resurrection and the Ascension and the anointment of His disciples with Holy Spirit on the fiftieth day marked the beginning and growth of the Christian church in Jerusalem.

### The selection of deacons and the conversion of Saul

When the number of disciples multiplied and the church attained unprecedented growth, seven men of good reputation, Holy spirit and wisdom were prayfully elected to assist the apostles in church services, especially its welfare activities (Acts 6:1-6). They came to be known as 'deacons' which means 'those who serve'."

Jews who became jealous of the fast growth of the church, tried to destroy it in what all ways they could. Their solution was to find out, persecute and exterminate Christians. Saul of Tarsus who gave leadership to such persecutions was caught by Jesus Christ and was transformed into the chief deacon of the church. (Acts 9: 1-18, 22:3-21). The conversion of Paul gave a new awakening and energy to the Christian church. Saul or St. Paul spread his evangelical activities to various parts of the Roman empire outside Judea and Samaria. As a result St. Paul was called "apostle of the gentiles."

The missionary travels and evangelical activities of St. Paul resulted in the dispersal and development of the Christian church.

### The Council of Jerusalem (AD 50)

The council of Jerusalem is a significant one in church history. When disputes regarding the laws and rituals to be observed by non-Jewish people who joined Christian church arose, a meeting headed by the apostles was convened in Jerusalem in AD 50 and solutions were sorted out (Acts 15:1-15). Even though this council might seem insignificant, it is important because of two reasons.

1. This council became instrumental in creating an identity and status for the Christian church. Hitherto, the Christian church had been regarded as part of the Jewish religion. It acquired a separate identity and status after this council.

2. The historical importance of this council is that it became a perfect model of solving disputes arising within the church. The growth of the church became faster thereafter.

### Persecutions

In the beginning, the Christian church had to undergo a lot of persecutions. Jews, followed by the Romans, persecuted the Christians. The cruel and beastly persecutions which began in the first century AD lasted till the fourth century AD. Thousands of people including the apostles and the apostolic fathers suffered martyrdom. The blood of the early Christians who valued martyrdom above everything else, became the seed and manure for the growth of the church.

Roman emperors like Valarius (253-260 AD) and Diocletian (284-313 AD) gave leadership to the persecution. The reasons for the persecution pointed out by the rulers were insubordination to the Roman empire and its emperors, neglect of Roman gods, refusal of military service, acting against or contrary to the interests of the empire, assembling in secret places to plot against the empire, assembling secretly for prostitution and eating meat and abstaining from social rituals and practices.

Even though the tribulations were a challenge to the Christian church, the faith, determination and desire for martyrdom of Christians attracted many to the Christian fold. As a result, the growth of the church became faster. The persecutions did not merely create martyrs. They also caused the growth and dispersal of the church. Besides the persecutions resulted in the establishment of the canon of the New Testament and writings connected with faith.

### Establishing the Canon of the Holy Bible

The early church expected the second coming of Jesus Christ soon and hence didn't pay attention to writings. The epistles of St. Paul were written after AD 50 and the gospels were written after AD 60. Numerous books were written in the name of apostles and early fathers. As a result several contradictory teaching gained currency in the church. The early church fathers thought about the writings to be included in and excluded from the Holy Bible. Consequently the canon of the New Testament was established around AD 175. In the 'Muratorian' canon which is believed to be written around AD 180, only 22 books are included. The other books were excluded from the canon because of lack of clarity regarding authorship, and doubts about the content. However subsequent confirmation in these matters led to the later inclusion of the other books in the canon. Mar Athanasius, Bishop of

Alexandria, had stated in an Easter message send to various parishes in AD 367 that there are 27 books in the New Testament. The meeting of the Rabbis of Judaism at Jamnia in AD 90 decided that there would be 39 books in the Old Testament (Jamnia Council) The church took authoritative and official decision regarding the books of the Holy Bible towards the end of the second century AD. Thus the early church officially recognised the Old Testament containing 39 books and the New Testament with 27 books.

### Milan proclamation (AD 313)

Milan proclamation was made on 13<sup>th</sup> June 313 AD jointly by Lissi Nius who was the emperor of the eastern parts of the Roman empire and Constantine who was the emperor of the western parts of Rome. This proclamation removed all restrictions imposed on Christians in the Roman empire and declared Christianity as a recognised religion of the Roman empire. The Christian church which had been suppressed and tortured for three centuries, got independence and recognition in the Roman empire through the Milan proclamation. The confiscated properties and churches of Christians were given back. Christians who were imprisoned were released. Sunday was declared a public holiday. However the later historical incidents prove that Milan declaration did more harm than good on the spiritual plane.

As Christianity became a recognized religion, thousands accepted Christian faith. But the ethical principles, moral life styles and love based fellowship upheld by the Christian church till that date became nominal. The Christian church in the Roman empire was transformed into an administrative mechanism that functions with the support of political power. Moreover the church that protested against imperial forces till that date, became supporters of such forces and individuals. The Christian church became an imperial church.

### The three Great Councils and Division in the Church

The Church Councils (Synods; gatherings or meetings) were venues for studying theological and religious disputes within the church and finding out solutions. The early Christian church faced two main challenges-one was political-imperial persecution and the other was heresy. The important heresies of the first century were Gnosticism, Marcianism, montanism and monarchianism . In later ages, numerous other heresies developed either under the influence of the early heresies or independently. These later heresies created divisions in the church and led to councils or synods. The important synods and the heresies that caused them are given below.

1. Nicea (AD 325) - heresy of Arius
2. Constantinople (AD 381)-the heresies of Macedonianism and Apollinarianism.
3. Ephesus (AD 431)-Nestorianism.

These three synods are recognized by all ancient churches. Eighteen synods or great councils were convened in the later ages. Out of the total twenty one synods the first three are recognised by the Oriental Orthodox Churches and the first seven are recognised by the Byzantine Orthodox churches. The rest are recognised and claimed only by the Catholic Church.

The synod of Chalcedon (AD 451), known as the fourth Great Council has great importance in the history of the church. Eutyches, the old Abbot of the monastery of Alexandria, raised the question whether the Incarnated Christ was of one nature or of two natures. This gave rise to the division of the Church in the Roman empire. Those churches which accepted the decisions of the Council of Chalcedon were called Chalcedonian churches (Rome and Constantinople) and those which didn't accept them were called Non-Chalcedonian churches (Alexandria, Antioch and Armenia). After the division of the church in 1054 AD, the Church in the Roman empire was split into Eastern (Byzantine) and Western (Catholic) factions.

### The origin and development of Monasticism

Monasticism originated in the Christian Church in the last decades of the second century and in the first decade of the third century AD. The desire to attain 'perfection' demanded by Jesus Christ (St. Matthew 5:48; 19:21), the end of tribulations, the spiritual life style of Christians and their unique concepts about the world attracted many people to monastic life. Monasticism originated in Egypt. St. Antony is the founder and practitioner of solitary monasticism and St. Pachomius is the founder and practitioner of community monasticism. Monasticism and monks have made invaluable contribution to the Christian church. Their contributions include studies, liturgical writings, social welfare activities, missionary activities and moral life styles.

### Crusades

The efforts made by Christians of the West to wrest control of the Holy Land of Palestine from Turks who were followers of Islam, are generally known as Crusades. This is a Holy war waged by Christians by bearing a cross, against the enemies of the cross. Crusades took place during the period from 1095 AD to 1291 AD. The crusades of children known as children's crusade happened in 1212 AD. The

crusaders not only failed to capture Palestine but also lost many other Christian dominated places to the Turks. The crusades affected the entire Christian church adversely. It led to quarrels and disputes among the various Christian churches.

### Reformation movement

The attempts at church reform initiated under the leadership of Martin Luther in the Western Church came to be known as Reformation. Even though Martin Luther is the father of Reformation, its founding principles were in currency long before him. People like John Wycliffe and John Huss had propagated the reformist ideas and had questioned the structure and style of action of the Western Church. The practice of selling Cards of Absolution of the Catholic church gave impetus to Reformation. Martin Luther opposed the corruption, immorality and nepotism that existed in the Roman church. He founded the Reformation movement officially in 1517. Luther's actions were supported by H. Swingley and John Calvin who spread the ideas of Reformation to places like Germany, Switzerland, France and Netherlands. Churches which originated as a result of the Reformation movement are known as 'Reformed churches'. The Reformation movement led to the formation of Reformed churches and thereafter, the Protestant churches. It caused the later divisions of the Roman church.

### Ecumenical movement

The reformist ideas effected new trends in the entire Christendom. As a result reformist churches and organizations came forward to conduct bible studies and mission activities more effectively. The interest in bible studies and missionary activities enabled such missionaries to assemble and work together. Such fellowships developed with the passage of time and later led to the World Missionary Conference. The Edinburgh conference of 1910 laid the foundation of the modern ecumenical movement. The influence of the World Missionary Conference led to the formation of two ecumenical movements-Life and Work Movement and Faith and Order Movement. Life and Work Movement tried to understand the responsibility of Christians in the midst of urgent social issues. 'Faith and Order Movement helped in studying the faith and order issues of different churches and fostered mutual understanding among churches. The 'Faith and Order' conference held in 1937 at Oxford and the 'Life and Work' conference held in Edinburgh caused the emergence of the World Council of Churches. The two movements jointly decided to found the World Council of Churches. The World Council of Churches was formed in August 1948 at the meeting in Amsterdam in which delegates from 147 Christian churches participated. Rev. W.A. Vissert Hoaft was elected the first general secretary

of WCC. His Grace Alexois Mar Theodosios Metropolitan and Fr. K. Philipose participated as delegates of Malankara Orthodox Church. Thus Malankara Church became one of the founding members of WCC. Thereafter the Malankara Orthodox church is working actively in the ecumenical movement. It is a matter of pride for us that Late Paulose Mar Gregorios metropolitan was one of the leading names in the ecumenical scenario.

#### Activities

1. What were the conditions that led to the selection of deacons?
2. How was Matthias elected in place of Judas, who betrayed Christ? Read Acts 1:15-26 and find out.
3. What is Jerusalem Council? Why was it held? What is its importance?
4. What is Milan proclamation? Discuss the good and bad aspects of this declaration.
5. What is the synod of Chalcedon? Describe the division of the church after the synod?
6. Write short notes on
  1. The beginning of monasticism
  2. Crusades
  3. Reformation movement
  4. Ecumenical movement



## Chapter 2

# Important Events in Malankara Church

This chapter describes the events that played an important role in the growth of Malankara Church. A brief outline of the Malankara Church history of twenty centuries is given below.

1. St. Thomas and the Malankara Church
2. Persian immigration
3. Synod of Udayamperor (1599)
4. Koonan Cross oath
5. Marthoma I and Episcopa
6. Division of the Malankara church
7. The relation between Malankara and Antioch
8. Vattippanam
9. Bible translation and beginning of the Seminary
10. Malankara-Anglican relationship
11. Synod of Mulanthuruthy
12. Modern Malankara Church

### St. Thomas and the Malankara Church

History states that St. Thomas came to Malankara in AD 52 and founded certain Christian communities. There are two traditions regarding the visit of St. Thomas to India-the North Indian tradition and the South Indian tradition.

#### The South Indian tradition

St. Thomas came to Kodungalloor which was then known as 'Muziris' and founded Christian communities in seven important places. St. Thomas suffered martyrdom in AD 72 while he was living in Mylapore and was interred there.

The following are the important evidences for the fact that St. Thomas founded the church in Malankara.

1. The tomb of St. Thomas.
2. The ancient Christian communities founded by St. Thomas.
3. The name of St. Thomas used by the Christian communities.
4. Historical documents regarding the activities of the apostle.
5. Christian witnesses in the oral and literal traditions.

#### The North Indian tradition

The basis of our belief that St. Thomas preached the Gospels in North India is a book titled 'The activities of Judas Thomas' written by an author from Uraha between AD 180 and AD 230. This book states that apostle St. Thomas propagated the way of Christ in the country of Gondaphores. Scholars affirm that Gondaphores was the king who ruled over lands adjoining Afghanistan, Baluchistan and Punjab in the 1st century AD. Coins issued in his name have been found in the later centuries. Gregorios Bar Ebraya, the Syrian Father of Antioch who lived in the 13<sup>th</sup> century says in his book of Church History that St. Thomas preached the gospels in places under the authority of Gondaphores. Solomon the Nestorian Bishop of Basra who lived in the same century has recorded in his book 'The Book of the Bee' that Thomas, of the Tribe of Judea, had preached gospel in India.

#### Persian immigration

Both Malankara and Persian Churches preserve and take pride in the apostolic tradition and heritage of St. Thomas. The heritage of St. Thomas has augmented the interrelationship and friendship of the two churches. The Malankara Church maintained good relationship with the Persian church since the first centuries of Christendom. When the great persecution of the Christians took place, the Persian Christians migrated in small groups to Malankara. The first Persian immigration took place in AD 345 under the leadership of Thomas of Cana and the second immigration took place in AD 825 under the leadership of 'Sabrisho'. The first was a migration of fugitives and the second was of merchants. The Persian immigration has exerted a significant influence in the history of Malankara Church. To some extent, it has helped in enriching the church life of Malankara church and in fulfilling its spiritual needs.

#### The Synod of Udayamperor (Diamper)

The Portuguese who were Roman Catholics came to Malankara for commerce at the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century. These members of the Western church who came to

Malankara under the leadership of Vasco da Gama tried their best to convert Malankara Church into Roman Catholic faith. The followers of the Malankara Church who had ecclesiastical relationship only with the Persian Church till then, became dissatisfied with the activities of the Catholic church. Gradually the Portuguese catholics wrested administrative control over Malankara forcibly and Malankara church was forced to surrender to their hegemony. The Synod of Udayamperor was such a notorious incident. The Malankara church which refused to accept the supremacy, faith and rituals and other church practices of the Roman church, was forcibly yoked to Roman slavery through the synod of Udayamperor. The helpless 'Nazranis' did not have enough strength to resist this external force. It was the then Archbishop of Goa, Alexis de Menesis, who controlled the proceedings of the Synod and took decisions. The meeting which took place in June 1599 was presided over by the Archbishop. 153 priests and 600 laymen from the Malankara Church participated in the Synod. Historical writings testify that the decisions and decrees claimed to be taken at the synod of Udayamperor were obtained unilaterally through compulsion. Besides Menesis is said to have added certain decisions which were not discussed in the synod.

The following decisions were taken at the synod

1. The perspectives of the Roman Catholic church regarding Trinity, Incarnation, Mother Mary, Original sin, Purgatory, Intercession of Saints, Icon worship, Church and its organization and Books of the Bible should be accepted.
2. The Pope of Rome should be the only supreme head of the church. The Patriarch of Babylon should be rejected as he promotes heresy and schism.
3. The list of saints of Malankara is not acceptable. Hence that list should be abandoned.
4. Celibacy for priests should be made compulsory.
5. The Malankara church should be divided into Parishes and vicars should be appointed for each parish.

Thus synod of Udayamperor suppressed the identity and independence of the Malankara Church.

### Koonan Cross Oath (1653)

Koonan Cross Oath is a great event that led Malankara church from its fifty four year long slavery to the shores of independence. The synod of Udayamperor had brought about radical changes in worship, faith and practices of the Malankara

church. The faith and observances of the Roman Catholics were enforced in the Malankara church and the whole church was brought under the Pope of Rome. The hapless Malankara church lived in its sufferings for about half a century before it got a chance of attaining independence. In 1652 an episcopa named Ahathalla arrived in Malankara. The followers of the Malankara church looked upon him as their saviour and approached Roman Archbishop Francis Garcia for permission to meet him and for getting him released from Portugese captivity. The Archbishop who vehemently opposed the dreams of independence of the Malankara church didn't give permission either to meet Ahathalla or to release him. Due to the influence of the foreign forces, even the king of Kochi could not help the Nazranis. The authorities feared that children of the Malankara church might release Ahathalla by force and ordered the ship carrying him to sail out of Kochi harbour. At that time a rumour that the Portugese murdered Ahathalla and drowned his corpse at sea spread like wildfire in Malankara. The enraged children of Malankara church assembled in Alangadu church and took an oath. This is known as Koonan cross oath. The oath was taken by tying a long rope to a cross, and consequently the cross was bent. Therefore this oath came to be known as Koonan cross (bent cross) oath.

This historical event which happened on 3<sup>rd</sup> January 1653 has been distorted and misinterpreted by later Catholic historians. History testifies that the Koonan cross oath, known as 'the independence struggle of Malankara Church' was against all forms of foreign domination and supremacy. This is evident to anyone who examines the contemporary historical scenario. Even the historical books of the Roman Catholic Church contain evidences in this direction. Koonan Cross oath was not merely a farce or an expression of anger. It was a combined effort of the Malankara church to regain its traditions of worship and faith. The whole of Malankara church put up a joint front in this direct struggle and unconditionally rejected the Roman Catholic church, its representative authorities and the Roman Catholic faith which was imposed forcibly. It also returned to its Marthoman heritage and Syrian traditions. We should not forget the fact that condemning those who stood steadfast in the traditions and heritage followed by the church for centuries, as 'Newfangled loyals' (Puthan Kootukar) is not in tune with historical truths. The oath of Koonan cross was a great attempt to conserve the independence and identity of Malankara Church and revive its lost heritage and traditions.

### Mar Thoma First and the Episcopate

On May 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1653, after the Koonan Cross oath, an assembly was held in Alangadu church. Twelve priests jointly anointed Archdeacon Thoma as Episcopa at this assembly. Mar Thoma I anointed in this manner was the first prelate of the

Indian Church in the episcopal cadre. Historians then and now have difference of opinion regarding the legitimacy of the consecration of Marthoma I. However his anointment as Episcopa was something that the Malankara Church desired for and decided single mindedly. Moreover Bishop Mar Gregorios of Jerusalem who arrived in Malankara in 1665 legitimized the consecration of Mar Thoma I. The Malankara Church which had to depend on foreign metropolitans for all spiritual needs, realized that an indigenous episcopate was essential for its comprehensive development and laid its foundation. Mar Thoma I is the first known episcopa of the Indian church. The precedence of twelve priests raising a person to episcopacy existed in the Alexandrian (Coptic) Church.

### The Division of Malankara Church

The Roman Church which came to know about Koonan Cross oath and subsequent developments tried to placate the children of Malankara and bring them back to the Roman fold. They send Carmelite missionaries Hyacinth and Joseph Sebastiani as mediators for this purpose. The mediators succeeded in their mission. Majority of the people and parishes under MarThoma I deserted their prelate in favour of Roman faith. Parambil Chandy Kathanar of Kuravilangadu and Kadavil Chandy Kathanar of Kaduthuruthy, two of the four major priests elected to assist Marthoma I had already accepted Roman faith.

On January 7, 1663 the Dutch captured Kochi. As a result, the political influence of the Portugese in Malankara declined. When the Dutch ordered the eviction of the Portugese from Kochi, the latter had no option but to raise Parambil Chandy Kathanar as episcopa. This interference of the Catholic Church caused a division in the Malankara Church which had remained undivided for sixteen centuries. The two factions became bitter enemies. One should rethink whether Christian missionary activities are meant to promote enmity and division in the above described manner.

The interference of the Catholic Church led Malankara Church into power tussles and further divisions. History testifies to the fact that it is the Roman Catholic church and its desire for power that laid the foundation of factionalism and power struggle that we see in Malankara Church today. Thus the Malankara Church which was one in faith, tradition and practices got divided in the second half of the seventeenth century.

### The relationship between Malankara and Antioch

The Malankara Church which had been ruled by indigenous leaders till the 15<sup>th</sup> century, went under the Roman Catholic administration in the 16<sup>th</sup> century

after the arrival of the Portugese. It had to bear the Roman yoke for about half a century. After the oath of Koonan Cross in 1653, it severed all relations with the Catholic church. The consecration of Marthoma I and the dissensions regarding his episcopacy led Malankara church into new relationships. Church historians say that Mar Gregorios of Jerusalem who reached Malankara in 1665 led Malankara church into its relationship with Antioch. Eventhough the Malankara Church had relationship with the Persian (Nestorian) church till the sixteenth century, it had no relationship with the church of Antioch till then. There are no historical documents to prove the relationship with Antioch. It is the arrival of Mar Gregorios in the seventeenth century and the legitimization of episcopate in Malankara that led to the relationship between Malankara and Antioch. The visit and collaboration of Metropolitians from Antioch in 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries strengthened the relationship between Malankara and Antioch. The Synod of Mulanthuruthy held in 1896 formalised this relationship. Even though this relationship helped to sustain the Syrian tradition of the Malankara church, it led to decisive changes in faith and rituals. When the relationship with the Catholic church caused two divisions (including Malankara rite) in Malankara church, the relationship with Church of Antioch shattered the Malankara church to pieces. Thozhiyoor and Jacobite factions originated as a result of the relationship of the Malankara church with the Patriarch of Antioch.

#### Vattippanam (Fixed Deposit given for interest)

During the rule of British Resident Colonel Mecauly, Marthoma Seventh who succeeded Marthoma Sixth (Mar Dionysius, the Great) deposited 3000 poovarhan (Golden or star pagodas) equivalent to Rs. 10,500 with the British East India Company at a rate of 8 percent interest per annum. Out of these 3000 star pagodas, 840 star pagodas were collected by Mar Dionysius from the community and the rest (2160) were got from his co-operation with Mecauly. (The word 'Baddhi' in Kannada means interest and it became 'Vatti' in Malayalam)

The interest got from the above mentioned deposit was meant to be spend on welfare projects of the Church. The first annual interest of the deposit was received by Marthoma Seventh and the interest for the three succeeding years was received by Pulikkottil Ittoop Ramban for the construction of the seminary. The interest on this deposit was utilized for the daily expenses of the seminary till 1836. Thereafter there arose a dispute with the Patriarchal faction regarding who is entitled to receive the interest and this dispute came to be known as 'Vattippanam suit'.

## Translation of the Bible and founding of the Seminary

The Old Testament of the Holy Bible was written originally in Hebrew and the New Testament in Greek. Later the complete Bible was translated into various languages like Latin, Syriac, Coptic, English and German. The Holy Bible used in Malankara till the first decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century was the Syriac translation of the Bible. It was in 1811 that the Malayalam translation of the four gospels became popular in Malayalam. It is believed that Ramban Philippose of Kayamkulam and Ramban Joseph of Pulikottil played an important role in the translation of the Malayalam Bible. This translation known as Ramban Bible was published from Mumbai in 1811. The roles of Ramban Philippose of Kayamkulam and Claudius Buchanan in the publication of Ramban Bible are widely acknowledged. The complete New Testament published in 1829 was realized mainly through the efforts of Pulikkottil Ittoop Ramban and Benjamin Bailey. In 1841 the complete Bible containing both Old and New Testaments was published through the efforts of Benjamin Bailey and Thomas Norton. The contributions of Mathen Malpan Konattu and Kadavil Paulose Mar Athanasius in the publication of Malayalam Bible cannot be forgotten. The services rendered by foreign missionaries, especially Anglican Missionaries in the publication of Malayalam Bible are incomparable. Among them Benjamin Bailey, Thomas Norton and Herman Gundert deserve special mention.

Joseph Mar Dionysius II of Pulikkottil founded priesthood training centre known as Old Seminary at Kottayam in 1815. Rani Lakshmi Bai who ruled Travancore at that time contributed 16 acres of land, the required timber and about 20,000 rupees for the purpose. The foundation stone of the work in the tax-free land allotted on the banks of Meenachil river was laid on 15<sup>th</sup> February 1814. The construction of the seminary was completed in March 1815 and thereafter priesthood training started. The Old Seminary soon developed as the administrative headquarters and priesthood training centre. The contribution of Joseph Mar Dionysius II in this development is incomparable. English education in the land of Kerala had its beginning in the Old Seminary.

## The relationship between Malankara and the Anglican Church

Malankara- Anglican relationship is yet another relationship that helped the growth of Malankara church on one hand and caused its division on the other. Malankara church maintained cordial relationship with CMS missionaries, the missionary arm of the Anglican church, right from the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. With the aim of co-operative action with the Malankara church, the Church Mission Society (CMS) send the missionaries Thomas Norton, Benjamin Bailey, Henry Baker



and Joseph Fenn to Malankara. They executed their evangelical mission with Kottayam as their centre. Fenn got engaged in Seminary services, Bailey in the translation of the Holy Bible and Baker in founding schools. Along with their mission, the missionaries tried to implement Reformist ideas in the Malankara church. They wanted to alter the liturgy and rituals of the Malankara Church in order to attune them with those of theirs. As a result there arose two factions within Malankara Church-those who supported and those who opposed reformation. In order to decide whether the Church should accept or reject the reformist ideas, a Church assembly was held in 1836 at Mavelikkara. This assembly decided to reject reformist ideas altogether. This is known as 'Mavelikkara Padiyola'. However this official decision of the Church was not acceptable to all.

#### Kochi Panchayat of AD 1840

As the differences with the missionaries heightened and a compromise became impossible, both factions decided to divide the property of the Church between them. On April 24, 1840 a committee having three Europeans as its members met at Kochi for this purpose. As per the decision of the committee, Old Seminary and its properties and Vattippanam was apportioned for the Syrian Church. On the other hand CMS College, Kottayam and its surroundings, Rupees 20,000 got from the government, and Munroe island were given to the missionaries. The court also suggested that there should be an elected priest and a layman along with the Metropolitan to handle public money and receive the interest on 'Vattippanam'. Thus trustees of the Church were posted.

Later Abraham Malpan and others tried to implement Reformist ideas in the Church. As a result those who supported reformation continued to exist as a separate faction within the Church and resulted in another division of the Church subsequently. After the Royal Court judgement of 1889, the reformist faction got separated from the Malankara Church and founded a new church named 'Mar Thoma Church'.

#### Synod of Mulanthuruthy (1876)

Synod of Mulanthuruthy is one of the important events in the history of Malankara Church. The Malankara Church brought Patriarch of Antioch to Malankara in order to defeat the Reformist faction in court cases. An assembly of the Malankara Church was held at Mulanthuruthy and it was presided over by the Patriarch. The assembly of Church representatives was held at Mulanthuruthy church in June 1876. The Patriarch insisted that Malankara church should oblige in writing to surrender its independence and sovereignty to the Patriarch of Antioch.



Apart from the decisions taken at Veliyanadu assembly in 1873, it was also decided that Malankara Church had been under the Patriarch of Antioch since ancient times. Even though the decisions of the Synod helped in defeating the Reformist faction in court cases, it is a sad truth of history that the Synod led to the surrender of the identity and freedom of the church and to its subsequent division. It was Patriarch Pathrose III who convened the Synod of Mulanthuruthy and presided over it. This historical event happened during the period of Pulikkottil Joseph Mar Dionysius V.

#### Activities

1. Explain the two traditions that exist regarding the visit of St. Thomas to India.
2. What is Synod of Udayamperor? How did it affect our church?
3. Describe briefly
  1. Persian Immigration
  2. Koonan Cross Oath
4. How was Arch Deacon Thoma ordained as Marthoma I?
5. Explain the circumstances that led to division in Malankara Church.
6. What is 'Vattippanam suit'?
7. What is Synod of Mulanthuruthy? Discuss its impact on the Church.

## Chapter 3

# History of the Catholicate

The Catholicate of Malankara is the symbol of the freedom and identity of Malankara Church. This chapter discusses the founding of the Catholicate and the events that led to its foundation.

1. The titles of Catholicos and Patriarch.
2. The titles of Catholicos and Maphriyan in the Persian empire.
3. The background of founding Catholicate in Malankara.
4. Was it Catholicate or Maphriyanate that was founded in Malankara?
5. Was it a founding or a reinstatement?

### The titles of Catholicos and Patriarch

The word Catholicos has originated from the Greek word Cath-Nolikos. This word means 'Person of the Public.'

Revenue officers in the Roman Empire were known by this name. Hence this name was not used to designate church administrators within the Roman Empire. But in places like Persia, Georgia, Armenia etc outside the Roman Empire, Church administrators were known as Catholicos. Besides, 'Person of the Public', this title was also used in these churches in the sense of a church administrator who rules a See independently.

The title Patriarch was used by prelates of the church within the Roman Empire the title Patriarch originated from the Greek words 'Patri' and 'Archies' which mean 'Chief Father'. The Supreme leader of Church, family, clan or tribe was known by this title. These facts underline that Patriarch and Catholicos are equivalent titles and have equal authority and rights. The two titles were used alternately to designate prelates of different churches having equal authority and rights.

## The titles of Catholicos and Maphriyan in the Persian Empire

Catholicate originated in the Persian church by about AD 290. After three hundred years Maphrianate was founded in the Church of Tigris which was under the Syrian church of Antioch but geographically within the Persian Empire. The head of Persian Church was called Catholicos and the head of Church of Tigris was called Maphriyan. Catholicos was the leader of Persian Christians whereas Maphriyan was the leader of members of Church of Antioch living in Persia. In those days Catholicos was considered equal to Patriarch and Maphriyan was considered as under the see of Antioch. However the records after the 13<sup>th</sup> century tend to use these titles alternately. It is with the Catholicos of the Persian Church that Malankara Church had friendship and communion till the 12<sup>th</sup> century AD. The Maphriyan of Tigris was a subordinate of Patriarch of Antioch and a member of the Syrian Church ordained by the Patriarch. He executed pastoral service to members of Syrian Church who lived in Tigris. Moreover the Church of Tigris was part of the Church of Antioch.

## The background of founding the Catholicate in Malankara

When we think about the background of founding the Catholicate in Malankara, it becomes prima face evident that the liberation from foreign domination and the innate desire for freedom of the Malankara church prompted the church fathers to think about such an administrative mechanism. Besides the founding of Catholicate can be seen as part of the progressive development of the Malankara Church.

The most important cause of the founding of Catholicate was the Synod of Mulanthuruthy and the rights and authority illegitimately claimed by the Patriarch through it. The synod of Mulanthuruthy convened in 1876 had taken two wrong decisions. One was that the Malankara church had recognized the supremacy of the Patriarch of Antioch since ancient days. These decisions ensured the supreme authority of Patriarch of Antioch and Malankara Church was to be considered as part of church of Antioch. There was a general impression that the reins of authority of the Malankara Church was transferred from the Malankara Metropolitan to the Patriarch. This foreign intervention destroyed the freedom of the Malankara Church and Malankara Church once again had to submit before foreign domination. The desire for liberation from foreign domination led to the founding of the Catholicate.

Another reason for the founding of Catholicate was the desire to give due recognition and respect to Joseph Mar Dionysius V, who led Malankara Church to

victory in its struggle against the Reformists. The members of the Church desired to found an administrative system (Maphriyanate) similar to the one that existed in Tigris, Persia under the Patriarch of Antioch and wanted to raise Joseph Mar Dionysius to that post. Mathan Malpan of Konattu and Vattasseril Mar Dionysius metropolitan wrote letters to the Patriarch placing this request before him. Malankara Church demanded the reinstatement of Maphriyanate in Malankara which had ceased to exist in Tigris. The historical documents reveal that Vattasseril Metropolitan and his followers were driven solely by the desire to establish an independent administrative system and had no intention to break off the relationship with the Patriarch or with the Church of Antioch. The immediate cause of establishing the Catholicate was the uncanonical interdict against Saint Vattasseril Metropolitan issued by Patriarch Abdulla on 5<sup>th</sup> May 1911.

The Catholicate can be seen as an outward expression of the ageoldness and historical consciousness of the Malankara Church. Besides it can also be seen as an independent administrative mechanism that evolved as a result of the progressive growth of the Church. The ageoldness, historical consciousness and evolution can be listed as the reasons for the founding of the Catholicate.

### The founding of Catholicate in Malankara

The interdict on St. Vattasseril Metropolitan created great commotion in the Malankara Church. Majority of the people and Churches rallied behind the saintly metropolitan. They decided that such high handed actions of the Patriarch of Antioch should be stopped altogether and steps should be taken to prevent any such moves in future. They referred the matter to Patriarch Abded Meshiha, the Predecessor of Patriarch Abdulla, who accepted the invitation of Malankara and arrived here on 13<sup>th</sup> June 1912.

The managing committee of the Church which assembled in Parumala under the presidentship of Mar Dionysius VI decided to consecrate Murimattathil Paulose Mar Ivanios of Kandanad diocese as Catholicos. Accordingly the Synod of Malankara Church headed by Patriarch Abded Meshiha consecrated Mar Ivanios as Catholicos under the title Mar Baselius. The consecration took place at Niranam Church on Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> September 1912. Thus the Catholicate was established in Malankara.

### Was it Catholicate or Maphriyanate that was founded in Malankara?

There are two opinions over this question. The demand raised in the letter send by St. Vattasseril Mar Dionysius and Mathan Malpan of Konattu to the Patriarch

of Antioch was regarding the Maphrianate and its foundation. But in the Orders issued by Patriarch Abded Meshiha in connection with the establishment of the Catholicate, Mar Baselius Paulose I was designated as Catholicos or Maphriyan. One of the above mentioned orders reads like this:

In response to your request, we have ordained our beloved Ivanios as Baselios with the name Maphrian or Catholicos of the East that is the See of the Apostle Marthoma in India and elsewhere (V.C. Samuel 'Truth Triumphs' MOC, Kottayam, 46). This order was issued on 17<sup>th</sup> September 1912. Even though what was desired for and meant to be founded was the Maphrianate, the order proclaims it as Catholicate also. Moreover in the order issued in February 1913, the Head of Malankara church is designated as Catholicos. It reads: "When the Catholicos passes away, your bishops have the legitimate right to ordain another person in the place." Both these orders refer to the Head of Malankara Church as Catholicos. Even though what the Malankara Church desired for was a Maphrianate, what was founded here in effect was the Catholicate. Also in the orders regarding the rights and authority of the Catholicos, the rights and authorities mentioned are those that can be executed only by the Catholicos and not by a Maphriyan. Hence what was founded in Malankara was an independent Catholicate.

Was it a founding or a reinstatement of the Catholicate

How did the founding of the Catholicate come to be known as a reinstatement? The reasons for such a misrepresentation are the following.

1. The thought that it was the Maphrianate of Tigris that was transplanted to Malankara and the propaganda in this direction.
2. The misconception that Malankara church was part of Church of Tigris.
3. As the Catholicos of Malankara uses the title ('Catholicos of the East') used by the Catholicos of Tigris.
4. The thought that the Catholicate of Tigris has ceased to exist and is non extant today.

Because of these reasons the establishment of the Catholicate came to be known as a reinstatement. However when we think in the light of the historical background we understand that the above listed grounds are false. What happened in Malankara was the establishment, not the reinstatement, of the Catholicate.

It was not the Maphrianate of Tigris that was founded in Malankara but the Catholicate with same powers and rights. It is a historical truth that Malankara Church had never been a part of the Church of Tigris. Besides those who use the same titles or designations need not represent the same position. The Maphrianate of Tigris was an administrative mechanism founded by the Patriarch of Antioch for

the members of the Syrian fold there. The Church of Tigris was a part of the Church of Antioch.

There are many evidences for the fact that it was the founding of the Catholicate that happened in Malankara. The Catholicate of Malankara had never been established anywhere else in history. It is an administrative mechanism of Malankara Church Fathers for the members of the Malankara church. From this we can understand that what happened in 1912 was the founding of the Catholicate.

#### Activities

1. Conduct a comparative study of the titles-Catholicos, Patriarch and Maphrian
2. Explain the historical background of the founding of Catholicate in Malankara.
3. Examine the reasons for the establishment of the Catholicate getting represented as a reinstatement.
4. Enumerate the qualities of Church fathers who took efforts for the independence of Malankara Church and the establishment of the Catholicate.
5. Pray for Malankara Orthodox Church.

## Chapter 4

# Malankara Church in the Modern Age

The history of the Malankara Church after the establishment of the Catholicate is one of development and progress. The consciousness of freedom and identity gave the right sense of direction to the Malankara Church and opened up the horizon for the Malankara Church to become a world class church. The important events of the modern age are described in this chapter.

1. Framing the constitution of the Malankara Church
2. The merger of the posts of Malankara metropolitan and Catholicos.
3. The Supreme Court judgement of 1958 and Reconciliation in the Church.
4. Malankara Church and the Ecumenical movement.

### Framing the Constitution of the Malankara Church-1934

It is a matter of pride that Malankara Orthodox Church, the Christian Church of India could frame and implement a constitution even before India became an independent nation and framed her national constitution. The constitution of the Malankara Church was passed by the Malankara Syrian Christian Association convened at M.D. Seminary, Kottayam on 26<sup>th</sup> December 1934. The framing of the constitution helped in preserving the independence and identity of the Malankara Church and in checking foreign domination.

The period between 1911 and 1934 was a period of conflicts. Yet the peaceful atmosphere was maintained through peace talks in this period. The managing committee of Malankara Association which met in 1928 entrusted a constituent sub committee under the leadership of Shri. O.M. Cherian. This committee prepared a draft document titled 'Compendium of Laws'. At the same time St. Vattasseril Mar Dionysius metropolitan was also preparing another draft of the constitution. While discussions and studies on both these drafts were going on, Vattasseril metropolitan passed away on 23<sup>rd</sup> February 1934. The Malankara Syrian Christian Association that met on 26<sup>th</sup> December 1934 passed the constitution drafted and submitted by

the constituent subcommittee and the constitution came into force in 1935. The constitution of Malankara Church passed in 1934 contained 13 chapters and 127 articles. Today the constitution has 13 chapters and 135 articles. The constitution has been amended in the years 1951, 1967, 1997, 2006 and 2012.

### The merger of the posts of Malankara Metropolitan and Catholicos

The posts of Catholicos and Malankara Metropolitan were formed during various stages of development of the Malankara church. When we examine the history of Malankara Church till the twentieth century, we find that the apostolic heritage and succession that originated from St. Thomas continued for centuries through the Church prelates. This apostolic line extends from the Early Fathers of Indian Church who received their blessings directly from St. Thomas till the Catholicos. Just like in other early churches, the early Fathers of Indian Church too might have been known as Elders and Chiefs. History states that these Heads of the Church were known as Archdeacons in later periods. Ever since the declaration of Independence of the church in 1653, the Heads of Malankara church came to be known as Marthomas. These Marthomas and their successors called Malankara Metropolitans gave strong leadership to the Church and with the founding of the Catholicate in 1912, there were two key spiritual positions in Malankara Church. One was that of Malankara Metropolitan who executed the physical, spiritual, and ecclesiastical administration of the Malankara Church. The other was that of the Catholicos who executed the consecration of Holy Mooron and consecration of bishops along with presiding over the synod. These two positions existed as separate entities from 1912 to 1934. However the Malankara Syrian Christian Association of 1934 decided that both these positions should be vested in one person. Thus the two key spiritual positions in Malankara were merged into one and assumed the entitlement of 'Catholicos of the East and Malankara Metropolitan.' Thus the Catholicos became the president of Malankara Syrian Christian Association and the Metropolitan Trustee of the Malankara Church. This merger of positions helped in the rapid development of the Malankara church thereafter.

### Supreme Court judgement of 1958 and Reconciliation in the Church

After the founding of Catholicate in 1912, disputes heightened in the Church and the two factions, known as the Patriarchal faction and the Metropolitan faction respectively, competed against each other. Along with registering cases against the



rival faction, there were simultaneous attempts for reconciliation. Eventhough all the efforts for reconciliation failed, the Honourable Supreme Court gave its verdict in 1958. The verdict was in favour of the Orthodox Church and thereafter peace was established in the Malankara Church. The verdict was given by a five member bench presided over by Chief Justice S.R. Das. Apart from the Chief Justice of India, the division bench comprised of Justice Bhagavathy, Justice Sinha, Justice Subba Rao and Justice Wankoo as its members.

The Supreme Court verdict of 1958 ended the long standing case filed in 1938 by the Patriarchal faction against H.H. Geevarghese II, the then Catholicos and Malankara Metropolitan. This case had several interim verdicts and verdicts of lower courts as well as appeals during its course. Even though one such verdict of 1946 was against the Orthodox Church, the Supreme Court on appellate petition judged in favour of the Orthodox Church in 1958. This verdict resulted in the establishment of peace within the church.

After the verdict of 1958, all metropolitans, from both Patriarchal and metropolitan factions met at Old Seminary Kottayam in presence of Mar Yoolios, the Patriarchal representative. The meeting took place on 16<sup>th</sup> December 1958. At 11<sup>o</sup> clock at night both factions exchanged letters of reconciliation. Mar Yoolios, the representative of Patriarch Ignathius Yakob III and H.H. Geevarghese II exchanged letters and established peace in the church.

Even though peace was re-established in the church in 1958, disputes continued to raise its head here and there. Malankara Church remains divided for more than one century and civil suits after civil suits plague it. A final judgement regarding the disputes after the establishment of peace came from the Honourable Supreme Court in 1995. However neither these subsequent judgements nor the efforts at establishing peace could claim a final settlement. The verdict of the Supreme Court itself was an attempt to promote the efforts for reconciliation. A meeting of Malankara Syrian Christian Association was held on March 2002. Justice Malimutt of the Supreme Court was observer at this meeting. This meeting endorsed through voting that H.H. Baselius Marthoma Mathews II was the statutory Malankara Metropolitan. Unfortunately the patriarchal faction withdrew from the meeting at the last moment. Thereafter that faction has continued to respond negatively and therefore peace in Malankara Church still remains at large.

### Malankara Church and the Ecumenical movement

Twentieth century is a notable period in Church history. The emergence of ecumenical movements have enabled the coming together of the divided church

communities. It also aids in inter church dialogues and joint action. Malankara Orthodox Church has always welcomed and co-operated with such initiatives. It is one of the founding members of World Council of Churches. This is an indicator of the ecumenical interest of the Malankara Church. Even before the emergence of WCC, Malankara Church had shown great interest in the ecumenical scenario. H.H. Catholicos Geevarghese II, H.G. Dr. Paulose Mar Gregorios, H.G. Dr. Philipose Mar Theophilus, H.G. Alexios Mar Theodosius, Fr. Dr. V.M. Samuel, Fr. Dr. K.M. George, Fr. Dr. Jacob Kurian and Sarah Chacko have actively participated in several ecumenical assemblies representing Malankara Church. It is a fact that the factional disputes and internal problems of the Malankara Church have adversely affected its ecumenical image.

### Mission Activities

There are historical records regarding the existence of a monastic order of Malankara Church named 'Order of St. Thomas' before the reign of Marthoma I [that is when he was Arch deacon Thomas]. Majority of the monastic orders existing in Malankara Church today originated in the first decades of the twentieth century and even after that. The Bethany Ashram of Perunad, Ranni was founded in 1918, Mount Tabor Dayara of Pathanapuram in 1929, Bethlahem Ashram, Chengamanad in 1960, St. Paul's Ashram, Puthuppady in 1958, Holy Trinity Ashram, Ranni in 1970, 'Thadakam' Ashram in Coimbatore in 1936 and Mar Kuriakose Dayara, Mylapra was founded in 1985. Along with the monasteries, nunnaries were also established. Thus twentieth century decisively influenced the growth of Malankara Church.

Along with the founding of monastic ashrams, evangelical activities developed in the Malankara Church. The Oriental Evangelical committee constituted by Rev. Fr. Geevarghese of Arthunkal and the Sleafadasa (Servants of the Cross) community founded by Deacon M.P. Pathrose are examples. Besides, the St. Paul's evangelical movement was founded in 1953 by Deacon M.V. George (H.G. Geevarghese Mar Osthathios metropolitan).

### Activities

1. The framing of the Church constitution provided the right sense of direction to the Malankara Church after the founding of the Catholicate. Substantiate.
2. Prepare brief notes on (1) The merger of the positions of Catholicos and Malankara Metropolitan. (2) Malankara church and the ecumenical movement. (3) Mission activities in the Malankara Orthodox Church.

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## Unit 4

# The Christian Family

### Chapter I

## Biblical Basis

#### Introduction

Societal changes have effected radical changes in the views on family. Also we cannot say that different cultures, nations and religions had a homogenous perspective regarding family. However we have to assimilate a Christian perspective regarding family. It is a generally accepted fact that family plays a dominant role in building up the life of an individual. We can view family form various perspectives.

#### 1. Biological perspective

Living things in nature follow a particular order. When they come of age they copulate and beget offsprings. They would raise their offsprings for some period of time. After this stage paternal and filial affections cease to govern their lives.

#### 2. Psychological perspective

Man and woman have a natural emotional desire to open up their hearts mutually and share love and care. This is fulfilled through family relationship.

#### 3. Commercial or Financial perspective.

All of us need financial security for our existence and development. Children grow and develop in the protection of their parents alone. Family is an important means for this development.

#### 4. Sociological Perspective

Man is a social animal. Society needs an internally ordered structure for its sustenance. Family becomes the smallest unit of such an order. That is why

it is said that if the family becomes good, the society would definitely become good.

### Christian Perspective

The Holy Bible assimilates the above listed four perspectives comprehensively and puts forward a greater concept regarding family. Accordingly one should execute all the family responsibilities by yielding to the Will of God. The system of family itself is part of the creation and preservation of God. The biblical basis of family can be stated briefly as follows.

#### 1. God created the family

(Genesis 1: 25-26;2)

We read two descriptions of how God created the family in the Holy Bible. The first description doesn't mention how the creation was done. However it is revealed that no living things other than our first parents are given God's image and resemblance in the act of creation. What is meant here is that man should grow up in God's nature and should reveal God through his thoughts, words and action. In the second description how the first parents were created are detailed. Adam was created by blowing life breath into his nostrils and Eve was created using Adam's rib-bone. This description reveals that God had crafted the family with His own hands. It implies that man and woman should live together as partners and friends. Some have interpreted that Eve was given lower position than Adam. However this is not warranted in the Bible. What is emphasized here is the strength of mutual relationship.

#### 2. Marital relationship is inseparable

(St. Matthew 19:1-12)

This is the part of the gospel read during the sacrament of marriage. Jews had the practice of divorcing their wives for silly reasons. Jesus Christ didn't agree to it. Marriage is not a mutual arrangement between a man and a woman. It is an agreement with God. Our church views the teaching "Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate" quite seriously. We should realize that divorces, which are increasing in number, are not in accordance with the Will of God.

#### 3. The relation is like that between Jesus Christ and the Church

(Ephe 5: 22-32)

This part of the epistle is also read during the sacrament of marriage. Here we find the term mystery, secret or sacrament. Sacrament is a Latin term. The

relationship between Christ and the Church cannot be separated at any time. Christ gave His life and saved the Church. This section reminds us that husbands and wives are bound to maintain sacrificial love and live together till the end of their lives.

#### 4. Only one husband and one wife

Polygamy and the system of keeping concubines existed in ancient cultures and even among Jews. The Christian church doesn't accept any of these. The church has recognized the admonitions given by St Paul (through his epistles) to the Elders and deacons of the Church as applicable to all the believers (1 Timothy 3.2, Titus 1:6). We can say that it is the Christian Church that gave the family model of one husband and one wife to the world.

#### 5. Marriage is a sacrament

In the light of the biblical principles mentioned above, the church considers marriage as a sacrament. A sacrament is chiefly officiated by God. The priest stands in place of God and joins the husband and wife together through this sacrament. The sacrament of marriage of the Church has two parts. In the first part rings are blessed and are given to the bride and the groom. The priest himself blesses and gives the rings as a symbol of how even betrothal is accepted by God. The bride and the groom don't exchange rings as marriage is not a mutual agreement. The priest himself blesses and gives the rings. The next part is the blessing of the crown. The priest blesses chains with cross and gives them to the bride and the groom. After this, the priest joins the hands of the bride and the groom together and prays reminding them that God will be their eternal mediator. All the prayers of the holy sacrament of marriage teach us that family is a divine institution. "Unless the Lord builds the house, they labour in vain who build it; unless the Lord guards the city, the watchman stays awake in vain" (Psalms 127-1). The family life of all those who give importance to this belief will become successful.

#### 6. The Holy Trinity as a perfect model

Eventhough we cannot attain perfection in this world, we should have an ultimate goal in our lives. A family is made up of individuals and the personalities within it inevitably have differences. To the question of how we can bring about harmony within the family, the answer is Holy Trinity. But we should not think that the solidarity of Holy Trinity can be comprehended merely by human intellect. Unity and diversity co-exist in the Holy Trinity. God the Father who created everything, and Son, the Saviour who reclaimed it through His Passion, and the Holy Spirit

who completes everything born and yet to be born Execute different functions. Yet in essence all the three are One. Similarly the father, mother and children have different functions within the family. At the same time all of them should be one in their love of God. The mystery of the coexistence of unity and plurality in Holy Trinity should become a model for Christian families.

### 7. The Holy Family of Nazareth

Eventhough Jesus Christ was born of a Virgin, he had a family background. The Holy Bible says that Mary was betrothed to Joseph even before the Annunciation. (St. Matthew 1:18-21, St Luke 1:26-38). When we consider the fact that Jesus Christ, the saviour of the world, had a family to be born into and parents to look after, the Spiritual significance of Family becomes clearer. St. Joseph and Virgin Mary received divine revelations equally. These parents took care to bring up their child in God's grace and blessings of men alike by circumcising him on the eighth day, bringing him to the House of God on the fortieth day, and dedicating the child at the age of 12 before God. If all these things were required for Jesus Christ, the need for Spiritual education among children growing in the modern world of evil influences, is quite large. When we think about the divine basis of family, we have to understand it in the light all the points discussed above.

#### Activities

1. How is the Christian perspective regarding family different from other perspectives?
2. Analyse the biblical passages read during the sacrament of marriage.
3. How does the Christian perspective regarding family help in strengthening family ties? Discuss.

## Chapter 2

# Challenges faced by the Modern Family

### Introduction

Family life has faced several issues and challenges throughout history. But in the modern world these have become more complicated. There are several reasons for it, but the most important is the western influence. Today all think that the growth of a society is contained in its material growth. We desire for the material conditions and technological development of the West. Along with this, the problems in the family relationships of the West, started spreading out into our families as well. One inference got from observing people of the west is that material growth and peace in family will not go hand in hand. Divorces and broken families are increasing significantly in our society also. We shall examine the important challenges before our families.

#### 1. The sacramental value of family life has lost its significance

The sustainability of the family rests on the Christian perspective and faith regarding family. As we have learned in the previous chapter, the belief that family is joined together by God and it cannot be separated is going down in modern families. The modern couples believe that it is the material conditions that sustain family. Hence they work hard for it forgetting even God. This loss of value is a great challenge.

#### 2. Inability of couples to accommodate the changing systems of family

The changes in the society influence family a lot. The joint family system is a hallmark of the agrarian society. Such a society has more God reliance and human relationships. When the agrarian society moved into the industrial age, the joint families became nuclear families. Today the society is changing from industrial age



to the cyber age. Material and spiritual values which were once upheld dogmatically deteriorated. For example, protecting parents in their old age was a value recognised in the erstwhile society. But today it has undergone changes. Changes that happened in the society in this manner have become a challenge to the family.

### 3. Changing roles of husband and wife

Family is a system. Every member of the family has a definite role to play within it. Formerly all conformed to these norms or standards. The husband would work outside the house and earn for the family. The wife would serve inside the house and the children would grow up obeying the parents. This system had one limitation. It didn't help in developing the skills and abilities of women folk. But it had the positive aspect of having a recognized administrative system. This system has changed and both man and woman have started working outside the homes. An internal administrative system acceptable to all in the changed circumstances has not yet evolved in families. This is another challenge.

### 4. Influence of Globalization

The important yardsticks of success in globalised society are financial growth and achievements. The proverb that 'those who have no money are useless' has literally influenced all in the society. Couples become dissatisfied if they are not able to realise the achievements they desire for in material life. This badly affects peace in family. Couples entertain a lot of expectations in material progress. The gap between expectation and reality creates problems in families.

### 5. Bad influence of media

The media creates unnecessary greed for coziness, luxury and expensive articles. They create emotional disturbances in places where intellect and logic should be applied. The values and attitudes constructed by the media need not be based on spirituality. Family life demands a lot of sacrifice. Media creates an attitude to achieve and attain rather than to sacrifice. As we have started using the equation 'Gain more than you give' within the families, it has become another challenge.

### 6. The social recognition got by evil habits

Today society has given recognition to many practices which were once considered bad. One such practice is consumption of alcoholic drinks. Many people who take to the habit for the sake of friendship become addicts. Alcoholism creates problems within many families and later leads even to divorce. Other challenges faced by

family are immoral actions like drug addiction, criminality and extra marital relationships

## 7. Mental disorders

Mental disorders are on the rise in the modern society. If serious or light mental disorders like depression, distrust, ecstasy, sadism, inferiority complex or unnecessary fear affect one member of the family it will spoil the entire family. Many disorders can be corrected if the patient is given the required treatment and care at the appropriate time. If the partner doesn't have a sacrificing attitude for it, the problem will become serious. It should be prayerfully decided whether divorce should be obtained in such situations.

There are numerous other issues yet to be included in this list. Some of them are estrangement between the families of the husband and wife, personality differences, lack of mutual respect, haughtiness, jealousy, uncontrollable anger, lack of a forgiving attitude, lethargy, lack of co-ordination in bringing up children etc. The solution for all these is building your home on a spiritual foundation. A family that prays together stays together. If the married couple live in divine nature by practising spiritual austerities like prayer, lent and fasting they can overcome all the challenges listed above. Modern families should try to understand with greater seriousness that "Unless the lord builds the house, they labour in vain who build it." (Psalms 127:1)

### Activities

1. State the challenges faced in modern family life.
2. Has material progress increased the happiness of family life? What do you think?
3. How do media influence families? Discuss in detail.
4. How can we solve the problems created by mental disorders in family life?

## Chapter 3

# Family Relationships

### Introduction

Let us look at an odd but real situation. A palatial house. The only son has a spacious room with all modern facilities like TV, internet etc. He studies in this room. Along with it, he can chat with people in any corner of the world. He is always on-line on social networks like Facebook, Twitter etc. A card hangs at his door with the inscription "No entry without permission". The house is built by his father and mother. But they need permission to enter the spacious room they had given to their only child for his comfortable life! What we see here is a picture of irony created by the modern information technology. Even when we see the world as a global village and maintain international relations as a global citizen, conversation and communication with parents living under the same roof become quite limited. The inability to establish deep and intimate relationships even within the family should be viewed seriously.

### Reasons for family relationships becoming thinner

If parents work or are busy, they spend lesser time with their children. These children on the other hand, spend their freetime in the technological world. They start off with toys and computer games and establish relationship with the world outside their homes. The joint family system disappeared and the practice of sharing intimacy with grandparents listening to grandmother stories ceased. Modern houses and flats spoiled neighbourhood relationships. Students join far away public schools for the sake of English medium education. They neglect neighbourhood schools and neighbourhood relationships become impossible for them. Moreover the alienation created by globalization makes relationships thinner. The philosophy that "People are to be utilized and things are to be loved" has possessed human hearts. The general belief today is that there is no need of people if there is sufficient money and technology. Individualism has become a recognized norm in social life.

Man's estrangement from God has resulted in his estrangement from fellow human beings. The consequence of man's estrangement from God in the garden of Eden was fratricide. Love of God and love of man are two sides of the same coin. As a result of the changes in the spiritual and material conditions, family relationships have become weaker. Christian families should consciously react against this. In the context of breaking up of families, let us think about its solutions as well.

### 1. Attain indepth spirituality by placing God as the centre of family

Create opportunities for the members of the family to interact at various levels by praying, worshipping, dining and chatting together. If we utilize time only for money making, deep relationship among members within a family will not develop.

### 2. Everyone has the duty to love aged parents and extended families

It is an unchangeable commandment to obey and respect parents. None has the right to violate God's commandment just because social conditions have changed. This commandment is clearly highlighted in the sacrament of marriage. Instead of sending aged parents to old age homes, it would be ideal if the nearest relatives take up the responsibility of looking after them within the family itself.

### 3. Bring up children in good advice

We should develop the expectations and dreams regarding material life only on the foundation of spirituality. The saying 'if character is lost everything is lost' is very meaningful. Christian life is not just recognizing certain creeds and observing certain rituals. It is a way of life. The greatest feature of that way of life is respect for the poor. The psalmist says 'Blessed is he who considers the poor; the lord will deliver him in time of trouble' (Psalms 41:1). Jesus Christ at the time of His Incarnation empathized more with the marginalised including tax collectors, sinners, prostitutes, blindmen and lepers. Children should learn and acquire this value from parents. Special love and care should be given to aged parents and children within the family. Outside, special care should be given to the diseased and the poor.

### 4. The youth should be able to assimilate Christian values according to their age even if they don't get this training at home

The youth should not keep away from responsibilities just because they didn't get their models from parents at home. The youth learn a lot of things of the secular

world without the help of parents. This principle is applicable to spiritual life as well. If the youth accept the word of God and the life of saints as greater models than parents in this matter, they can do a lot of things to improve relationships in the family.

### 5. The Church is a family

A community that worships together is bound to coexist like members of a family. St Paul describes the faithful as organs of the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12 : 11-20). If one organ suffers all the organs suffer together (Verse 26). The first Christian communities lived in mutual care and they shared their material goods among themselves. Now all who believed were together and had all things in common.....and divided them among all, as anyone had need (Acts 2:44-45). There was none among them who lacked (4:34). Our sharing of the flesh and blood of Christ in the sacrament of the Holy Eucharist, becomes meaningful when we share our material goods with those who don't have them. A believer should cultivate family relationship with those related in blood and friendliness with the believers in his prayer fellowship. When we consider the fact that Christ loved the world, we are compelled in Christ to love all, including those who believe in other Churches, religions or even atheism.

### 6. Human relations foster pleasure of body, mind and soul

No one lives and dies for himself. Life becomes meaningful when we live for others. Mother Teresa, who is respected by all, stated "Though there are millions in this world who don't have enough food, there are many more who don't have enough love." Life becomes intolerable when you have no one to love you. The old parents in several homes suffer from this experience. The old don't need much material comforts. What they require is love, care and nursing in times of need. Alienation and neglect within homes have become common in a society where information technology is the leading norm. All those who have received spiritual education should look into this matter and should try to foster human relations within and outside their homes.

#### Activities

1. Discuss the good and bad aspects of joint and nuclear families.
2. Record your opinion about sending aged parents to old age homes.
3. Find out practical methods for developing thick family friendships among families of your parish.

## Chapter 4

# Marriage between members of different churches and religions

### Introduction

Marriage and family relationships always contain a religious and ritualistic background. This fact becomes clear when we examine the history of civilizations that evolved in various parts of the world. In societies which turned secular or non religious, civil laws became the basis of family. Religious belief is not significant for couples living in them. But the society of Kerala has not become fully secular. However the Christian community has a lot of emigrants. The children of these emigrants have to co-exist with different cultures and people of different religions and castes. Some of these children might fall in love with people of other religions and begin family life with such partners. It might seem that laws of the church place restrictions on such people. The opposition of parents might become severe. Eventhough all these can be overcome, differences in faith and perspective of life might cause dissensions in family life later. Young men and women should become conscious about these.

### The law of the Church

In Orthodox church, marriage is a sacrament. A sacrament is given only to the believers. Therefore the bride and the groom should become Orthodox believers before marriage. Since the communion in the Holy Eucharist is very important, member of churches which do not have this communion should become members of Orthodox church before marriage. That is the reason why members of churches like Marthoma and CSI (especially girls) are taught Orthodox faith, anointed with Holy Mooron given confession and Communion and made members of the Orthodox church before they are taken in marriage. Since we are nearer in faith to Roman Catholic and Chaldeon Churches than to the Reformist Churches, members of those churches are not anointed with Holy Mooron, before marriage. We recognize their Baptism. But such people should accept Orthodox faith by taking Holy

confession and communion. Members of Pentecostal groups have to receive all rituals and sacraments of accepting Orthodox faith, including baptism, before getting married into the Church. Members of other religions also should become member of the church fully before marriage.

### The Catholic perspective

The Catholic church has adopted a different perspective regarding marriage with members of other churches or religions. They would officiate the marriage even without the partner changing his/her religion or faith. But the non-catholic partner has to give consent to the catholic partner to retain his/her faith and bring up their children in catholic faith. The Orthodox church has not adopted such a perspective. Orthodox church thinks that the young generation would get strong values and sense of direction only if the couple live in unity in the same faith. If the father follows Orthodox faith and the mother follows Pentecostal fellowship it is likely to affect the unity of their family life and thereby the future of their children adversely. Therefore Orthodox church doesn't encourage a couple following different churches or religions.

Differences in faith is not a problem for marriage under civil laws. As per Indian civil code, a male above twenty one and a female above eighteen can register their marriage if they consent to it under own will without any compulsion.

### Problems in the marriage between members of different churches

As parents give consent to most of the marriages between members of apostolic churches, there are hardly any problems in terms of consent. However disputes regarding the day of conducting the marriage ceremony often arise. Orthodox church doesn't allow marriage ceremony during the five canonical fasts (3, 12, 15, 25 and 50 day fasts) and on days other than Sunday and Monday. Now a days, on practical considerations, the Supreme Head of the Church permits certain concessions in this rule. But other churches have different rules regarding the days of marriage. They have permitted marriage on several days of the week. For example the Marthoma church has permitted marriage on all days other than Sundays. But they have not given any concession on Sundays. The members of Orthodox Church should take special care not to violate Church laws in conducting marriage.

The betrothed should conduct a self evaluation of their aptitudes before marriage. Those who follow the faith and its rituals, practices and life styles rigorously should select a suitable bride to ensure happy family life. Those who are rigorous about



Lent, fasting, confession, communion of Christ's flesh and blood, intercessory prayer to Saintly Fathers, prayer for the departed etc. would find it difficult to live with a non-rigorous partner in later life. Eventhough the fire of love prompts many young people to think that they can neglect the creed of faith in their subconscious mind, it is impossible in the long run. Hence in-depth self evaluation is essential before we select our partner in life.

### Problems in marriage with people of different religious culture

Our church and the Ethiopian church have communion in the Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist. Hence there are no canonical hinderances for members of these two churches getting married. However there are a lot of cultural differences between these churches. Therefore in marriage one should give serious consideration to social and cultural conditions along with matters of faith.

Marriage between people belonging to different religions might face a number of problems. The problems related to the church can be solved if both partners become members of the Orthodox church. Still parents, relatives and perhaps the conservative society around might not recognize such a marriage. Couples who get married either in the church or as per civil law overcoming these oppositions still face a lot of challenges. Can intense mutual love between such individuals survive these differences? The period of love is a period of imagination and the period of marriage is a period of reality. If the period of love is misunderstood as reality, a lot of problems will arise. If the couple continue in the former imaginative world even after marriage without recognizing the realities it will adversely affect family life.

The youth should not approach family life emotionally. The real world is beyond the pleasures got from love. We should evaluate whether we have the maturity to live in that world. Marriage is ordained by God. It should exist till the end of life. Monogamy is God's commandment. The couple should maintain fidelity throughout their lives. Wealth, position and material comforts cannot sustain family. What is required there is love, humility, compromise and readiness for renunciation. It is a relationship that doesn't find fault but support mutually in hours of crisis. The couple should not quarrel in presence of their children. Both the partners have equal responsibility to bring up their children by becoming good role models. The Christian family has the duty to look after the aged parents and the needy in the society. The basis of success in life depends on how far we have acquired the maturity to take up the responsibilities of family life. When people from different religions and cultures come together they have a number of different perspectives regarding



all that we discussed above. If we go forward in life with these different perspectives and standpoints, problems will intensify. Therefore it is essential for one to prepare prayerfully for family life. Those who come from different religions need it in larger amounts. Along with it, it is essential to take good guidelines from mature people.

#### Activities

1. Make a study of the problems in family life and their solutions and present it in the form of a report. (Five couples of various age groups can be selected for this)
2. Conduct a debate in the class on: 'Are love marriages a success or failure.'
3. Discuss the role of prayer, and ritualistic practices in confronting the problems of family life.

## Unit 5

# Various Religions and Ecumenism

## Chapter 1

### Various Religions

In today's world as a result of Globalization, people belonging to different religions and brought up in different cultures, interact intimately. However this experience of diversity has been there for centuries in our country. Friendly co-existence of religions is the hall mark of our nation. Eventhough each religion can claim its own uniqueness, peaceful co-existence of different religions is essential. This lesson envisages a general study of world religions and a specific understanding of Indian religions. This study also aims at how to conserve Christian identity and mission of the gospels within this religious plurality.

#### 1. Man and his religious experience

Some kind of religious experience is traceable in man right from prehistoric times. Forms of worship centering around natural phenomena (Eg. Fire, wind) or the Spirit that exists in everything developed. Such forms of worship developed into religions. Later when certain evil forms of worship developed, reactions against them set in and such reform movements in turn developed into religions.

#### 2. Two types of Religions

The first type of religions can be called primal or primitive religions and the second type of religions can be called developed religions. Primal religions have intimate relationship with nature. However they do not have a developmental history, established structure, founders, religious text, specific principles of belief or uniform system of worship. The extant religious forms of social groups like aborigins or tribals are primal religions.

Developed religions have a developmental history, great souls or saints who are either founders or reformers, religious texts, common components related to belief

or ritual etc. Religions which are considered developed are all Asiatic religions. They can be classified into Oriental and Occidental religions based on whether they developed in the east or in the west of Asia.

### 3. Occidental Religions

Religions which developed in the western part of Asia are called Occidental religions or Semetic religions. They are Judaism, Christianity and Islam. They are called Semitic religions or Shemia religions because historically they begin from the genealogy of Shem, son of Noah. When compared with oriental religions, occidental religions or semetic religions give greater importance to belief in One God, predominance of religious text, establishment of that religion and aggressive dissemination of that religion.

### 4. Oriental religions

Oriental religions refer to those religions which are formed in the eastern part of Asia, especially, in Persia (modern Iran), India, China and Japan. They include Zoroastrianism, Taoism and Shintoism. Eventhough Zoroastrianism or the religion of the Parsis originated in Iran (ancient Persia) today it has much of its followers in India. Since Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism and Sikhism originated in India, they are known as Indian religions. Eventhough Confucianism and Taoism originated in China, today they do not have much following anywhere. Shintoism which originated in Japan is the royal religion of Japan.

### 5. From Judaism to Shintoism

#### (a) Judaism

Judaism or Hebraism is one of the oldest religions in the world. The Jews have an anthropological history beginning from Adam and Eve, a genealogical history beginning from Father of the Tribes, Abraham and a history of the God's chosen led by prophets from Moses. Tora or The Covenant is central to the religious life of the Jews. The Old Testament of the Bible is in fact the Holy Book of Jews. Eventhough the nerve centre of Jewish religious practices is the temple at Jerusalem, it was destroyed in 71 AD and could not be reconstructed ever since. Jews became scattered in various parts of the world. However the state of Israel was founded in 1948. Jews are still awaiting their Messiah or saviour. Judaism is the first monotheistic religious organization in world history.

#### (b) Christianity

Eventhough there are those who teach that Christianity should not be viewed merely as one of the many religions, it is just one of the religions in the world as far

as historical studies are concerned. The essence of Christianity is a divine project of salvation centred on Jesus Christ. The Holy Book of Christianity is the Bible which includes both Old Testament and New Testament. Christianity has the largest following in the world and is the third largest religion in India. Christians are generally divided into three categories namely Orthodox, Catholic and Protestant. There are subdivisions within each of these categories. Unlike the other categories, Catholics recognize the Pope as the head of the church. The subdivisions within this category observe unity in belief while they maintain ritualistic differences.

#### (c) Islam

The Arabic word Islam implies 'religion of obedience'. Islam is the religious movement founded by Prophet Mohammed who gave leadership to the awakening of Arabia in 6<sup>th</sup> century AD. Muslims believe that Islam is a permanent religious movement and Mohammed is its last prophet. The centre of this religious movement which relies on monotheism and brotherhood of humanity is the religious text 'Quran'. There are two dominant categories in Islam: the Sunnis and the Shias. Islam has the second largest following in the world. The global Holy land of Islam is Mecca in Saudi Arabia. Pilgrimage to this place is known as 'Haj'.

#### (d) Parsis (Zoroastrianism)

Zoroaster is a great soul who lived in Persia in 6<sup>th</sup> century BC. The Parsi religion or Zoroastrianism is a religious movement which originated from him. The 'Gathas', the advices of Zoroaster, are considered as the Holy Book of the Parsi religion. Parsi religion looks at life as a constant battle between the opposing forces of 'Ahuramazda' (goodness) and 'Amgramanyu (evil) and exhorts to attain victory by siding with "Ahuramazda". Since Islam spread in Persia, Parsis are found only in India today.

#### (e) Hinduism

Hinduism is the dominant religion of India and is the third largest religion in the world. In fact, the implication of the word 'Hindu' is geographical. This term was used by people of the west to designate the land surrounding River Indus. The term 'Hindu religion' gained currency only with coming of Europeans to India. Hindus themselves had designated their religious movement as 'Sanathana Dharma'. Both Aryan and non-Aryan sections of the society have been included in the Hindu religious tradition. Therefore Hinduism is the most diverse religion in the world. The most important among the religious texts of Hinduism are the four Vedas, Six Vedangas, and the four Upangas. There are a lot of multiplex categories and 'bhakti' movements within Hinduism. There are also sub categories within the bhakti movements like Shaiva, Vaishnava and Shakti.

#### (f) Jainism

Jainism is a movement that developed under the influence of Vardhamana Mahavira who is believed to have lived in 6<sup>th</sup> century B.C. Eventhough he is considered as the founder of Jainism, as per the official perspective of Jainism, it is an infinite religion. Mahavira is only a contemporary 'tirthankara' of it.

A Jain is one who is 'victorious.' The goal of Jainism is to attain 'Kaivalya' by gaining victory over the bondge of 'karma' and rebirth. The important religious texts of Jainism are 'Purva', 'Angas' and 'Upangas'. There are two sects in Jainism namely 'Swethambarer' and 'Digambarer'. There are more than three million Jains in India.

#### (g) Buddhism

Buddhism developed under the influence of Gautam Bhuddha who is believed to have lived in 6<sup>th</sup> Century BC. As per the official perspective, Buddhism is also infinite. 'Buddha' means one who has attained wisdom or 'bodhi'. The four Great Truths of Buddhism provide the wisdom to overcome desire and attain 'Nirvana'. The religious texts which explain them are known as 'Tripitika'. Eventhough Buddhism originated in India, it spread into regions outside India. There are about five million Buddhists in India. There are two important sects for Buddhism also. They are 'Mahayana' and 'Hinayana'. The common feature of Buddhism and Jainism is that both of them originated in order to reform ancient Hindu religion from undesirable practices. Both of them are notable as religious movements which do not have concepts of God or Spirit.

#### (h) Sikhism

Sikhism is the last of the religions that originated in India. The Sikhs are followers of the religious reformer Guru Nanak who lived in 15<sup>th</sup> century AD. 'Guru Granth Sahib' which contains the teachings of Guru Nanak and the later gurus is the Holy book of Sikhism. Sikhism upholds monotheism and universal brotherhood. The golden temple of Amritsar is the centre of Sikhism. Sikhism is the fourth largest religion in India.

#### (i) Confuscionism

Confuscious is a philosopher-teacher who is believed to have lived in China in 6<sup>th</sup> century B.C. Many people looked upon him as holy man and leader and became his followers. This movement became known as a religious movement. Confuscious focused on ethical principles and the concept of welfare state. His teachings were known as Confusion classics. This movement was banned in later communist China. Today Confuscionism is not a formal religion in China. However Confuscionism is still active as the ideas that govern Chinese culture and life.

### (j) Taoism

The Chinese word 'Tao' implies the principle that controls life and the Universe. Taoism was developed into a religious movement by the followers of the religious teacher who lived in 6<sup>th</sup> century B.C. in China. Taoism contains moral principles centering around three terms 'tao,' 'the' and 'ching'. In later communist China, Taoism had the same fate as that of Confucianism. (discussed above).

### (k) Shintoism

Shintoism is the official religion of Japan. The foundation of Shintoism was laid by a Chinese term 'Shentao' (which means the path of Gods). The most important ritual of Shintoism is worship of Divine Spirits. In Japan these divine Spirits are called 'Kami'. The texts of Shintoism are called 'Kakiji' and 'Nihomki'. Shintoism is considered as the royal religion of Japan as the Japanese royal dynasty is believed to be the succession of souls that originated from Sun goddess.

## 6. Religious plurality and Christian belief

There is only one God. He is the god of Jews and Gentiles alike (Romans 3:29). That God desires for the goodness and salvation of all. Jesus Christ is the means of salvation. God awaits for everyone to attain the experience of salvation through Jesus Christ. Christ has entrusted the responsibility of evangelism with his disciples for this purpose. However it should be executed with patience, love, humility and sacrificial attitude. Here is the need for religious harmony and peaceful coexistence. We should not try to frighten or judge others. Instead we should try to bear witness to Christ with deep rooted Christian faith thinking that other people also have goodness and God can act in them. Acts of Apostles 10:34-35 is an approach that supports such witness. 'In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality. But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by him.'

### Questions

1. How is globalization and study of religions interconnected?
2. What are ancient religions? What are their common characteristics?
3. What are occidental religions? What are their common features?
4. What are oriental religions? What are their common features?
5. Write an essay on the developed religions in the world.
6. State a religious approach that doesn't forget an evangelical mission.
7. What should be the approach of the Church to the plurality of religions in India?

## Chapter 2

# Various Christian Churches

### 1. Jesus Christ and the Church

Jesus Christ had clearly stated that he would establish the Church (St Matthew 16:18). The historical founding of the Church happened in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost. (Acts of Apostles Chap.2). And the Lord added to the Church daily those who were being saved. (Acts of Apostles 2:47). The Church thus begun is an expression of God's kingdom on this earth. It has a unique internal unity with Christ. Statements like 'Church is the body of Christ' and 'Church is the bride of Christ' are epithets that describe this unity. One thing is true. The Church established by Christ is One.'

### 2. One Church and Different Church Sects

The one church which is the body of Christ, failed to uphold unity of faith among the various regional church communities due to human weaknesses in the succeeding ages. As a result divisions developed in the church and different church sects came into existence. The division of the church is the consequence of man's sin and contrary to God's Will. But as each church sect believe and justify its standpoints regarding faith, divisions continue to exist in the church. These divisions exist as a hinderance to the unity of the one church of Christ. If we learn about the divisions of the one church of Christ. If we learn about the divisions of the church, the important sectarian churches, and differences among them, we can think about the ways of mutual fellowship and unity and pray for them.

### 3. History of divisions in the One Church

The Universal Christian church existed as one Church and as regional church communities united in one faith till the fifth century. The first division of the church on the basis of faith happened in the council of Chalcedon in AD 451. There was a clash between two dominant views regarding how God nature and human nature operated in Jesus Christ. The followers of one nature and two natures parted ways.

As the synod of Chalcedon recognized the two nature view, the other faction rejected the council. Those who were opposed to the Council of Chalcedon became the non Chalcedonian faction under the then Patriarch of Alexandria and those who accepted the Council became the Chalcedonian faction under the Patriarch of Rome. The non Chalcedonian faction retains their standpoint of faith till date and are known as Oriental Orthodox Churches. Alexandrian or Coptic Orthodox Church, Syrian Orthodox Church of Antioch, Ethiopian Orthodox Church, Armenian Church, Malankara Orthodox Church of India and Orthodox Church of Eritrea belong to this category.

### 1. Coptic Church

This is also known as Alexandrian Church or Egyptian Church. Since there is racial and linguistic domination of Coptics it is also known as Coptic church. This Church has the thronal succession of St Mark (the evangelist). It has its headquarters in Cairo, Egypt. The Coptic Patriarch is also designated as Pope.

### 2. The Church of Antioch

This church is today spread in Syria, Lebanon, Iraq and Turkey and has the succession of the Church of Antioch. However today it has no geographic connection with Antioch. This Church has the apostolic succession from St. Peter. Its headquarters is in Damascus, Syria. The Jacobite faction in India claims themselves to be under this Church. The Head of this church is called Patriarch of Antioch.

### 3. Ethiopian Church

This church has the largest following among Oriental Orthodox churches. Eventhough there were disciples of Christ in Ethiopia since the first century, (like the Ethiopian eunuch baptized by Philip), the history of Ethiopian Church begins from fourth century AD. This church has the holy tradition of Frumensius who evangelized Ethiopia in the 4<sup>th</sup> century and the nine Syrian monks who reached Ethiopia in the 5<sup>th</sup> century. This church had long been under the spiritual supervision of the Coptic Church. The head of this church is known as 'patriarch' and its headquarters is Adis Ababa.

### 4. Armenian Church

The Armenian church has a history of an entire country including its king becoming Christians in 4<sup>th</sup> century AD. Armenia got its light of gospels from St. Gregory, the man of miracles and Bearer of Light. The church has its headquarters and followers in Armenia which was part of Russia and in Lebanon. The central



headquarters is at Echmiadsin in Armenia. The Catholicos of this region is called Supreme Catholicos and the regional Head of Church of Lebanon is called Celestian Catholicos.

#### 5. Malankara Orthodox Church

Our church has the apostolic and ecclesiastical succession from St. Thomas and exists in India from 1st Century AD onwards (Details of our Church are included in the unit on Church History). The Head of the Church is known as the Catholicos and Metropolitan of Malankara. The Headquarters of the church is in Devalokam, Kottayam, Kerala.

#### 6. Church of Eritrea

This is the church of Eritrea which has gained independence from Ethiopia. As an independent church, church of Eritrea is undergoing changes today (due to the changed political circumstances).

The Chalcedonian sect continued undivided till the 11<sup>th</sup> century. But in the 11<sup>th</sup> century a rift in faith happened among them on the subject of how the Holy Spirit originates. When the Patriarch of Rome suggested that the creed of the church of Nicea should be altered as 'Holy spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son' (Philoyoke), a division under the leadership of the Patriarch of Constantinople disagreed with it. They tried to defend the wordings in the Creed of the Church of Nicea as such. (that is, Holy Spirit..proceeds from the Father). Thus those who were opposed to 'Philoyoke' have remained steadfast in their standpoint of faith till date, and are known as Eastern Orthodox Churches. In a limited sense they are also known as Byzantine Orthodox Churches and Greek Orthodox Churches. The following churches belong to this category.

##### 1. Church of Constantinople

The Head of the Church is known as Ecumenical Patriarch. The headquarters of the Church is at Istanbul, Turkey.

##### 2. Byzantine Church of Alexandria

The Head of the Church is called Alexandrian Patriarch. The headquarters of the church is Alexandria in Egypt.

##### 3. Byzantine Church of Antioch

The head of the church is known as the Patriarch of Antioch. The headquarters of the Church is Damascus in Syria.

#### 4. Byzantian church of Jerusalem

The head of the church is known as Patriarch of Jerusalem. The headquarters of the church is Jerusalem in Israel.

#### 5. Russian Orthodox Church

The head of the church is known as Patriarch of Russia. Headquarters is at Moscow, Russia. Russian church has the largest following among the Orthodox churches.

#### 6. Serbian Orthodox Church

The head of the church is known as Serbian Patriarch. The headquarters of the church is at Belgrade, Serbia

#### 7. Romanian Orthodox Church

The head of the church is called Romanian Patriarch. The headquarters of the church is Bucharest, Romania.

#### 8. The Orthodox Church

The Archbishop of Cyprus is the head of the Church. The headquarters of the church is Nicosia in Cyprus.

#### 9. Greek Orthodox Church

The head of the church is Archbishop of Greece. The headquarters of the church is Athens, Greece.

#### 10. Bulgarian Orthodox Church

The head of the church is Bulgarian Patriarch. Sophia in Bulgaria is the headquarters of the Church.

#### 11. Polish Orthodox Church

The Metropolitan of Poland is the head of the church. Headquarters of the church is at Warsaw in Poland.

#### 12. Georgian Orthodox Church

Georgian Patriarch is the head of the church. The headquarters of the church is at Tbilisi in Georgia.

#### 13. Czech Orthodox Church

The Metropolitan of Czechoslovakia is the head of the church. The headquarters of the church is at Prague, Czechoslovakia.

#### 14. Orthodox Church of Finland

The head of the church is the Archbishop of Finland. The headquarters of the church is at Kuopio, Finland.

#### 15. American Orthodox Church

Metropolitan Archbishop is the head of the church. The headquarters of the church is New York.

#### 16. Japanese Orthodox Church

Metropolitan is the head of the church. The headquarters of the church is at Tokyo, Japan.

After the division of the Church in the 11<sup>th</sup> century, the faction of the church which remained under the Roman Patriarch, Pope is known as the Roman Catholic Church. As a global church, there are several systems of church administration with local flexibility in worship under the Pope of Rome. Another division which happened in this church faction in the 16<sup>th</sup> century is known as Protestantism. When Martin Luther, who had been a priest in the Catholic Church, dissented with the evil practices of the church, several people came forward to support him. Thus protestant churches came into being. Later numerous divisions happened within these protestant churches. As a result, there are hundreds of reformist churches or communities today. Since certain Protestant communities cannot be seen as Churches, they are described as Sectarian categories.

In short, three major church divisions have happened in Christian History in the 5<sup>th</sup>, eleventh and in the sixteenth century.

#### Certain features of faith and ritual of important church categories

##### (a) Oriental Orthodox Churches

1. Emphasize the oneness of the Divine and Human nature of Son of God's Unified Personality in His Incarnation.
2. Recognise only first three Great Councils (those of Nicea, Constantinople and Ephesus)

##### (b) Eastern Orthodox Churches

1. Emphasize the difference in the Divine and Human Nature of the Incarnated Son of God.
2. Recognize seven Great Councils including the first three Councils as well as the council of Chalcedon

### (c) Roman Catholic Church

1. Emphasizes the difference in the Divine and Human Nature of the Incarnated Son of God.
2. Recognizes twenty one Great Councils including the first Seven Councils.
3. Accepts Filioque (that is, including 'that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Son in the Creed of the Church of Nicea)
4. Teaches the doctrine of 'Immaculate Conception of Virgin Mary.
5. Recognizes Pope of Rome as the successor of St Peter and the Only-Infallible head of the Universal Church.
6. Insists on celibacy of Priests.
7. The doctrine of transubstantiation of the Holy Eucharist.
8. Follows the bible with seventy three books.

### (d) Protestant Churches

1. Follow the Chalcedonian stand point in theology (emphasize the difference in the 'two natures'-divine and human natures-of the Incarnated Son of God)
2. Emphasize the literal self-containedness of the Holy Bible which has sixty six books
3. Don't accept the Holy Eucharist as a sacrificial act.
4. Don't recognize intercession of Saints, prayer for the departed and secret confession.

### Questions

1. Which are the indicators that suggest that The Church is One as far as Christ's relation with it is concerned?
2. Why do divisions exist in the Church?
3. Which are the three important stages in the history of division in the church?
4. What are the important features of faith of the four important church categories in Christian history?

## Chapter 3

# The Ecumenical Movement

### 1. The word meaning of ecumenism

The word ecumenical comes from the Greek word 'Oikoumenikos' which means 'the place where we live in.' This term has been applied in the sense of unity in the place of living to the entire universe, the entire Roman Empire, places where Greek was spoken, and the entire Church in various circumstances. The activities of co-operation and unity of various Christian sects became known as Ecumenical movement as a continuation of this. In modern times, the term ecumenism is used in a sense wider than unity of churches to designate equitable co-operation among various human communities and joint efforts for the intergration of the entire universe. In this lesson we approach ecumenism mainly as the activity for the co-operation and unity of the various sectarian churches.

### 2. Historical background

The efforts towards ecumenism in history began in the Western world. They originated among the Protestant churches of Europe and America. When the movements of Spiritual Awakening became powerful in the Protestant world, Bible studies, Missionary activities and social service projects were began based on a Spiritual Unity beyond the differences of the churches. This gave rise to the ecumenical movement. There were four important items at its forefront.

1. Organizations which aim at the spiritual solidarity of students and youth.
2. Missionary movement.
3. The Christian social service movement 'Life and Work'
4. The movement for Unity of Faith Studies 'Faith and Order'

### 3. Organizations which aim at the spiritual solidarity of students and Youth

The activities of individuals and societies exhorting for a spiritual renaissance among the Christian youth of Europe and America became powerful in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Young Men Christian Association (YMCA) established in 1844, Young Women Christian Association (YWCA) founded in 1854 and Students' Volunteer Movement (SVM) which started functioning in University campuses during the same period invited the youth into prayer and studies beyond the differences of churches. Drawing inspiration from these experiences, platforms and leadership for the Youth developed at national and international levels. These gave inspiration to bring church activities to the path of unity.

### 4. Missionary Movement

An important domain inspired by Spiritual awakening movements and student and youth associations was that of evangelism. Societies for participating in missionary activities irrespective of church differences were formed. The Baptist Missionary society founded in 1792 and the London Missionary societies founded in 1795 are examples. Along with this, joint projects for translating and propagating the Holy Bible were also formed. That is how the British and Foreign Bible society was founded in 1804. Besides, the national and international meetings of missionaries who undertook mission work in Asia and Africa, emphasized the need for Christian unity. A clear example of this is the International Missionary Conference held at Edinburgh in 1910.

### 5. Life and Work

This is the joint platform for action formed by Christian churches in order to redress the distresses of the first and second world war. The international meetings held under its auspices emphasized the need to form a permanent organization to work for the unity of churches. Thus the meeting of 'Life and Work' held in 1937 at Oxford decided to constitute World Council of Churches.

### 6. Faith and Order

Many churches have shifted from the standpoint that it is matters of faith that divide churches and therefore should be kept away from discussions. Rather, they have come to the understanding that if matters of faith are discussed with an open heart it will lead to unity of churches. The movement 'Faith and Order' was founded as a consequence. This movement is active since 1927. In some places it could

bring churches into unity and reinterpret matters of faith in a generally acceptable way. When World Council of Churches (WCC) was formed in 1948 it was decided that 'Life and Work' movement should be discontinued. However it was decided to continue 'Faith and Order' as an independent commission. Therefore today most churches of the world, including the Catholic church work together in the Faith and Order Commission.

### 7. World Council of Churches (WCC)

The suggestion that the various Christian communities across the world should have a common organization was first proposed by the Head of an Orthodox Church (the Ecumenical Patriarch) in the 1920s. Steps to form the World Council of churches (WCC) was taken by the 1937 Oxford conference of the 'Life and Work' movement. WCC was founded in 1948 at Amsterdam (Netherlands). Most of the Protestant churches and many Orthodox churches including the Malankara Orthodox church are members of WCC. The headquarters and secretariat of WCC is at Geneva, Switzerland. WCC focuses on learning, discussion and joint action plan in subjects which promote unity of churches and their common witness. It has no authority to impose any decision on its member churches. Eventhough Roman Catholic church is not a member of WCC, it co-operates with the council on certain fronts and platforms. (Eg. Joint working group, faith, liturgy commissions etc.). International assemblies held in various countries within a periodicity of 6 to 8 years is a significant activity of WCC and a great celebration of global Christian co-operation.

### 8. Global Christian Forum (GCF)

Global Christian Forum started in 2007 is a broader Christian front than WCC. It provides a more independent platform than WCC in terms of membership and activities. Its first meeting held in Kenya in 2007 was attended by delegates from several neo-Christian Awakening Communities along with members of Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant churches. Global Christian Forum seeks broader domains of co-operation among churches when compared with the activities and scope of WCC.

### 9. Achievements and Limitations of the Ecumenical movement

#### (a) Achievements

1. Provides opportunities and venues for Christian co-operation and witness at the global, national and international levels.
2. Helped directly and indirectly in unification of churches.

(Eg. The formation of Church of South India (CSI) in 1947 and Church of North India (CNI) in 1970).

3. Could remove or lessen the misunderstanding between churches.
4. Prepared areas of co-operation and platforms for dialogue between different religions and ideologies for common good.
5. Enabled studies and publication with a perspective of co-operation and an approach of unity in faith and knowledge.

(Eg. Various studies on faith and literacy published by the Commission)

6. Created many joint ventures and opportunities in theological studies and pastoral care.

(Eg. The joint F.F.R.R.C. faculty of Orthodox-Marthoma-CSI churches in Kerala)

7. Provided opportunities for joint prayer meetings in order to promote thoughts of unification of churches among the members of various churches (Eg. Prayer week for church unification conducted jointly by the Catholic church and WCC. Ecumenical prayer week of YMCA and YWCA).
8. Ecumenical Movement is able to give leadership to global efforts for unity of humanity and global integration.

#### (b) Limitations

1. Even though it could increase areas of co-operation, it could not strengthen efforts for church unification significantly.
2. Under the guise of ecumenical co-operation, the faithful of the churches are stolen away in some places.
3. There is a criticism that it spreads a casual approach in matters of faith and morality.

#### Questions

1. What are the important implications of the word 'ecumenical'?
2. Write a paragraph on the historical background of the ecumenical movement.
3. What are the contributions of students and youth to the ecumenical movement?
4. What is the contribution of the Missionary movement to ecumenical enterprises?
5. The chief predecessor of WCC is 'Life and Work.' Elucidate.



6. What is the contribution of 'Faith and Order' to the ecumenical movement?
7. State briefly the activities and importance of WCC.
8. What is Global Christian Forum?
9. What are the important achievements and limitations of the ecumenical movement?

#### Projects

1. Prepare a report and evaluation of the assemblies of WCC. Keep this report as a file and add the assemblies in the coming years to it.
2. Prepare an ecumenical diary compiling ecumenical news items that appear in news papers and visual media for one year or over a few years.
3. Write a paper on the activities of ecumenical movement in your state/country.

## Chapter 4

# The participation of Orthodox churches in the Ecumenical movement

### 1. In WCC

There was the participation of Orthodox Churches right from the beginning of the modern ecumenical movement. Since majority of the members of the ecumenical movement are protestants, many people consider it as a protestant movement. In 1920 the Ecumenical Patriarch send a pastoral letter to Churches in which he suggested that a league of churches ( a general assembly of churches) should be founded. WCC was a realisation of this suggestion in course of time. There was Orthodox presence as delegates and leaders in the ecumenical meetings of students and youth even before 1920. For example, a metropolitan of the Greek Orthodox church delivered the keynote address at the Tokyo meeting of W.S.C.F (World Students Christian Federation) in 1907. The 1911 Istanbul meeting of the same organization was inaugurated by the Ecumenical Patriarch.

There was active Orthodox presence in the Geneva (1920), Luzon (1927) and Edinburgh (1937) meetings of Faith and Order and Stolkholm (1925) and Oxford (1937) meetings of Life and Work. The participation of a delegation led by the Head of Malankara Church H.H. Moran Mar Baselius Geevarghese II in the 1937 Faith and Order meeting at Edinburgh was an international news at that time.

Malankara Orthodox Church and some other Orthodox Churches are participating as founding members in all assemblies of WCC since 1948 (the year of its inception). The Russian Orthodox Church took membership in WCC in the New Delhi Assembly of 1961. Thereafter the Orthodox participation in the ecumenical movement became very powerful and active.

In the first WCC assembly at Amsterdam in 1948, Germanos, the Archbishop of the Greek Orthodox Church of London, was elected as one of the presidents. In that assembly Miss Sara Chacko, a member of our Malankara Orthodox Church

was elected woman president. In the history of WCC, on almost all occasions, one of its presidents will be from Oriental Orthodox family and another one will be from the Eastern Orthodox family. Dr. Paulose Mar Gregorios of Malankara Orthodox Church served as the president of WCC from 1983 to 1991.

Dr. Paulose Mar Gregorios has served WCC in various capacities; first as a layman and later as a priest. He had been the Associate General Secretary, Director of Division of Ecumenical action, member of Central Committee, member of the Executive committee and member of Faith and Order Commission of WCC. Besides, members of Malankara Church like C.I. Itty, Fr. K.C. Joseph and Fr. Dr. K. M. George have been members of the WCC staff. Dr. Philipose Mar Theophilus, Dr. K.M. George and Dr. Elsy Philip have been members of the Central Committee. Fr. Dr. V.C. Samuel, Fr. Dr. Johns Abraham and Fr. Dr. Baby Varghese have served as members of Faith and Order Commission. Fr. Dr. Jacob Kurian has also worked as member of Faith and Order Commission and Standing Commission.

## 2. Through Direct Ecumenical Dialogues

Orthodox churches have participated in direct ecumenical enterprises other than through the WCC. All the details of direct dialogues with churches of the same family, other Orthodox families and Catholic/Protestant churches cannot be included here. Hence dialogues connected with the Malankara Orthodox church alone are mentioned here.

### a) Heads of Oriental Orthodox Churches Meet, Adis Ababa 1965

For the first time in history, a global meeting of the Heads of Oriental Orthodox Churches was held in 1965 in Adis Ababa. It was hosted by Haily Salasi, the emperor of Ethiopia. A high level delegation under the leadership of H.H. Baselius Augen I Catholicos participated in that meeting. The meeting decided to design a common Sunday school curriculum for all Oriental Orthodox Churches and it was put into practice.

### (b) The historically important meetings between heads of Malankara Church and heads of the Catholic Church

1. Catholicos Baselius Augen I held a meeting with Pope Paul VI on 3<sup>rd</sup> December 1964 in Bombay.
2. Catholicos Baselius Marthoma Mathews I met Pope John Paul II on 3<sup>rd</sup> June 1983 in Vatican.
3. Pope John Paul II visited Catholicos Baselius Marthoma Mathews I at Kottayam on 8<sup>th</sup> February 1985

(c) Unofficial dialogues between Oriental and Eastern Orthodox Churches

The unofficial dialogues between Oriental and Eastern Orthodox Churches initiated by Fr. Nikos Nissiyots and Fr. Paul Varghese (Dr. Paulose Mar Gregorios) were held in Aarhus, Denmark (1965), Bristol, England (1967) Geneva, Switzerland (1970), Adis Ababa, Ethiopia (1971). The differences in Christology that existed between these two church groups were only differences of interpretation. Both groups infact meant the same. This fact was recognized in these unofficial meetings.

(d) The joint official theological commission of Oriental-Eastern Orthodox Churches

The joint theological commission delegated officially from both the groups met since 1988. In 1990, they signed at Geneva, the doctrinal document regarding Christology mutually agreed upon and submitted it for the official recognition of their respective churches. Unfortunately, no desirable steps have been taken in this matter thereafter.

(e) Informal talks between Oriental Orthodox churches and Roman Catholics

Informal talks between Oriental Orthodox churches and Roman Catholic Church regarding Christology have been held since 1971 under the auspices of a Catholic organization named Pro-Oriente. The discussions in Vienna, Austria produced mutually acceptable standpoints regarding Christology. It was agreed that predecessors of both the groups had differences of opinion over Christology at the synod of Chalcedon because of lack of linguistic clarity and different political backgrounds. In fact the perspectives of both parties are essentially the same. Even though the official procedure to endorse this consensus is slowly going on, differences in other subjects still exist between the two parties.

(f) Joint theological commission of Malankara Orthodox Church and Roman Catholics

The joint theological commission was appointed for promoting co-operation and unity between these churches. This commission was set up as per the agreement between H.H. Baselios Marthoma Mathews I and Pope John Paul II during their meeting in Rome in 1983. Annual talks held regularly since 1989 have helped in identifying new areas of mutual understanding.

## Through National and local Ecumenical Councils

Malankara Orthodox Church actively participates in National Council of Churches (NCC) and KCC (Kerala Council of Churches)

### 3. Orthodox participation in the Ecumenical movement-An Evaluation

Both Orthodox tradition and other traditions have benefited a lot as a result of Orthodox participation in the Ecumenical movement. The other church traditions could study and assimilate many things from the spirituality, liturgical greatness and theological insights of the Orthodox Churches. For example, when other churches revise their liturgy, they try to include several aspects of Orthodox liturgy. Another ideal move is the greater importance given to the writings of Church Fathers and Church traditions by other churches. Similarly Orthodox Churches have also open heartedly tried to find out without prejudice, the good aspects of the beliefs and rituals of other churches. Orthodox Churches have to agree that ecumenical co-operation with other traditions has enabled them to respond creatively to the day to day realities of lives of people, observe the pastoral care in other societies, realize the importance of bible studies, and promote mission activities. We should also remember that through the ecumenical movement, Catholic and protestant churches have provided facilities for higher education and research to some priests and laymen of the Orthodox churches across the world.

#### Questions

1. Describe the history and background of Orthodox participation in the Ecumenical movement through WCC.
2. List the dialogues regarding faith between various Orthodox Church traditions.
3. List the dialogues between Oriental Orthodox and Catholic Churches.
4. Write an essay on the participation of Malankara Orthodox Church in the ecumenical movement.
5. Evaluate the contributions and achievements of the Orthodox Churches through the ecumenical movement.

## Unit 6

# Human Rights

### Chapter 1

## The Origin and nature of Human Rights

Man's most valuable possession is life. The rights to live and enjoy liberty are fundamental birth rights. All men are born free. They have equal rights and equal dignity. The fundamental rights and freedoms deserved by all humans are considered as human rights. The 'natural laws' that underwent transformation along with (concomitant to) societal development resulted as human rights. The Holy Bible protests against the exploitation and torture of the poor and the destitute. Jesus Christ himself reacts strongly against such exploitation. Hence protection of human rights is a Christian tenet itself.

The rights of individuals to life, freedom, equality and dignity can be called human rights. The 1986 Law of Human rights defines Human rights as 'rights to life, freedom, equality and dignity guaranteed to each individual by the constitution or those rights included in international treaties which can be implemented by the law court of India.'

This includes civil and political rights like the rights to life, freedom, communication, equality before law etc and economic and cultural rights like rights to education, work, food etc. The right to get these rights protected is the right of each individual.

### History

The history of human rights is very old. The principle that man has got certain rights by nature of his birth and that they are natural gained acceptance as a theory in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. Magna Carta was a covenant of Rights prepared in

1215 to defend the rights of citizens against the despotism and misrule of King John of England. This was the first declaration to protect freedom of citizens. Eventhough it was a rebellion to protect the rights of manorial heads, priests and lords, it has the historical importance of being the first challenge against the despotism of an anointed king. The king was forced to sign this historic document. Magna Carta contains human rights. Along with this document, Petition of Rights of 1628 and Bill of Rights of 1689 form the fundamental canon of British constitution. The general laws that constitute the basis of the legal system of Britain include human rights. Neither the King nor the parliament have the authority to override them.

Later American Constitution also passed amendments to protect human rights assimilating the principles of Bill of Rights. When American Declaration of Independence was made in 1776, the rights of people to dissolve a government that denies human rights was recognized. It also declared that all humans are equal and have inalienable rights. The French Revolution of 1789 which raised the slogans of freedom, equality and fraternity is another important battle in the history of human rights. Two centuries back many countries could include human rights in their constitutional law.

Man's unbounded desire for freedom is behind such declarations. When the second world war ended there was a widespread impression around the world that, the basis of peace should be respect for human rights. As a result world peace and protection of human rights were recognized as the important goals of the UNO.

The term 'Human Rights' became widely accepted with the founding of the UN. The General Assembly of the UN which met at Paris on Dec 10, 1948 gave sanction to 'Universal Declaration of Human Rights'. This is the authoritative document of human rights. Universal Declaration of Human Rights exhorts to uphold human dignity above all sectarian considerations and values individualism.

### Violation of Human Rights

The condition that denies the basic considerations that man is entitled to is known as human right violation. The condition of denying freedom of opinion, freedom of religion and equal consideration is also an encroachment on human rights. Merciless and cruel physical torture, brutality and mental torture are also denial of human rights. Police brutality, lockup murder, firing and inhuman treatment of prisoners are also human right violations. Man has the right to live with dignity in all fields like health, education, livelihood, work etc. When these are denied they become denial of human rights.

Human Right violations include denying medical aid at the appropriate time, making appointments in educational institutions after accepting huge amount as

bribe, denying appointment to deserving candidates, unequal treatment of men and women, human trafficking and enslavement discriminatory treatment against women, creating difficulties in day to day life (making ordinary life inexorable), unnecessary interference in the private life of individuals and tapping telephone conversation. If any of these disrupts human life, liberty, equality and dignity, it will be considered human rights violation.

Human right violations due to bribery are numerous. Misappropriation of public money for private profits and nepotism to aid personal profits are gross human rights violations.

The law courts take an uncompromising stand against human right violations. Protection of human rights cannot be ensured by merely issuing statements regarding it. This is a domain where appropriate decisions should be implemented with justice. There should be a widespread awareness about the responsibility of human society in his regard.

It is the responsibility of not only the Members of the Parliament and judges but also of all sections of the society to participate in the protection of human rights. Therefore it is the duty of the citizen to awaken social consciousness against human rights violations. We should be prepared to join hands to work for it.

#### Activities

1. What is meant by human rights?
2. Explain the historical background of human rights.
3. Evaluate various types of human right violations.
4. How can we protect human rights?

#### Projects

1. Make a study of any case of human right violation in your neighbourhood and discuss what were the remedial measures taken.
2. Analyse the newspapers of the previous week and list down human right violations listed in them.



## Chapter 2

# Basic Fundamental Human Rights in the Constitution

### United Nations Organisation

The greatest disaster faced by humanity in the first half of the twentieth century was the second world war. The world witnessed very cruel and devilish homicide and tortures. The famous Atlantic Charter was drawn up as a result of a meeting between Winston Churchill and Roosevelt in a war ship anchored in the Atlantic in 1940. In the opinion of American president Roosevelt future world should be casted in the mould of 4 fundamental liberties

1. Freedom of opinion
2. Freedom of Religion
3. Freedom from poverty
4. Freedom from fear

If the future generations are to enjoy this liberty the threat of war should be avoided and peace should be ensured. In this context, there developed a conviction at the international level that a new world organization should be founded for the security of the entire mankind. Great powers like the USA, Great Britain, USSR and China took the lead in this regard. As a result, fifty nations assembled in San Francisco. Representatives from these nations assembled on 24<sup>th</sup> October 1945 and signed the charter, which is the fundamental document of United Nations Organization. October 24 is celebrated as the UN day. The proclaimed aim of the United Nation is to attain progress and better standards of life for the entire humanity by ensuring world peace and security. Today it has become essential for nations to maintain mutual friendships by assimilating freedom and equality of rights of the people. Developing respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms is its basic principle. Solving economic, social, cultural and humanistic problems through mutual co-operation is also its common goal. United Nations Organization functions as a nerve centre to realize these goals. Hence UN Assembly is called as the Parliament of mankind.

## Universal Declaration of Human Rights

United Nations Organization decided that the Universal declaration of Human Rights should be made if fundamental human rights and freedoms have to get widespread recognition and permanency. The Social and Economic organization of this Organization looks after human right issues. The Universal Declaration of Human rights recognized by the UN was made on December 10, 1948. December 10 is observed as Human Rights Day.

There are about thirty sections in this historic declaration regarding Human Rights. It includes right to life, freedom and security, total liberation from slavery, protection from physical and mental torture, equality before law etc. The right to be considered innocent till incriminated by an impartial trial court, along with other fundamental human rights like freedom of opinion, freedom of belief and freedom of movement should be protected. Family is the fundamental unit of the society. Hence family has the right to get the protection of society and the nation. Universal Declaration of Human rights also gives importance to education, family health and family welfare. The declaration also describes the need for an international social order to protect these freedoms and rights.

Apart from Universal Declaration of Human Rights, various treaties at the interanational level have also been made. Treaties like 'International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights', 'International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights' have been recognized by the UN in 1966. All of them insist on personality development based on human rights and freedom aiming at the comprehensive development of the society.

If the rights and freedoms according to this declaration and treaties are to be implemented, member countries should frame their own laws.

## Indian Constitution

The preamble of our constitution declares our resolve to constitute India into a sovereign, socialist, secular Democratic Republic, provide equality, justice, freedom to all its citizens and to promote fraternity among them. Human Rights related to life, freedom, equality and dignity are included as Fundamental Rights in Part III of the constitution. Fundamental Rights include basic freedoms like freedom of speech, freedom of movement, freedom to form organizations, equality before law, equal protection of law, freedom to hold religious beliefs and cultural and educational freedom.

Article 21 of the constitution declares the right to life. No citizen should be denied his life and individual freedom except by law. Article 21 of the constitution can be considered as the fundamental principle of Human Rights. It promises Right to dignified life.

As a human being each individual is entitled to certain rights. Our constitution emphasizes that there is no need to depend on the will of any majority or minority in order to enjoy these rights. However when the fundamental rights ensured by the constitution are interpreted and their depth is determined the spirit of Universal Declaration of Human Rights and treaties are also taken into consideration.

The fundamental rights and Human Rights ensured by the constitution should be preserved. For this a vigilant society which is conscious of its rights is essential.

### Human Rights Protection Law

Eventhough we can approach High Courts and the Supreme Court for redressal in case of Human Right violations, instances of such violations are increasing on a daily basis today. Hence a special mechanism for the protection of such rights had to be set up. Crimes and atrocities are on the rise. We have to protect all people from cruel, inhuman and humiliating harassments. Therefore everyone is convinced of the necessity of an institution that deals exclusively with human rights. Human Rights protection law is a significant stride of our nation in this regard. Human Rights protection Law came into force on September 28, 1993.

### Human Right commissions

On the basis of Human Rights Protection Law, National Human Rights Commission, State Human Rights Commission and Human Right Courts were constituted.

### National Human Rights Commission

It is the central government that constitutes National Human Rights Commission. A person not lower in rank than that of a Chief Justice in India, should be its Chairman. The commission has four members other than the Chairman. The headquarters of the National Commission is in New Delhi.

### Powers and Responsibilities

1. Investigate allegations of human right violations, examine public documents, record statements from other courts and offices, conduct direct investigations.
2. Become party in court procedures regarding human right violations.
3. Visit jails, protection homes, rehabilitation centres, sanatoriums etc and ensure the welfare of the inmates.
4. Evaluate the functioning and effectiveness of the existing constitutional and legal Human Rights protection mechanism and give judicious suggestions.

5. Make observations regarding human Right violations, atrocities and terrorist activities and suggest remedies.
6. Analyse international treaties and proclamations regarding human rights and adopt practical measures.
7. Undertake and encourage research studies regarding human rights.

### State Human Rights Commission

State Human Rights Commission is functioning in each state. The state Human Right Commission is appointed by the governor. The Chairman of State Human Right Commission must be one who held the rank of High Court Chief Justice. The Commission of Kerala includes two members other than the Chairman.

### Powers and Responsibilities

The powers of the State Commission are the same as that of the National Human Rights Commission.

When Human right violations happen, the commission can issue recommendations to the government to pay for damages if it is convinced of such violations. The commission has the authority to examine and investigate instances of Human Right violations in educational institutions, hospitals, places of work etc.

### Human Right Courts

There is provision in law to establish special courts for the speedy trial and judgement of crimes against Human Rights. The Sessions Court of each district can be declared as the special court of that respective district. Government notification is required for this. Also the consent of High Court Chief Justice is required. A public prosecutor can also be appointed to appear for cases in the special court. Special courts of this kind are known as Human Right Courts.

### Activities

1. Describe the goals of United Nations Organization.
2. Explain Universal Declaration of Human Rights
3. Explain Human Rights Protection Law.
4. Which are the various Human Right Commissions? Describe their powers and responsibilities.
5. How can we implement the constitution and other laws to protect Human Rights? Discuss.
6. Prepare a programme to develop awareness about Human Rights which can be performed in the next Human Rights Day.

## Chapter 3

# Human Rights and Valuable Human Life

Life is god-given. Man is the sentinel of life. However man has forgotten the value of human life which is the crown of all creation. How many precious lives are lost everyday due to riots, wars, murders, accidents etc! Besides, a large number of tiny lives are lost by way of abortion and foeticide. Protection of life is a human right. Along with this we should be able to uphold purity of life.

Family is formed by man and woman together who are unified through the holy sacrament of marriage. Family is the smallest microcosm of the church and the society. Children are the divine gifts granted to couples who are united divinely through the sacrament of marriage. God gives life to them. Parents are only co-participants in this act of creation of God. All human beings born on this earth are the sons and daughters of God. Each child should grow up in God's grace. Hence parents have the responsibility to rear and protect the life they beget.

### Foeticide

Foeticide is the debased practice of determining the sex of the child in its foetal state growing up as body and spirit in its mother's womb and willfully destroying it after expert diagnosis.

Science has proven that a child that grows in the womb receiving blood and food from it, has natural human feelings and thoughts. The foetus in the womb is a human individual growing up into perfection. Destroying this foetus in the womb is a great crime against Nature and God. By doing so we are willfully denying the child's right to live.

Doctors as well as hospitals who make money by killing the foetus in the womb is the curse of today. The number of parents who don't have any prick of conscience to allow their female foetus to be murdered is on the rise. The cruelty of those who try to kill postnatal female infants in various ways is also shocking. Today's generation that runs after comforts and selfishness are upholding such injustices. Destroying

a life in its foetal state, without even allowing it a chance to cry out ‘mother’ is murder itself.

The impression that the girlchild is a financial burden to the family and other liabilities like dowry, marriage expenditure etc result in female foeticide. Determining the sex of the foetus is punishable by law. However a number of hospitals and scanning centres extort money and carry out sex determination tests. Man’s love for comfort, money and extravagance inspires all these.

### Abortion

Abortion means destroying the child in its foetal state. This may be done voluntarily or deliberately. Deliberate destruction of the child growing in the mother’s womb is punishable just like foeticide. Sometimes foetal deaths may happen due to insufficient development of the foetus and other diseases.

Abortion can be done legally if a girl conceives through extra marital relationship or rape, or if the pregnant woman’s life is in danger or if the child has mental retardation or physical disability. However such situations should not be misused.

During the severe process of abortion wounds in the uterus are likely and there is possibility of back pain and bleeding in future. Besides disappointment and sense of guilt will increase and develop into mental diseases. Thousands of women who lose their hunger and sleep become afflicted. The wriggings and cries of the aborted child will haunt the mother’s conscience till death. Therefore it is our duty, our love, to protect the life that sprouts in the womb.

Pslams 127:3 ‘Children a gift from God; they are his reward’

The Holy Bible states that children are a gift from God. Parents have the responsibility to rear their children gifted by God, in the path of God. For this they should have the conviction that children are the gift of God the creator and not merely a product of conjugal relationship of husband and wife or not just a link to maintain the genealogy. We, who have to protect life, should never become murders of life. Destroying a foetus created by God and worthy of being born is committing murder. Such debased acts which destroy the growth of a child cannot in any way be justified.

The life of god-given children should be protected. They should be nurtured with responsibility and should be reared in God’s grace. We should strongly resist practices that destroy life. We should also take special care to keep away from lifestyles that perpetrate injustice and immorality. Those who lead a Christian life should neither take the lead in nor promote such debased practices. Instead human life should be protected with great care right from the moment of conception.

## Pro-life Movements

Pro-life movements are various movements that promote life. Pro-life activities propagate teaching, training, counselling and guidelines for protecting and preserving life. These movements play a great role in wiping out rotten practices like abortion, foeticide, child labour and harassment of women from the society. Pro life implies protecting the legal fundamental right to live. It inspires us to resist all practices that destroy life and living, legally.

Christian churches should become institutions that defend life. Let us grow from the 'dead' culture that destroy life to Christ, the Abundant life that conserves life. It is God who gives life. We, who cannot give life, have no right to destroy life. Let us become lovers of life, protectors of life.

### Activities

1. What are the responsibilities of parents towards children?
2. Explain abortion and foeticide.
3. Why does female foeticide increase? How can it be resisted?
4. What is Pro-life movement?
5. Organize a seminar on the topic: 'Protection of life in society'.
6. Write and present an essay on the ill effects of abortion.
7. Write a prayer for pregnant mothers and prenatal children.

## Chapter 4

# Human Rights and Responsibilities

Rights and responsibilities are two sides of the same coin. Where there are rights there are responsibilities also. Hence responsibilities have equal importance as rights and freedoms. One should not forget the limits of rights and the responsibility of duties. Each individual has certain obligations to the society. Individual freedom becomes meaningful only when judicious controls are made for general good and are observed. Many a time the moral codes, general welfare and general system of peace of the society might not be in consonance with individual freedom. Therefore certain limits to individual freedom are necessary if the rights and freedoms of others are to be protected. One should not misuse individual freedom in such a way that it affects the integration of the society. A democratic society cannot exist without co-joining individual freedom with the general good of the society. Hence the nation has the right to impose judicious control even over human rights. Freedom of opinion is a very valuable human right. But this right cannot be exercised against the system of general peace, righteousness and morality. Similarly slanderous statements that malign others under the guise of this freedom are not justifiable. Therefore as a citizen one should execute the duties towards the nation and society along with enjoying rights.

We are bound to preserve the sovereignty, unity and integrity of our nation and to protect our ideals and culture. We should go beyond parochial thoughts in terms of religion, region and language and should imitate the example of Christ who saw all people equally. We should preserve nature in its originality. We should understand that all creatures of the universe also have rights over natural resources and it is our duty to preserve and protect them. We should follow the good model of bearing witness to Christ through our life. Along with this we should ensure equitable justice to all.

### Child Labour

In our society, there are parents and agents who earn livelihood by sending their children to work or begging. We can see a number of children fatigued by



begging in festival grounds and waysides or destined to do hard work instead of playing in our surroundings. Sending little children to work is a crime. However such practices are still extant.

Children who are subjected to such torture are either orphans or from poor socio-economic conditions. Antisocial elements who kidnap children and use them for begging or stealing are also a curse of today. All children have the rights to get health, protection and primary education. Laws for getting them are also in force.

'Child labour' refers to sending children below the age of fourteen to work. It is a serious crime. Children are often employed in construction sites, factories, hotels, small scale industrial houses etc. Employers resort to child labour because they can get more work done for lower wages. The children thus employed suffer without proper rest or food. Besides they experience ill treatment, hardwork and cruel torture.

They do not get proper life-habits or nutrition due to children. Denied of love and care they fall into crimes and bad habits.

There should be proper legal instructions and right legal awareness for the general public regarding the prohibition of child labour. We should be able to prevent any instance of child labour and lodge complaints with the authorities regarding it. We should realize that other children have the right to enjoy facilities, comfort and freedom of life like us.

### Juvenile Justice Act

The future of a nation lies in its children. They are the wealth of the nation. It is the responsibility of the society to ensure the allround development of children. Indian constitution and laws ensure the total protection of children. However there are many children who fall into crimes in adolescence and spoil their life by becoming a scourge on the family, society and the nation. Torture and exploitation of children, inspiring them to crimes, leading them into anti social activities and behaving in a beastly manner towards children continue even today.

A boy who hasn't completed the age of 16 or a girl who hasn't completed the age of 18 is defined as a child. Broken family atmosphere, the cruelties shown by parents, towards children, parents who don't try to understand the mental, physical and emotional condition of children, sinful life of parents illegal brewing, gambling, drunkenness, illicit activities like adultery etc lead children into mental dissatisfaction and sinful paths. Criminal tendencies are common in such children.

Sorrowful little mind, unrecognized personality, a heart yearning for love and lack of sense of security generate hatred in children. They would neglect home and parents and gradually would fall into bad conditions.

The Juvenile Justice Act was passed by the Indian parliament in 1986. This law involves the mechanism to lead children who face the above mentioned problems from wrongful ways of life to righteous path and transform them into ideal citizens. This act was comprehensively revised in the year 2000. It is a crime to torture children, abandon them in the streets or ill treat them in other ways. Juvenile Justice Act includes clauses to take strict legal measures against those who ill treat children in these ways. Similarly showing cruelty to children, using them for begging, giving them narcotics or employing them in hotels and factories are also criminal acts.

It is our responsibility to safeguard the rights and dignity of children. It is the general responsibility of the society to ensure the right education and healthcare of children. We shall try to protect them and protest against injustices and tendencies to exploit children.

### Activities

1. How are human rights and responsibilities interrelated?
2. How can we prohibit child labour?
3. Explain Juvenile Justice.
4. Why do children fall into wrongful ways of life?
5. What measures would you take if you notice child labour in your locality?
6. Organize a discussion on the topic 'Children and law'

## Unit 7

# The Christian Approach to Various Ideologies

## Chapter 1

### Gandhian Thought

#### A Short Biographical Sketch

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was born in Gujarat on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 1869. By overcoming the vices and temptations of childhood and young age, he grew up as a man of exemplary moral integrity and deep commitment to society. He married Kasturbai in a very young age. After his studies in London, he became a lawyer. From 1893 to 1914 his work place was South Africa where he devoted much time and energy for the welfare of the Indians there. His experiences there, especially the humiliations he suffered from the white authorities, were preparing a unique freedom fighter in him. At the age of 46, he came back to India to give leadership to the freedom struggle of the nation and the cause of the poor.

A religious fanatic shot and killed him on 30<sup>th</sup> January 1948. His auto-biography, 'My Experiments With Truth' will give us a beautiful description of this political saint's glorious life and contribution.

#### His indebtedness

Gandhiji was deeply indebted to the Indian tradition especially that of religions. Among the Indian religious texts Bhagavad Gita had a unique influence on him. Likewise, Christ and especially his 'sermon on the mount' was very dear to him. He has openly confessed his indebtedness to towering personalities like Tolstoy and his book *The Kingdom of God is within you* and John Ruskin and his work *Unto this Lost*.

He was a dedicated student of all religions. He learned lessons of Bhakti from His mother herself and openness to other religions in childhood from his father.

### On Receiving Knowledge

Five senses, reason, and intellect play a significant role in receiving knowledge. But being a man of holistic vision, he did not discard any of these instruments as insignificant. However he was fully aware of the limitations of these means of knowledge. For example he believed that by senses and reason alone no one can understand God. So he emphasized the importance of faith which transcends the limitations of reason. Faith was for him a kind of sixth sense. For Gandhiji inner voice of the conscience was the voice of God himself. Disciplining of life is essential for listening to this divine voice or inner call. If we are not keeping our sense, reason & intellect purified, the knowledge we receive through them may be distorted. So he was very adamant that seekers of truth should uphold moral purity and sanctity of life. Knowledge becomes meaningful only when it helps humans to address various issues affecting their life.

### On Truth

Gandhiji called himself a humble seeker of truth (*satya*) and converted his life into a series of experiments with truth. Truth is foundational to his thought system. Truth was Gandhiji's dearest name for God. The insight 'God is truth' was a personal experience to him. He distinguishes the absolute truth which is God and the relative truth. Man cannot fully grasp the absolute truth. But relative truth is all that is given to man. Living in the light of this truth he has to realize the absolute Truth. In other words he believed that only by being truthful that one can identify with God. He used to present his struggle for freedom and justice as *satyagraha*. He also teaches that purity of heart is essential for the perception of Truth. So a pure and disciplined life is recommended for the infallible listening to the Truth which reveals through inner voice or conscience. Truth is end and ahimsa is the means to reach Truth.

### On Non-Violence

Gandhiji was a great apostle of *Ahimsa* or *Non Violence*. He took the insight of Ahimsa from ancient religious wisdom and tried to revise it as a dynamic soul force in modern India. His innovation lies in the application of ahimsa in political life on a mass scale.

Refraining from hurting or injuring others by thoughts, words and deeds is just one part of *Ahimsa*. In the Gandhian thought, ahimsa means a bold stand and struggle

against injustice and exploitations. Otherwise it is an indirect attempt to permit the violence of injustice to continue. If a person is non violent just because of his weakness or cowardice, it is not at all a virtue. As Gandhiji rightly says, "The doctrine of non-violence is not for the weak and the cowardly, it is meant for the brave and the strong. The bravest man allows himself to be killed without killing and he desists from killing and he desists from killing or injuring, because he knows that it is wrong to injure." (Harijan, 20, July 1937).

### Universal brotherhood

One of the major foundations of his vision of the unity of mankind was his religious belief. Being the children of God the Father, all are brothers & sisters. Also he strongly believed that God is present in all and thus "Though many, we are all one." (The collected words of Mahatma Gandhi Vol. 44, p. 82).

He compares the humanity to a large tree having countless branches and leaves through all which throbs the same life. In spite of the diversity in colour, size, possessions and positions, men and women of all countries and all ages share the same soul. Based on this vision it was quite natural for him to take a stand for the religious harmony and a stand against untouchability. In fact this oneness of life, according to Gandhi, is not limited to human beings only but extends to all forms of life.

### The concept of Sarvodaya

Sarvodaya literally means the advancement of all. This is a vision for a society in which the good of all is achieved. By Sarvodaya he visualized a society based on love and human values, a decentralized, self governing non-exploitative, Co-operative society. In short, Sarvodaya, the dream project of Gandhiji means 'welfare of all.' Gandhian vision of Sarvodaya is totally against the concept of survival of the fittest or the greatest happiness of those who have good purchasing power. His holistic vision includes the marginalized in society and also the material as well as spiritual freedom and development of all. It is noticeable that he used to call *dakuts* or the marginalized in society *Harijan* or people of God.

Only through moral means, this glorious end can be achieved. So he strongly recommends Nishkama-karma (action without attachment or self interests) as the means for the universal welfare. Message of his life was to 'renounce and rejoice.' Sarvodaya demands service to all and especially to the poor and the marginalised. He clearly says that service of all is part of the realization of God, the ultimate aim of man.

## Prayer as the food of soul

Gandhiji was a man of deep prayer and he used to consider prayer as the food of soul. In spite of various challenges and crisis, he used to enjoy unusual peace and he says that the secret of his peace of mind was his prayer life. Another advantage highlighted by him was that prayer purifies and gives victory over passions. For him prayer was an existential necessity which he describes thus: "A man may be able to do without food for a number of days, but, believing in God, man cannot, should not live a moment without prayer." (*India*, 15-12-1927).

## Conclusion

Gandhiji was an exemplary personality who wonderfully synthesized Bhakti, Jnana and Karma and fulfilled his life and became a challenging presence of God before others. Fulfillment of his life as well as that of the world around him were closely interconnected. With the words "My life is my message" he is still challenging the world to have an authentic human life with morals in the midst of moral crisis of the consumerist culture today.

## Activities

1. Briefly describe the greatness of Gandhiji's life.
2. What was Gandhiji's perspective on truth?
3. Write short notes on
  1. Non-violence.
  2. Sarvodaya.
4. Explain Gandhiji's concept of 'prayer as the food of Soul.'

## Chapter 2

# Religious Fundamentalism

Religions are meant for humanizing and enlightening humans. But religions are misused by many to spread hatred and violence. Religious fundamentalism refers to the narrow minded affiliation to one's religion leading to hatred of other religious communities which can result in conflicts and violence. Communalism and fanaticism are other terms to indicate the same concept. There are fanatics or extremists in all religions who uphold this dangerous self centered and narrow world vision. Religious fundamentalism does not appreciate the very existence of other religious communities and does not take any initiative for a harmonious existence of religious communities in society.

Faithfulness and fundamentalism are not the same.

A genuine faithfulness or steadfastness to one's own religion in itself is not evil. Those who would like to fulfill their being by using religious resources will appreciate very much such a faithfulness. It is by being faithful to their own religion that they try to be open to other religions or to cooperate with people of other religions to serve the society in a better way. For a Christian this means deep commitment to Christ and his teachings and involvement in His Church.

### Fundamentalism and Religious violence

God is love and forgiveness. But violence is taking place all over the world in the name of religion. Quite often people in India rise up to watch horrible news of communal violence or terrorism inspired by religious fanaticism in TV and print media. India, especially from the time of partition witnessed many religious conflicts and violence leading to the massacre of many and demolition of religious centres and houses.

The demolition of Babri Masjid in Ayodhya, UP on December 6<sup>th</sup>, 1992 by the fanatic forces aiming at the building up of a Mandir(temple) in the name of Rama, was a decisive moment in the history of modern India. With the Ram temple movement which culminated in the demolition of Babri mosque, communal rift in

this country was broadened and deepened tremendously. There were a few massive incidents of religious violence and massacres subsequent to this. In 2002 Gujarat witnessed the unfortunate *Godhra event* and consequent massacre of thousands of Muslims by the communal forces who claim to have affiliation to the majority religion. The next terrible persecution was against the Christians in Orissa in 2008 and other parts of the country. Just like HIV/AIDS the virus of communalism is also spreading throughout the country. South India, which was mostly used to be insular to communalism, experienced religious violence and communal attacks in many places recently.

#### Root causes of fundamentalism and communal violence

- a. Fascist ideology: Fascist ideology of Nazis under the leadership of Hitler in Germany was brought to India with an Indian version by Hindu fundamentalist leaders like Hedgewar, Savarkar, and Golwalkar. By closing the eyes to the pluralistic culture of India, the ideology teaches the myth of ancient mono culture of Hinduism. Actually India used to enjoy religious pluralism from antiquity. There are many Hindu fundamentalists who consider Christianity and Islam as foreign religions and think that followers of these religions are not entitled to have equal citizenship with the members of the majority religion. It is through the hate campaign, misinformation and fear psychosis that various organizations of Hindvata intensify communalization of Society.
- b. Misuse of religion by Politicians: Religious sentiments are exploited by the politicians to achieve their political agendas. Thus power becomes the ultimate goal at the expense of the harmony and peace of society.
- c. Economic matters: Economic progress of one religious community may stimulate jealousy and hatred in other communities. One of the causes of the anti-Christian movement in Kandhamal district in Orisa was the socio economic progress of the dalit Christians there.
- d. Conversion issue: Indian constitution guarantees the right to preach and propagate one's own of religion. In spite of the evangelization attempts by the Christians in India, the total Christian population in this country is less than 3% and is not increasing in the last several decades. But the fundamentalists have taken it as a big issue and introduced anti conversion bills in a few states. Christian evangelists also need to rethink about their aggressive attitude. Aggressive evangelization condemning other religions aiming at conversion in large scale is also a kind of fundamentalism which provoke the fundamentalists of other religions.



- e. Lack of understanding about other religions: There are many who are well versed in their own religion and unaware of even the basics of other religions. This deficiency can lead to prejudices concerning other religions which may result in indifference or hatred to others.

#### Remedial Measures

More and more opportunities for formal and informal dialogue among various religions are to be encouraged to expose the miscommunications or prejudices. Truth shall liberate us. Inter-religious prayer groups, inter-religious pilgrimages, inter-religious live together camps are important to achieve this goal. Only those who are deeply faithful to their own religion have the qualification and right to take initiative for such programmes. Cooperation of people belonging to different religions to serve the society will also prepare a ground for understanding each other in a healthy manner. Just publishing a few books or articles is not enough when the gravity of the issue of communalism is considered. More and more creative works are to be encouraged to ensure the unity in diversity. Film makers, artists, novelists, journalists etc. can play a decisive role to promote peace by overcoming fundamentalism by using their creativity in a meaningful way. Documentaries like *Ram ke nam* (1991) and *'Father Son and Holy War'* (1995) on the psychological element of communal violence made by Anant Patwardhan, the famous Indian documentary filmmaker, is just an example. Theology of peace can be visualized without stereotype jargons and to be expressed through various creative ways to appeal to a wider society.

Teachers or Gurus used to enjoy a very prominent place in Indian society. They still have an important role to play in dispersing the darkness of divisive forces to ensure peace and the integration of the society. Even if Christians form a tiny part of the population of this country churches still own a large number of schools. Do we pursue earnestly this mission through our schools?

#### Panchasheel for Religions and Global Human Family

As nations work in the spirit of global international co-operation, the religious people have also to come out to affirm a global inter-religious unity and co-operation. In this context must we understand Paulos Mar Gregorios' proposal of a Panchasheel (five habits) for religions, which can be summarized as follows:

1. Mutual respect: Mutual respect between religions can be engendered by teaching each person to respect other religions as well as his own, never to speak hatefully of them and to learn what is best in each religion.

2. Non-discrimination: The principle of our secular democracy that no man or woman shall be discriminated against because of his or her religion should be upheld at any cost.
3. Dialogue or learning from each other: All religions have a tendency to feel self sufficient. But when one sets out to learn deeply from other religions, one's understanding of one's own religion is transformed and deepened. At least leaders and thinkers of each religion need an exposure at depth to the teachings of other religions.
4. Resolving conflicts by Peaceful Means: There should be a national network of religious leaders committed to the ideal of religious and communal harmony, who will be vigilant about communal tensions in various parts of the country.
5. Inter religious co-operation in service to community. Ways and means for joint service are worth exploring (*Paulos Mar Gregorios, Religion and Dialogue*, p. 167-170)

### Reasoning for Christians Engaging in Dialogue

We Christians have a responsibility to have dialogue with followers of other religions for various reasons; for knowing God's work in other religions, especially for knowing Christ's influence in them, for strengthening and stimulating one's own faith, for contributing to a creative unity of mankind and peace and harmony of the society. Above all, Christian love is compelling us to take up this mission. Dialogue demands a deep commitment to Christ and openness to all. Dialogue is not limited to theoretical discussions but includes all kinds of creative sharing and co-operation beyond all boundaries to serve the society.

May God be with us in this struggle. 'Blessed are the peacemakers, because they are the children of God.' (St. Matthew 5:9)

#### Activities

1. What is religious fundamentalism? What are the evils involved in it?
2. Prove that religious fundamentalism is the cause of communal riots.
3. Explain the causes of fundamentalism.
4. Findout through a classroom discussion, the ways to solve issues generated by religious fundamentalism.
5. What are the 'Panchasheel' for preserving religious harmony?
6. What are the reasons for religious harmony in your locality?

## Chapter 3

# Social Ideologies

Even if God created human beings in His own image, certain groups of people are discriminated based on their colour or gender or occupation/ descent. At the same time we can see counter movements to ensure equality and justice in society. Blacks in USA, Dalits in India and Women all over the world were experiencing the pain of social discrimination and in modern period many social activists, ideologues and theologians took initiative to address their issues.

### Dalit Issues

The adjective *dalit* refers to the broken situation of the low caste and outcaste people in India. All the socially oppressed people in India would like to be known as *dalits* today. It refers to the oppression and captivity they were experiencing from the high castes.

### Oppression of Dalits

Oppression of *dalits* by the so called high caste people continued for the last 3500 years. It starts with the coming of the Aryan colonizers to India. The Aryans used religious and psychological methods to enslave or oppress the original people of India. A re-reading of religious scriptures written by the Aryans and also history will enlighten us regarding this.

According to the *Purushasukta* hymn in the Rig-Veda, four castes were created by God from the four parts of his own body: The Brahmin (priestly class) from head, *kshatriya* ( the warriors) from arms, *Vaishya* ( traders) from thighs and *Sudra* (serving caste) from feet. All those who did not fit into this fourfold structure were called outcastes. Primarily *dalits* are outcastes.

*Manusmriti* composed during the first centuries of AD further legitimized the oppression of the *dalits* and removed even their human identity.

## Social Awakening

The contribution of the Bhakti movement saints like Kabir Das, Tulsi Das etc and the leaders like Jyotiba Phule, B.R. Ambedkar and Mahatma Gandhi etc. for the liberation of the dalits is remarkable. Almost all dalits consider Ambedkar as the prophet or even god of the *dalits*.

Article 16 of the Constitution of India fully recognized the need for the development of the *dalits*, both socially and educationally. It abolished the practice of untouchability, declaring it offence punishable by law. However *dalits* are missing an equal and just treatment in social life even today.

## Dalit theology

It was during the 1980s that a few dalit Christian thinkers began to make serious attempts to express themselves theologically to help the dalits to overcome a situation of oppression, poverty, suffering, injustice, illiteracy denial of human dignity and identity. A.P. Nirmal, NE Prabhakar, Bishop M Azariah, K. Wilson, V. Devasahayam, and James Massey etc were a few important early dalit theologians.

Dalit theologians emphasized the need of re-reading and writing history from the point of view of dalits. The God who liberated Israel also commanded them to teach their past history of slavery and liberation to their children from generation to generation (Deuteronomy 6: 20- 25). St. Paul also reminds Dalit Christians that they should always remember the past, how God out of nothing has made them a 'something', a people. (I Cor. 1: 26-28)

From creation account onwards Bible is a record of God's solidarity with the humankind especially with the oppressed. In the Exodus account we read that God became part of the struggle of the oppressed Israelites and "came down to deliver them" (Exodus 3:7, 8). In the act of Incarnation, God in full solidarity with the mankind gave up his other worldly identity and became a dalit, the poorest of the poor. This is the best model for all to participate in dalits' struggle to overcome their ongoing captivity and oppression by being in solidarity with them.

## Feminism

The feminist movement is also known as women's liberation or women's movement. This refers to a series of campaigns for justice and equality to women in society. Campaigns for reforms on issues like women's suffrage, equal pay, reproductive rights, domestic violence, sexual violence, maternity leave etc. were part of this movement. Feminism is basically a struggle against the oppression of women.

The first wave of feminism refers to the feminist movement of the 18<sup>th</sup> century through early 20<sup>th</sup> century, which dealt with women's suffrage. Virginia Wolf, Elizabeth Stanton etc were a few women leaders of this age. In the second half of twentieth century, Betty Friedan's book *The Feminine Mystique* played an important role towards the achievement of feminist goals.

Feminism could achieve their goals to a great extent especially in the western world. Now women's suffrage is almost a universal practice. It also led to broad employment for women at more equitable wages, and access to university education. The right of women to make individual decisions regarding personal or marital matters and the right to own property are other achievements.

Feminist theology is a movement that re-interprets the traditions, practices, scriptures and theologies of religion from a feminist perspective. Some of the goals of feminist theology include increasing the role of women in the religious leadership, re interpreting male dominated imagery and language about God, determining the place of women in relation to career and motherhood, and studying images of women in the religious sacred texts. Feminist Christian theologians began with a critique of the past – that is a male patriarchal attitude in the Church and culture towards women. The second step seeks alternative biblical and extra biblical traditions that support women's personhood, her equality in the image of God, her participation in prophecy, teaching, and leadership. Finally they tried to examine every theological doctrine and concept anew in the light of the feminist experience. Rosemary Ruether, Elizabeth S Fiorenza, Letty Russel are a few renowned feminist theologians.

“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Jesus Christ.” Galatians 3: 28

#### Activities

1. What are the suggestions of Dalit theologians for Dalit development?
2. Discuss how women is represented in the Holy Bible.
3. Conduct a review of the good and bad aspects of Feminism.
4. Is Galatins 3:28 relevant in all fields? Discuss.

## Chapter 4

# Economic Ideologies

### 1. Capitalism

Capitalism or free market economy refers to the economic system in which most of the means of production are privately owned and production is guided largely through the operation of markets. This economic system was boosted in the west by the industrial revolution. Excess of production and enlargement of the productive capacity are important marks of capitalism. Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations* (1776) beautifully describes the ideology of classical capitalism. Competition aiming at the moderation of prices of commodities is central to capitalism. Survival of the fittest is foundational to capitalism.

In this age of globalization, what is actually globalised is capitalist ideology and culture. Multinational companies' major concern is the maximization of profit. They bring luxurious items to developing countries also targeting those who have high purchasing power. Satisfying the greed of a minority rather than the need of majority is their major agenda. Through various agreements, the governments are weakened and slowly they withdraw from their commitment to social welfare. Quite often small industries and businesses are swallowed by these Corporates resulting in their monopoly and escalation of prices.

### 2. Socialism

Socialism is basically an economic system which strongly recommends social ownership or control of the means of production and cooperative management of the economy. Thus property and distribution of income are subject to social control. Socialism also refers to the political movements which tried to put this system into practice.

As a political movement socialism includes a diverse array of political philosophies, ranging from reformism to revolutionary socialism. Modern socialism originated from an 18<sup>th</sup> century intellectual and working class political movement that criticized the effects of industrialization and private property on society. By the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, socialism had come to mean opposition to capitalism and advocacy

for an alternative system based on some form of social ownership. Proponents of State socialism advocate for the nationalization of the means of production, distribution and exchange as a strategy for implementing socialism.

Social democracy is the political ideology that advocates a peaceful evolutionary transition of society from Capitalism to Socialism. It rejects Marxian social revolution and uses established political processes for achieving a just society. Social democracy began as a political movement in Germany in the 1870s. From the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, social democratic governments came to power in many countries. Social-democratic thought regards state control/ regulation without state ownership as sufficient to ensure development and social justice.

Today, many democratic socialists, especially in Western Europe, want industries to be guided jointly (together) by representatives of shareholders as well as the workers working together in what is known as an industrial democracy because both groups have interests in the success of the enterprise. This would be a more direct democratic way of organizing rather than control by central government. Trade unions and/or workers' councils would represent the interests of the employees.

### 3. Marxism

Marxism is the famous ideology and socio-economic theory developed by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. Marxism or Communism teaches that all people are entitled to enjoy the fruits of their labour. When the workers repossess the fruits of their labour, the gap between the rich and the poor will vanish and economic class divisions will cease. The Marxist theory explains that history progresses through class struggles. The conflict between the capitalists and the proletariat or the owners and workers or the rich and the poor is the driving force for achieving a classless society. So the ultimate goal is a society where there will be no more a division of rich class and poor class. Marxists believe that the transition from capitalism to socialism is an inevitable part of the development of human society. Marxists believe that a socialist society will be far better for the majority of the populace than its capitalist counterpart.

Since Marx's death in 1883, various groups around the world have appealed to Marxism as the theoretical basis for their politics and policies. The following countries had governments at some point in the 20th century who at least nominally adhered to Marxism. Albania, Afghanistan, Angola, Benin, Bulgaria, Chile, China, Republic of Congo, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Ethiopia, Grenada, Hungary, Laos, Moldova, Mongolia, Mozambique, Nepal, Nicaragua, North Korea, Poland, Romania, Russia, the USSR and its republics, South Yemen, Yugoslavia, Venezuela, Vietnam. In addition, the Indian states of Kerala, Tripura and West Bengal have had Marxist governments, but change takes place in the government due to



electoral process. Some of these governments such as in Venezuela, Nicaragua, Chile, Moldova and parts of India have been democratic in nature and maintained regular multiparty elections.

The 1917 October Revolution, led by Vladimir Lenin in Russia, was the first large scale attempt to put Marxist ideas about a workers' state into practice. Following World War II, Marxist ideology, often with Soviet military backing, witnessed a rise in revolutionary communist parties all over the world. Some of these parties were eventually able to gain power, and establish their own version of a Marxist state. Many of these self-proclaimed Marxist nations eventually became authoritarian states, with stagnating economies. This caused some debate about whether Marxism was doomed in practise or these nations were in fact not led by "true Marxists".

In 1991 the Soviet Union was dismantled and the new Russian state, alongside the other emerging republics, ceased to identify themselves with Marxism. Other nations around the world followed suit. Since then, radical Marxism or Communism has generally ceased to be a prominent political force in global politics, and has largely been replaced by more moderate versions of democratic socialism—or, more commonly, by neoliberal capitalism. Marxism has also had to engage with the rise in the Environmental movement. Theorists have synthesized Marxism, socialism, ecology and environmentalism into an ideology known as Eco-socialism. Communist governments have historically been characterized by state ownership of productive resources in a planned economy and sweeping campaigns of economic restructuring such as nationalization of industry and land reform (often focusing on collective farming or state farms.)

Towards a theology of wealth: Teaching of our Lord Jesus as recorded in Gospels exhorts to share wealth with the poor and the needy. It emphasizes the ultimate ownership of everything by God and the need to be sensitive to the needs of the marginalized. Ancient Christian writers like St. John Chrysostom, St. Basil the Great etc., and modern Orthodox Theologians like H.G. Paulos Mar Gregorios and H. G. Mar Osthathios have affirmed strongly the link of faith and social justice. Without losing faith and gospel, as Christians we have to critically evaluate ideologies and work towards a just and peaceful society.

#### Activities

1. What is meant by Socialism?
2. What is the significance of October revolution?
3. Conduct a study of the economic ideas of H.G. Geevarghese Mar Osthathios.
4. Attempt a comparative study of Marxism and Christianity.

