



# Carmel Times

*A Teens Fellowship Initiative*

CARMEL MAR THOMA CHURCH  
BOSTON



## Be patient

Short story series on the fruits of the Spirit

----- **Story and Illustrations by Allen Mammen**

Jacob's day started off just like any other until he heard the devastating news from his boss about the budget cuts that had caused him to lose his job at a pharmaceutical company. He begins to worry and knows he will be evicted soon as his job was his only source of income. He ravages through websites trying to find a new job and prays that God will help him get through his struggles. Soon he begins to sell his belongings to make enough money to buy his meals and pay his rent, but this does not work for long.

Within a week, Jacob runs out of money and is unable to get a loan from the bank which then results in his eviction from his apartment. He then finds his way to a homeless shelter where he decides to stay until he finds a place to work. Jacob stays at the homeless shelter until he is kicked out due to the overload of unemployment rates and homeless people which forced him to live on the street. The only thing that kept him motivated to keep going was the word of God, but specifically a quote from Psalms 40:1 "I waited patiently for the Lord; he turned to me and heard my cry." Jacob referred to this quote in his daily prayers and as well as in his times of distress.



Around 3 months later, after patiently waiting and depending on the Lord to help him get through his struggles, Jacob meets another faithful Christian, Caleb Alexander. Caleb sees him kneeling on the hard concrete ground praying to the Lord on his way to his taxi back from the bank and purposefully drops his wallet to get his attention. Jacob hears the thud of wallet on the concrete ground and being the faithful person, he is he picks it up and runs after him to return it without knowing that his kind actions would change his life.

"Sir.....sir hold on please" Jacob screams as he runs down the street with his worn-out shoes and as tired as can be. Caleb turns around and glances at Jacob realizing that he truly is a good man and begins to walk towards him.

"Thank you so much, kind sir, " Caleb says, smiling, "I don't know what I would have done if it wasn't for you," taking his wallet from Jacob's rough hands. "Why are you out here on the streets? Don't you have a home?" Jacob explains his story to Caleb and shows him where he has been living his life for the past 3 months. "This disastrous pandemic has affected my life in so many ways but my faith in the Lord has helped me stay patient and believe that He would help me get through this" Caleb thinks to himself as he looks at the hard ground that Jacob had gotten on his knees on to pray to the Lord whom which he trusted to help him.

## Foreword by Atchen

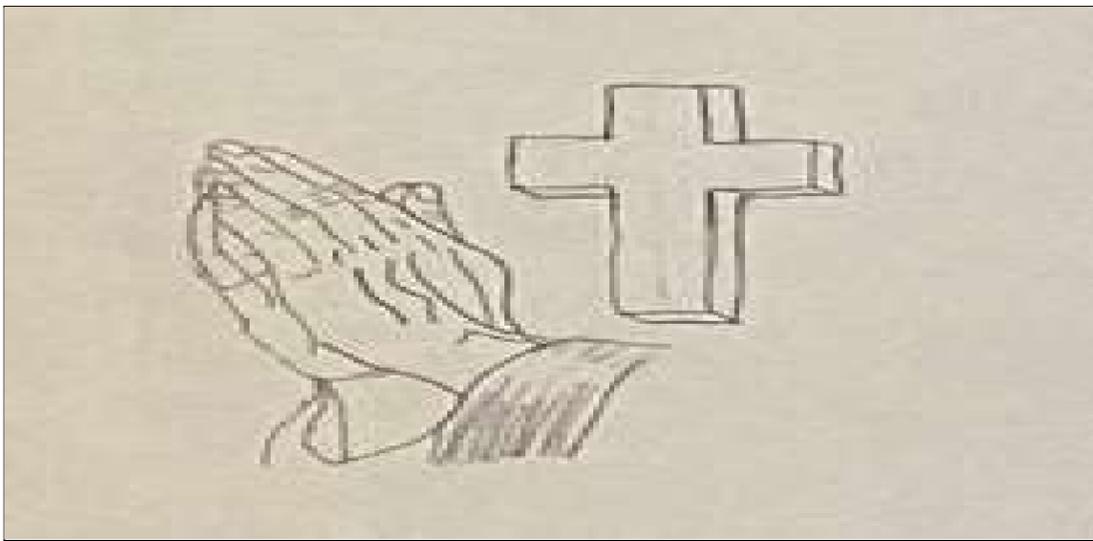
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Christmas is a time of the year when we joyfully come together to commemorate the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ. What we mostly see during these times are parties, friends and family, festal foods, and drink, baking and buying, social gatherings, gift exchanges and giving to charity. The Mar Thoma Christians are expected to set apart the pre-Christmas season in prayerful and ascetical quietness preparing in anticipation for the coming of the Lord. We are inspired to be more contemplative and reflective and all that we see around can direct us towards Christ and his Love.

There are many things that form part of the Christmas traditions. For example, Candy Canes. If you hold the candy cane upside down, it forms the letter "J," which stands for Jesus. There is a legend that the candy cane was first created in the 18th century by a candy maker. He wanted to share the true meaning of Christmas with the children in his town. His prayer led him to an idea - the candy cane. He made the candy cane in the shape of a shepherd's staff to show kids that Jesus is the good shepherd. The candy maker chose hard candy to remind children that Jesus is our "rock" who is dependable and strong. The red stripes on the candy cane were added to share about the crucifixion and blood that Jesus shed for our sins. The candy cane was made white to represent the purity of Jesus. The legend continues that the candy maker gave away the candy canes as a gift. He wanted the kids to understand that salvation is a gift that comes from Jesus.

It can be just a legend but the depth that it gives to a believer during Christmas is marvelous. May you make a meaningful Christmas than a Christmas filled with merriment alone.

**Sujith Atchen**



Illustrations by Allen Mammen

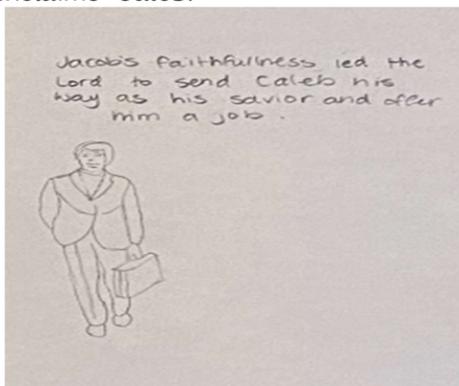
## Story Continued...

Even through such horrible situations he believes that the Lord has a plan for him and is with him through everything. He deserves a better life, there must be a way for me to help him.

“Is there any way I can repay you for your kindness? There must be something I can do for you.” Caleb proceeds to ask Jacob. “No sir, I just wanted to do the right thing and return your wallet,” says Jacob. Caleb insists on repaying Jacob and even though he continually refuses Caleb eventually decides to offer him a position in his company. Jacob hastily responds saying “There is no way I can accept that offer sir. Thank you so much but I think that offer should be given to someone more suitable.” Caleb, knowing that Jacob is in desperate need of a job and is only trying to be humble, calls his assistant and tells him to get the office ready for a new employee. “Well, it seems like you’re going to need a bit of a clean-up huh?” Caleb says smiling at Jacob

“Sir it seems as though the Lord has answered my prayers and sent you to save me. I have been waiting for this day for many months. There are no words I could use to express how grateful I am for your kind and generous actions.” says Jacob as his tears roll down his cheeks. Caleb pats him on the back and says, “Just remember as the Lord our God has said, “Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him” (Psalms 37:7).” Jacob says “Thank you.

Thank you for reminding me that the Lord has brought these struggles upon me not only to test my faith but also to teach me to stay patient through all my hard times.” “Now let us go and get you ready for your new job young man. You have a new life waiting ahead you all planned by the Lord.” proposes Caleb. “Would it be okay for us to stop by the chapel on our way? I would like to thank the Lord for his blessings and everything he has done for me today.” says Jacob. “Of course, we can.” exclaims Caleb.



Each one of us learns a lesson throughout our lives about how the struggles the Lord sends our way always has a purpose. In Jacobs case we see that by losing his job and being evicted the Lord wanted to remind him that staying patient and faithful would help him get through his problems. Jacob’s constant prayers and remembrance of the word of God showed the Lord that he trusted him and so the Lord sent Caleb to help him. Just like Caleb helped Jacob, the Lord sends us all a savior in different shapes and forms, and even though we may not always identify it immediately the Lord will always be by our side.

## Jokes Corner

Q. Why did Adam go to the BBQ

A. He wanted a spare rib

Q. What did Daniel tell his real estate agent?

A. I’d prefer a house with no den.

## Sunday School News & Events

Christmas Carol Service Dec 17th

Inviting children who are interested in design or graphics to help design the next volume of Carmel Times. Give your names to Sheba Oommen

Next Carmel Times Issue – Jan 2023

If you would like to be part of this team or contribute to this publication, whether it be a story, article, poem, drawing/illustration/ graphics, please send your contributions to cmtcprintcrew@gmail.com

#SOCKTOBER Mission Drive



## Editorial Board

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# Voice from the Past

----- BY NAOMI VARUGHESE



**Robert Raikes**

September 14, 1736 – April 5, 1811

Have you ever wondered who founded the movement of Sunday school? I'm sure it's been a thought in our minds for quite a while. So, who is the man or woman that started Sunday school? The man who invented Sunday school was named Robert Raikes, and he was a newspaper publisher in Gloucester, England.

Raikes was born in Gloucester on September 14, 1736. His father was a businessman and the owner of the influential Gloucester Journal. The Raikes family was certainly well connected, both spiritually and naturally. At the age of 22, Raikes lost his father. He took charge of the family business and cared for his mother and siblings. Raikes biggest concern was prison reform.

The origins of the Sunday school can be linked to the work of Robert Raikes, even if religious education of various forms had been known previously within Christianity. He concluded that giving fundamental and religious instruction to young children on Sundays could dissuade them from a life of crime. Many of these kids worked in factories every day but Sunday. Although lay people were in control, the first Sunday school was established in 1780 with the help of the Anglican parish minister. The teachers' residences served as classrooms. The Bible served as the textbook, and the curriculum's initial focus was reading and writing.

In the early years, Raikes paid most of the costs and utilized the paper to promote the schools. Initially, only boys went; subsequently, girls joined them. After three years, Raikes' newspaper article about the Sunday schools in Gloucester sparked interest, leading to the system's replication across the British Isles. Some religious leaders opposed the schools because they believed that teaching interfered with how Sunday should be observed. Others disagreed with education for the poor because they feared it might spark a revolution. However, Sunday schools developed a tight relationship with the churches throughout time. Thirty-one years after the first school opened, when Raikes passed away, it was estimated that 500,000 kids in the British Isles were enrolled in Sunday schools.

North America and the European continent both saw the movement's expansion. The Sunday School movement proved to be a great blessing for children in the United Kingdom and worldwide. Various systems of teaching have been used in Sunday schools. Until specialized church-school materials were created, and curriculum were created to reflect the theological viewpoints of the different faiths, the Bible and the denomination's catechism were typically the materials utilized for education. Robert Raikes died in 1811, but the growth of the movement he pioneered was phenomenal. The first Sunday of November is celebrated worldwide as Sunday School Day.

Finally, let's talk about the origin of Sunday School in Kerala, India. In 1809, Church representatives of the Malankara Churches held a meeting at Kandanadu Church, near Ernakulam, to arrange facilities to teach children in the Church about religion, prayers, and sacraments. The India Sunday School Union was founded in 1876. The Mar Thoma Sunday School Samajam was established on 25 February 1905 at the Maramon Convention. Sunday Schools are arranged in every Marthoma Parish. The Sunday School Superintendent /Headmaster coordinates and facilitates the smooth running of the Sunday School program along with Sunday School teachers.

## Exercise Patience

Patience is a fruit of the Spirit. When we pray, sometimes we must wait for God to answer. Our hopes and prayers aren't always answered right away. But good—even beautiful—things can happen while we wait. Our lives are full of times that take patience. Sometimes patience is easy, and sometimes it's not. Whenever we're having trouble being patient, we can ask God for help because patience is a fruit of the Spirit. Patience is more than just patiently waiting for something to happen. Patience can also mean not giving up and to keep trying. Whether it's learning to flip a bottle, learning to tie our shoes, or waiting for a whole week for the weekend, things don't always happen as fast as we'd like. But when we're patient and keep trying, we learn and grow new skills. As an exercise, list out the bible characters, who waited patiently. We will go first. Abraham and Sarah.... Now your turn.

# ChitChat Room

Conversation with our Church Secretary Binu Oommen

----- By Christian Varughese & Rebecca Koshy

**Christian:** What made you leave India for America?

*Binu Uncle:* I don't think I have fully left India. I still have strong ties back home. But I looked for an opportunity to pursue my higher studies and that is what brought me here to US. America has some of the best engineering schools and I wanted to get my education from these schools and to pursue a career.

**Christian:** Why did you choose to become the church secretary?

*Binu Uncle:* I didn't choose to be a Secretary. The members of the church elect you to be the Secretary of the church. Of course, you have a choice. You can accept or decline that call. And I chose to accept that call, as I felt it as opportunity to give back to the church and community. When I came to the US as a student, there was a church for me to attend worship, a community to belong to and people that are like family to us. This church functions, because many people have given their time and effort to ensure the smooth running of this parish. And I felt that it was my turn to serve the community and church.

**Christian:** Do you have any hobbies or secret talents you do in your free time?

*Binu Uncle:* Yes, I enjoy reading. I am very passionate about product development, so I seek out venues to stay current on technology and innovation. I also enjoy music. I am currently taking online piano lessons in my free time.

**Rebecca:** What was your experience with church as a child, and how did it shape your relationship now?

*Binu Uncle:* I grew up in Bhilai, and there the MTC church was a very close-knit community and a very significant part of our lives. Growing up I was very active in Sunday School and Youth Fellowships and Church Choir. Through these activities and meetings, we learnt in depth about bible and in turn helped us knowing our Lord and, in the process, I accepted Jesus as my personal savior early in my life. This was very important in shaping my childhood and later helped me as I moved away to new places and experiences and when I was alone.

**Christian:** If you could have dinner with any historical figure, dead or alive, who would you choose and why?

*Binu Uncle:* May sound very cliché! But I would love to have dinner with Mother Teresa. She single handedly has helped hundreds of thousands of destitute and I would love to learn more about her faith and how she got the strength to do what she did.



**Rebecca:** Who is your role model you refer to in life, and why?

*Binu Uncle:* One of my role models in my life is my father. He taught me how to stay strong in faith, build a career and spend quality time with family. My father was a man of great integrity, and strength. An interesting thing I will share about papa. He took his driving license after the age of 70 years and brought his own car and started driving, when most people stopped driving the car due to old age. He embraced his age and his limitations but sought out interesting things he wanted to do.

**Rebecca:** Have there been any challenges you've faced as the church secretary? If so, what are some of them?

*Binu Uncle:* There are several challenges that comes as part of being in any position. It is tough sometimes to implement a change and build a new program when there are so many differing voices. Hence it is important to listen to those voices and be able to guide and answer each thought in a constructive manner. You must be a voice for everyone and be able to handle multiple conflicting opinions and thoughts. But you must do what's best for the church and the community.

**Christian:** Describe yourself in 3 words as an adult, and then describe yourself in 3 words as a child.

*Binu Uncle:* Thoughtful, Curious, Methodical as an adult. Hardworking, disorganized, dependent as a child.

**Rebecca:** If you couldn't live in Massachusetts, where else in the world would you live?

*Binu Uncle:* Kerala is one place I can see myself living other than Massachusetts. I like warm weather and lot of people around me. But there are other things that attract me to a place. I like beach and water, access to library and innovation hubs.

**Christian:** How do you define success?

*Binu Uncle:* Success is in being happy at the state you are in. If I can be happy and peaceful with whatever options God has given me, that defines success for me.

# World Sunday School Day

The first Sunday in November is celebrated as World Sunday School Day. On Nov 6<sup>th</sup>, our Sunday School children and teachers led the Holy Communion worship service. Following the worship service, we commenced the WSS Day Celebrations. The teachers celebrated our Sunday School by giving a report on all the activities done through the year, and the achievements of our children by distributing certificates and medals.

Our children presented an adaptation of the iconic pop anthem “We Are the World” written by Michael Jackson and Lionel Richie. In an interview, asked if he would write another “We Are the World,” Richie said it wasn’t necessary, because the lyrics of the song are still relevant today. And that was the spirit behind performing this during 2022 World Sunday School Day.

*We're all a part of God's great big family  
And the truth, you know, love is all we need*

