

# Carmel Times

A Teens Fellowship Initiative



CARMEL MAR THOMA CHURCH  
BOSTON



## Flight

Short story series on the fruit of the Spirit

----- by Anushka Thomas

It was a sunny Saturday morning in August; the kind of morning that smelled like pancakes and felt like joy. Camilla had just woken up to the sound of cheerfully chirping birds, so she walked downstairs to enjoy her morning.

Fluffy buttermilk pancakes, fresh fruit, crispy bacon, and a steaming cup of coffee; the perfect breakfast. But no sooner had she taken a bite of her food when she heard a scratching sound at the door. Exasperated, she got up to open the door, dreading to find out what sort of trouble her cat had gotten into this time. But when she saw what her cat was holding in its mouth, it became clear that her cat was not the one who was in trouble.

Between the cat's jaws was a tiny bird as blue as the summer sky, frail and injured. Camilla quickly brought the little thing to her kitchen table, trying to figure out what was wrong. There, she discovered that the poor bird had broken its wing. How was it going to fly with its friends now?

But Camilla was determined to help the bird. Day after day, she fed it, washed it, and gently bandaged its wing so the bird wouldn't move it too much. At first, the bird would screech and try to fly away when Camilla came close to it; usually ending in the bird being even more hurt than before. But ever so slowly, the bird began to trust her.

It happily chirped when it saw her, and soon it started to follow her around the house. She aptly named it Sky; and the two became inseparable. But soon, Sky's wound began to heal. It was a slow process; at first, Sky could barely flap his injured wing. But eventually, he was once again able to fly like an eagle, swift and sharp.

Camilla was dreading this moment; she couldn't bear to say goodbye to her newfound friend! Unfortunately, she knew it was time to let Sky go. She opened the window and placed Sky outside, sadly watching as he flew far, far, far away.

The evening came and went, and Camilla awoke to yet another sunny Sunday morning; the kind of morning that smelled like pancakes and felt like joy. But it didn't feel like that this time; not anymore. But just as she began to brew a cup of coffee, she heard a peck at the window. It was Sky! She raced to the window and let him inside; happy that her *gentleness* had earned her a new friend.

*Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who belong to the family of believers. Galatians 6:10*

## Foreword by Atchen

Dear Friends in Christ,

We are once again at the approach of a seasonal transition. After the lassitude of Winter, the lively days of Spring and Summer come with immense possibilities. To top it all, schools have holidays too. Vacation can be a great opportunity to relax, but it can also be a time of growth. Here are some ideas for how we can have an engaging and fruitful vacation:

1. Volunteer: Many organizations in our Church and society need extra help during the summer months. We can look for opportunities during VBS or on a mission trip. Our local community would have openings such as at a local food bank, animal shelter, or community garden. Volunteering not only helps others but can also be a great way to understand the world better and make new friends.

2. Learn a new skill: Vacation is a great time to learn something new. The Summer Enrichment program of our Sunday School is also a great option. Learning a new skill can boost confidence and open new opportunities. In preparation for the next school year or transition into adulthood, summer vacation can be a great time to set goals and make plans. We can research colleges or career paths, create a budget or savings plan, or set personal goals for the coming year.

3. Read and reflect: Summer can be a great time to read and reflect on books that inspire and challenge us. With so much information and misinformation available through various outlets, reading provides an opportunity to engage with reliable sources and to deepen our understanding of our world. We can choose books that align with our interests or explore new topics. It is important to use our vacation to study the Bible as well. We can choose a specific book or topic to focus on or spend time reading and reflecting on scripture. Consider using a devotional or study guide to help you stay focused and engaged.

4. Connect with friends and family: Vacation is a great time to spend quality time with friends and family. We can plan outings or activities with loved ones and deepen relationships. Relationships are the only things that would be of worth at a more mature age.

5. Do not miss Church: Attending Church during vacation can be a great way to experience the bliss of worship and connect with fellow believers. If you are traveling during vacation, research churches in the area of your stay and plan to attend a service. Vacation can provide a quiet and peaceful setting to spend time in prayer and reflection. Consider finding a quiet spot in nature or setting aside time each day for personal prayer and reflection.

Make the most of your valuable time and prioritize activities that will help you grow and thrive.

Sujith Sam Mammen atchen  
Easter 2023



# CARMEL'S GOT TALENT



*Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.*



## Sunday School News & Events

### Next Carmel Times Issue – May

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](mailto:cmtcprintcrew@gmail.com)

### Bible Bee – Apr 7<sup>th</sup>

Will be covering the book of Daniel, Chapter 2.  
Look out for more details on National Bible Bee Summer study.

### World of Word –

**April 23<sup>rd</sup>** Scripture Reading and Introduction to Debate  
**May 14<sup>th</sup>** Persuasive Argumentation and Debate, a workshop by Diya George

### Save the Date –

**RISE 2023 April 29<sup>th</sup> @ CMTC**

**miniRISE 2023 May 13<sup>th</sup> @ CMTC**

**VBS – June 16,17,18**

Look out for Sunday School Announcements for more details.

Stay tuned for some exciting news from **Adventure League**

## Editorial Board

Sheba Oommen  
Betsy Jacob  
Sarah Oommen  
Andrew Varughese  
Jairah Philips





# Voice from the Past

----- by Amelia John

David Livingstone



Livingstone in 1864

David Livingstone was born on March 19, 1813, and he died on May 1, 1873. David Livingstone was one of the seven children born to poor religious parents. When David was 10, he went to work at a cotton mill. After working a 14-hour day at a cotton factory spinning jenny, he would go to night school for two more hours. He studied theology and medicine and eventually became a Scottish missionary doctor.

David Livingstone's mission was to reach new people in Africa, and to introduce them to Christianity. He spent 33 years in Africa. David Livingstone also freed black people from slavery. David Livingstone was known as the Scottish explorer, an abolitionist, and a physician who was known for being the first European to discover Victoria falls in 1855.

Livingstone's job was to reach new people and introduce them to Christianity. Livingstone has been credited with the ending of the East African slave trade. Livingstone was inspired by his future father-in-law and other people. David had learned that the missionary doctors were needed in China, so then he studied Greek.

David loved Africa and the African people. Unlike many other Europeans, David treated the African people kindly and he respected their culture. David wanted to help spread the gospel and he wanted to open Africa for trade. When someone asked David Livingstone why he became a missionary to Africa, he replied, *"I was compelled by the love of Christ."* David Livingstone married Mary Moffat, the daughter of the missionary who had encouraged him to go to Africa.

David explored the continent. Lots of people were fascinated by David's geological discoveries. During one of David's trips, he survived a lion attack though David's shoulder was badly injured.

One morning, aides found him dead in his grass hut, kneeling in prayer by his bed. He was entombed in Westminster Abbey where his epitaph reads: Brought by faithful hands over land and sea, here rests David Livingstone, missionary, traveler, philanthropist, born March 19, 1813,

at Blantyre, Lanarkshire, died May 1, 1873, at Chitambo's village, Ulala. *Other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring (John 10:16)*

Livingstone's example has inspired tens of thousands of Christians everywhere and influenced hundreds more to become missionaries. Famous gospel pioneers such as Alexander Mackay (Uganda), Melvin Fraser (Cameroon), Mary Slessor (Nigeria), were all touched by Livingstone's life and led to follow his trails. But the world is equally indebted to Livingstone for his relentless attack on slavery.

## Bowling: That's How We Roll!





# ChitChat Room

## In conversation with The Honorable Cecil J. Thomas (Ajit) Connecticut Superior Court

----- by Ruthie Philip and Jairah Philips



**Ruthie: Why did you decide to become a lawyer and at what age did you make this decision?**

**Ajit Uncle:** I was 15 years old when I decided that I wanted to become a lawyer. I had gained some familiarity with the law through books, movies, and in other ways, and saw that it had a significant impact on everyday issues and problems for people of all backgrounds. I learned that the law could be complicated and required a deep understanding of a system with special rules. I also learned that having a lawyer help you with those rules is incredibly important and is especially important when important personal problems are at stake.

**Ruthie: What is the difference between a lawyer and a judge and which job do you like better?**

**Ajit Uncle:** Lawyers represent their clients and advocate for their clients in different ways, including in the courtroom. They usually argue their clients' cases to a judge, who decides the matter. I enjoy both roles. I was privileged to spend my career as a lawyer representing low-income individuals facing the threat of homelessness. During my career as a lawyer, I worked for legal aid, in Hartford, Connecticut, which has a significant poverty level. Over sixteen years I represented thousands of individuals in these difficult circumstances, which was always very rewarding for me. As a judge, I am currently hearing family cases- cases involving divorces and custody of children and individuals seeking relief from domestic violence. These are also very personal issues that can have a significant effect on the families that appear before me. My role now is to hear both sides and make a decision that is fair and equitable, and in the best interests of the minor children. This can be a heavy responsibility and I spend a lot of time thinking about my decisions and their impact. I can't say that I like one job over the other. I enjoy both roles, for different reasons, and both roles have different challenges as well.

**Ruthie and Jairah: Who encouraged you to become a lawyer and did anyone object to your decision? Why?**

**Ajit Uncle:** It was mostly my own decision and was not initially well received by my parents and grandmother, who hoped I would do something in the medical field. My grandmother was concerned because she had a negative impression of lawyers. I promised her when I was fifteen that I would practice law in a way that would not break our family faith and values, and I have always worked hard to keep that promise. My parents were initially concerned because at the time that I decided to become a lawyer, few members of our community had chosen that career. They have since come to appreciate the work that I've done, particularly when I started my career as a legal aid lawyer. Since I started practicing law, several cousins, friends, and other members of our community have chosen the law as a career and are succeeding in this work.

**Ruthie: Despite your busy schedule you still manage to come to church and teach Sunday school too. What is your motivation?**

**Ajit Uncle:** My parents were among the founding members of our parish, and I grew up in this church. My faith is an important part of who I am, and ultimately that faith came before my career, and will continue after I am no longer working as a member of the legal

profession. God comes first, and we are here not just because of our own faith, but the faith of those who came before us. Coming to church and participating in worship with others is therefore very important to me. I enjoy teaching Sunday School a great deal. I first taught Sunday School for four years from 1998 to 2002. My first Sunday School students are now adults, some with families and children of their own. To help guide a young person in their search for understanding and knowledge of God and our faith is a great privilege and gives me great joy.

**Ruthie: What was one of your most interesting cases and why?**

**Ajit Uncle:** I worked on many interesting cases as a lawyer. One involved a gentleman who was terminated from his housing assistance program. He was blind and had several health issues, and when he was admitted to the housing program, he had been homeless and living under a bridge. My client was terminated from the program for a crime he committed many decades ago, which everyone knew about when they admitted him into the program. The program then changed its rules, and terminated my client's housing assistance, which placed him at risk of going back into homelessness. I kept receiving negative decisions in this case, but we also continued to appeal to higher courts. I represented him in an appeal that went all the way to the Connecticut Supreme Court, which ultimately agreed with me that my client had been terminated from the program illegally and gave him back his housing subsidy. In another case, I represented thousands of Hartford residents who had been forced to leave condemned homes by the City of Hartford without receiving the financial assistance they were entitled to under state law. We brought a class action lawsuit on their behalf and were able to secure a multimillion-dollar settlement that allowed those families to claim and receive the assistance they were entitled to under state law.

**Ruthie: When you lose a case, how do you feel?**

**Ajit Uncle:** Losing a case was always very hard, particularly because of what was at stake for my clients. With my former clients, they were barely getting by, and always facing multiple crises. A loss of a case meant the loss of a home, or access to resources, or hundreds of other consequences that were very difficult and sometimes life threatening. I never took those losses particularly well, and it motivated my colleagues and I to work very hard for our clients.

**Ruthie: What do you enjoy doing with your kids so that you feel that you have spent quality time with them?**

**Ajit Uncle:** We play squash and basketball together and go on bike rides together from time to time. Last summer we took a trip to Maine together, which we all enjoyed very much. Isaiah, Elijah and Joshua are also slowly learning how to cook with me.

**Ruthie and Jairah: Did you ever have a situation in your professional life that made you think it was God who worked through me or gave me a breakthrough?**

**Ajit Uncle:** I always felt that my work as a lawyer was a calling to do God's work. I felt that calling all that time, with each case.

**Jairah: "In times of distress is there a bible portion you turn to? If so, how does it help you persevere through the struggle?"**

**Ajit Uncle:** Micah 6:8 comes to mind often: "He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God." I also keep Psalm 23 and Matthew 25:40 in mind. All of these passages remind me of what God asks of us and promises us.

**Jairah: What is one piece of advice that you have for teens who aspire to be a lawyer?**

**Ajit Uncle:** Work hard and spend time trying to gain practical experience with the profession. The work of a lawyer is difficult, and incredibly rewarding.

# Maramon Convention

The Maramon Convention, is a Christian convention in Asia, organized by the Mar Thoma Evangelistic Association and is held at Maramon, Pathanamthitta, Kerala, India annually in February on the vast sand-bed of the Pampa River next to the Kozhencherry Bridge. Around 1894, a few small supportive prayer groups emerged, and this paved a way for spiritual revival. Because the number of people attending these meetings was growing; the need was addressed by deciding to have a meeting of these groups on a wider level at a central accessible place. The duty of organizing this meeting was given to the Mar Thoma Evangelistic Association and the first convention was held in 1895 at Maramon. Being part of the Mar Thoma fraternity, we encourage all to listen to a few sessions of the convention and learn a few songs, which will help us in our spiritual growth.

Ask your parents, grandparents or elders who have been to the Maramon convention, to share their experiences. Could you find during which section of the worship, our parish choir sings Maramon Convention songs?

## Down the memory Lane

Few of our Sunday School children spoke to some of our elders and they shared their Maramon Convention memories.

### **Aaron Oommen sharing the memories of our Choir Director, Mr. Christy Mathew**

*Christyuncle's father Late Rev. V. M. Mathew was the Director of the Department of Sacred Music and hence Christyuncle has had very close ties to Maramon Convention from a very early age. He had not missed a single convention till he completed high school. So, for almost 17 years he has attended the Maramon Convention. His dad used to lead the choir. While his dad selected songs and trained the choir, Christyuncle had the opportunity to play guitar for the choir. He was in middle school (around 7th or 8th grade) so he would skip classes because the Convention was during the week. Playing for the recordings was an integral part of his growing years. In those days, all the musicians had to be in one room in the studio, nowadays you can have one instrument at a time, and have different tracks. They didn't have that kind of facility back then. So, if one person made a mistake, they had to start all over again. So, to record 15 songs they all stayed overnight for 3 to 4 days at a stretch. One unforgettable experience was when he was in fifth grade, DSMC brought a huge organ from a company called Reginald from Chennai and he got to play that organ that time. Though he has not attended a convention recently, he believes that though the technology and seating has changed, the general format and spirit of the convention remains the same. Christyuncle himself has composed around 5 songs for the Maramon Convention in the past years.*

**Georgie Mammen sharing the memories of our Kochamma, Mrs. Sherin Mammen**  
*In her childhood, my mother sat on the sand over a newspaper in the 'pandal' made of coconut leaves. My mother enjoyed the songs, sermons and prayers and had wished that someday she would be able to sing in that choir. They carried food wrapped in banana leaves and at noon ate it under the Pandal with relatives.*

*They walked on the sand bed and ate snacks from the shops on the sand bed. There were lots of shops. My mother never misses cane-sugar juice and bell pepper 'bajji' from the shops. She likes the view from the top of the Kozhencherry bridge. From a distance, the 'pandal' looks like a small book. We hope that I can go there again when we go back to India.*

### **Hannah Mathew sharing the memories of her grandmother Mrs. Aleyamma Mathew.**

*My grandmother came from Maramon and lived near Maramon Manappuram. Some of her memories of the Maramon Convention started at the early age of five where she participated in the kids' sessions. She also had the privilege to sing in the Maramon Convention choir, spiritually grow in her faith and accept Jesus Christ as her savior.*

### **Isaiah and Elijah Thomas sharing the memories of their grandfather, Mr. Joseph Thomas**

*The Maramon Convention is a big gathering in Kerala celebrated and organized by Christians. We interviewed our Appachen, Joseph Thomas, to learn about some of the amazing experiences he had there. When we interviewed Appachen, he said his favorite part about the Maramon convention was that there was a new song to sing every year he went. Appachen was very proud that his choir group won the choir competition one year. Appachen also enjoyed listening to the famous speakers such as Dr. Stanley Jones, Rev. Edwin Orr and Theodore Williams. He also shared that he enjoyed the Maramon Convention so much that he even walked 45 minutes to get there when there was no other transportation. Thousands of people attend the Maramon convention, and as you can see from this interview our grandfather clearly loved going to the Maramon convention when he lived in India.*

### **Joanna Alex sharing the memories of her grandfather Rev. Oommen Philip**

*I remember attending the Convention with my parents as a small kid especially in the context of child dedication for full-time ministry. My mother used to remind me that she dedicated me even before I was born. It was her conviction that the newborn will be separated for the full-time ministry. To grow in that conviction, I was taken every year for the dedication service. Finally, I realized my calling for a full-time ministry, and I am retired after 41 years of ministry. This year, after having heard the Thursday morning message through Rev. Mark D. Chapman, I decided to go and attend the dedication service as a thanks offering though my parents went to be with the Lord, with the hope to see them again on the second coming of our Lord as He promised. The Convention is having various sessions like sessions for children, youths, Bible study and general messages. This year for the first time, there were night meetings for the new Believers in Hindi, Telugu, Kannada, Marathi, Bengali etc.*

### **Jordon Anish sharing the memories of his Sunday School teacher, Mrs. Thankam George**

*Thankam aunty loves the unique experience where she gets to see people from all over the world, gather under the coconut leaf woven roof called the OLA MEDENJA PANDAL and the KUTTI PANDAL for Sunday school children where they can listen to the word of God. She remembers meeting missionaries and evangelists and other fellow believers who travel from very far and remote villages of Orissa, Andhra and Tamil Nadu to attend this convention. It gives a sense of peace doing bible study with scholars and priests around the world, along the banks of Pampa river.*



# More Glimpses from Carmel's Got Talent



## Psalm 166

A psalm of praise. A psalm of Ruthie.

*O Lord you are great, greater than all of the human beings and gods.  
Lord, great are you in all my sight, greater than all on earth.*

*Praise the Lord in all times in life,  
and he will bless you and make you prosperous.*

*O Lord, I fall at your feet in your majestic holiness.  
O Lord, no one can match your holy ways.*

*Lord, you are pure and beautiful.  
I will praise you till the end of my days!*

*O Lord, you are great, greater than all of the human beings and gods.  
Lord, you are great in all my sight, greater than all on earth.*

## The Fruit of the Spirit is GENTLENESS Kids Activity

As you have read in the story about Camila and Sky, Gentleness is being loving, tender, calm, and humble in the things you say and do instead of being harsh or mean. It is a mildness or meekness (quiet, gentle) of spirit. When we are gentle with someone, we speak the truth in love.

We as children should always remember to use our words and actions gently. Gentle words truly do calm a situation and harsh words do indeed stir up anger. **“A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.”** [Proverbs 15:1]

Let's try out a game to practice this. You will need 2 balloons filled with water and a bucket.

1. Take each water balloon. Place a bucket away from where you are standing. Try and toss the balloon in the bucket by tossing it in as hard as you can. After you have thrown the 1st balloon pick the 2nd one and this time you should try to get the balloon in the bucket without breaking it by gently placing it in the bucket.
2. Just like the balloon that we weren't careful with, when we are harsh or careless with our words, we can really hurt other people & make them burst. But when we are gentle with our words and actions it shows that we care about others and want to treat them in a kind and loving way.

As an additional challenge, try and find the passage where Jesus showed a great example of gentleness.