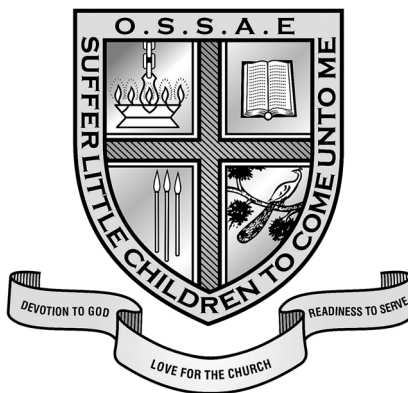


# ORTHODOX SYRIAN SUNDAY SCHOOL ASSOCIATION OF THE EAST



## TABORE DIVISION

**Class XI**  
**(English)**

Sunday School Central Office  
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## FOREWORD

Orthodox Sunday School Association of the East could successfully publish Sunday School text books, modifying those in use comprehensively, according to needs of the hour. The effort behind this deserves appreciation from all angles. This publication was the result of concerted hard work from a fellowship of clergy and laity well experienced in the area of education under the capable leadership and guidance of the then OSSAE President and educational wizard H. G. Dr. Yakob Mar Irenaios and the then Director General of OSSAE and reputed Psychologist Fr. Dr. O. Thomas. Now, it has become necessary for a re-publication of those books. Let us recall thankfully those who worked behind this: we submit them in the hands of our Almighty God.

The Word of God, Church Liturgy, family prayers, life of Church Fathers and their exhortations, faith of our Church, Church History and social issues are integrated systematically and equitably developed from BALAPADOM to VEDA PRAVEEN DIPLOMA and different topics arranged in different textbooks most sensibly and in an orderly manner. There can be further modifications and corrections. All those going through these texts may note that they have the freedom and opportunity to make suggestions for improving this further.

Let us not forget one thing. Along with the topics covered in the curriculum, children come across another open text, which is the presence of their teacher, which they experience and assimilate. In young minds, which is more influential, presence of teacher or textbooks? Both are important. However, what integrates more in a child mind is the presence of teacher, as we perceive. Facial expressions happen to enlighten a person. It is a direct perception rather than sense of hearing. Mother, father, priests, teachers, elder brothers and other elders are all masters, but the one standing on top of all is mother as the saying goes, "GURUNAM MATHA SHREYASI".

The very first open house of education is home followed by church and school. All these join to form a concept of GURUKULAM and an ongoing master – child relationship. It shall be in such a learning scenario, one has to perceive curricular and non-curricular topics with teachers and students.

With this note of Foreword, the revised print of Sunday School texts are presented before Church.

Devalokam  
01-12- 2019

**Dr. Gabriel Mar Gregorios**  
*President, OSSAE*

## INTRODUCTION

‘Spiritual education has been documented in the Holy Bible from the time of Moses as being of utmost importance. Through God’s spokesman, Moses, the Israelites were instructed to teach God’s commandments to their children, “Recite them to your children and talk about them when you are at home” (Deuteronomy 6:7). The Orthodox Syrian Sunday School Association of the East (OSSAE) is the significant movement in Malankara Orthodox Church for giving spiritual education to the children.

The ministry of being a teacher of the Sunday School is not a job or Sunday routine. It is a privilege to be chosen and used by Jesus Christ. Hence the goal of OSSAE is to give the children the firm faith in Jesus Christ our Lord. The Sunday School education should inspire them to have faith in the Triune God, partake in all salvific acts of our Lord Jesus Christ as a member of the Holy Church and also to work for the glory of the Kingdom of God.

Let the teacher be an encourager because the world has plenty of critics already. Let our method of teaching be ‘learner’ centred. Teacher shall inspire the children and be a facilitator for them. Help the student to know God, to experience God and to walk in His ways.

The parents also have a great evangelical role in moulding their children in Godliness. St. John Chrysostom opined that ‘Home Church is the cradle of Catechism’. Here St. John Chrysostom used the term “home Church” to mean Church at home. The parents are the most influential teachers of children. They should teach their children without fail. OSSAE prepared and uploaded video classes from Balapadam to Class XII on [ossaebodhanam.org](http://ossaebodhanam.org). Parents should take care to teach children using these online resources along with regular classes of Sunday School.

The value of our Sunday school children is immensely great. Their value doesn’t decrease based on someone’s inability to see their worth. What God knows about them is more important than others think. Ultimately to know the will of God is the greatest of all spiritual pursuits, to understand the will of God is the greatest spiritual discovery and using Christian education to do the will of God is the greatest of life’s achievements. Let God’s will shine on the lives of our children!

Devalokam  
16-09-2021

**Fr. Dr. Varghese Varghese**  
*Director General*

## PREFACE

The OSSAE curriculum was thoroughly revised during 2012-13. The revision was done considering child psychology and giving emphasis to student centered teaching and learning. Intensive supervision of the then OSSAE President, H. G. Dr. Yakob Mar Irenaios and the leadership of the then Director General Fr. Dr. O. Thomas were the real assets in the revision process.

Prof. Dr. Sam V. Daniel, Omalloor served as the Executive Editor of the Curriculum Committee. After Fr. Dr. O. Thomas, Fr. Dr. Reji Mathew became the Director General and he worked hard day and night to complete the revision. Many distinguished persons co-operated with him to complete the lessons. Let us express the gratitude to all of them. When Fr. Dr. Jacob Kurian took charge as the Director General, he initiated the correction of printing mistakes and other errors in the first edition.

The process is still going on. It is now ten years since the new curriculum had been formulated. Present Curriculum Committee, under the leadership of OSSAE President H. G. Dr. Gabriel Mar Gregorios and Director General Fr. Dr. Varghese Varghese, is taking steps to include necessary revisions in the texts. The service of Fr. Job Sam Mathew, our Office Administrator in remodelling this book is to be mentioned with gratitude.

There are thirteen classes at present under five sections – Bethlehem, Nazareth, Galilee, Jerusalem and Tabore. This text is of the class XI of Tabore division. This is part of the Veda Praveen diploma course. There shall be examinations at the end of class XI and XII. A Project, Orientation course report and three hours of teaching are part of the course. All these taken together shall count for the result of Veda Praveen diploma.

Teachers and parents shall give special attention to these teenage students so that they grow in a close communication with Christ.

Dear students, take care to see that regular prayer and meditation of Bible are part and parcel of your life. Let the Holy Spirit guide us everyday.

Devalokam  
14-09-2021

**Prof. Dr. Cherian Thomas**  
*Publication Officer*

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## **ADDITIONAL CRITERIA FOR VEDA PRAVEEN DIPLOMA**

In addition to a pass in class XI and XII taken together, the following are the prerequisite criteria for the award of Veda Praveen Diploma.

1. Three hours of teaching in any Sunday School class under the supervision of the Head Master/Head Mistress.
  2. Submit a report of the Orientation course attended as approved by the director.
  3. A certified project report in the given format.
- 

## **FORMAT OF THE PROJECT REPORT**

1. Front Page with all details.
2. Project Title.
3. Introduction.
4. Significance and the Relevance of the Study.
5. Methodology.
6. Analysis of the Data Collected.
7. Findings/Inference.
8. Conclusions
9. Reference.



# UNIT 1

## BIBLE STUDIES

### Chapter 1

### The Holy Bible: An Orthodox Church Perspective

The Holy Bible is the authoritative text of the Church. It is the source of the faith and liturgy 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 humankind.

God was making use of certain individuals to write this message completely and without errors. He gave them inspiration and knowledge. 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 human beings. 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.

### The Orthodox Church and the Protestant Bible

The Protestant Bible contains only thirty nine 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 third century BC there were a number of Jewish migrants living in Egypt. The second generation of these migrants knew only the Greek language. The Greek translation of the Old Testament was done in Alexandria for their use. This happened at the end of third century BC. The translation

was done by a team of seventy scholars (Some scholars say seventy two) 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 of the Jews and Greek was the universal language, the Jewish community recognized the Septuagint. The early Christian Church followed this tradition and used only the Septuagint. St. Paul and others used to quote from this Greek translation and not from the Hebrew Bible.

The Rabbis 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 Maccabees. (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 Roman Catholic Church and all Orthodox churches other than the Protestant Reformist churches accept the Old Testament containing 46 books.

The Peshitta translation used in the Syrian Orthodox Church is based on Septuagint. Hence it has 46 books. The Malayalam translation of Peshitta Bible is done by Very Rev. Fr. Kurian Kaniamparambil Cor episcopa.

### **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 liturgy and 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 of Hippo 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). These statements clarify 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 and Evangelical view that the Holy Bible alone is the only source of authority of all doctrines, liturgy 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, liturgical texts 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 consider the teachings of Church Fathers, Canons of Ecumenical Councils and Synods, and liturgical texts of the Church in Biblical studies.
3. The Syriac Bible (Peshitta) recognized by us differs from the Protestant Bible in the number of books in the Old Testament.
4. We do not believe in "Sola Scriptura" (Scripture alone) 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 arguments given by them are:

1. The Old Testament is the Holy Book of the Jews. It consists of laws and the practices of Jews. They are not relevant to those who believe in Jesus 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 and 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 Testament. 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 Jesus 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 Old Testament and the New Testament 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 Testament. 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 (1 Corinthians 10: 1-13)
4. Numerous prophecies and Psalms of the Old Testament are fulfilled in the New Testament. 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 prophecies. 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 it was formed as a 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 summarized 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 as the day of worship. 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 sinners to attain the perfection defined in the laws however they try. God realized this limitation and sent His own Son to wash off our sins. When we recognize (in faith) that Jesus 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 Jesus 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 Testament and should preserve the right relationship between both. We should view one as shadow (Old Testament) and the other as essence (New Testament).

### **Activities**

1. Prepare a list of at least ten Old Testament verses used in the Gospel of St. Matthew.
2. How was St. Paul's concept of 'righteousness of faith' revealed in the life of 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 'evangelion' which means good news. The gospels contains the good news for the whole of humankind. 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 preaching 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 Jesus Christ in near future, they didn't feel the need to record them for future generations. The eyewitnesses to the words and works of Jesus Christ delivered those facts faithfully to others (1 John 1:1-2, Acts 2:42, St. 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 Jesus Christ might not be as imminent as they had expected earlier. All these factors prompted the recording of gospels. The preaching 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 circulation 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 Jesus 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 consolidated and presented the live experiences of the Church and oral traditions 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

Even though 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 different in presentation 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 Christ:** 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 Passovers (St. John 2:13, 6:4 and 12:1). According to him, Jesus visited Jerusalem several times.

**2. Difference in the Style of Preaching:** The Synoptic Gospels have numerous parables. In St. John's gospel we don't have any parable but only long 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 and the Holy Spirit.

**3. Miracles and Signs:** Synoptic Gospels contain many miracles. While St. John selects only seven of them and describes them as signs. He reveals the truths of Jesus 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 half of the New Testament. 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 Corinthians 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 early Christian communities. 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 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 the 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 context of worship of the Christian Church. The truths revealed through the Scriptures inspire the various components of worship.

Orthodox Church, which is an ancient apostolic Church accords a very important position to the Holy Bible. We can understand this when we examine the liturgical structure and liturgical organization of the Church. Every believer who enters the church for worship finds the Holy Book kept specially encased on a table in the Alb. 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 important in the Orthodox Church. Observance of the Eucharist is mandatory on all Sundays and Moranaya 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/darga) 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 some 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 (liturgical year) is divided into various periods and passages related to Incarnation and ministry of Jesus Christ, His crucifixion, death, resurrection, 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 liturgical 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 '*Promions*' and '*Sedras*' used in the prayers of the Passion Week are full of prophesies 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' ('Vayanayogam' or 'Prarthanayogam'). We should understand how this name originated. The believers would assemble in homes for prayer, Bible reading, singing and fellowship. 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 the Holy Bible in the Orthodox Worship.'

## UNIT 2

# CHURCH HISTORY

### Chapter 1

## Milestones in Church History

A comprehensive and synoptic history of the Christian Church from first century AD to the twenty first century is given below. Only the important events which can be described as milestones of Church history are discussed here.

1. The Pentecost and the Growth 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 the Growth of the Church**

Jesus Christ who resurrected on the third day, appeared to His disciples and women followers 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 God 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 Iscariot 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 different languages (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). Christ's passion, Crucifixion, Resurrection and the Ascension and the

anointment of His disciples with Holy Spirit on the fiftieth day marked growth of the Christian Church.

### **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, filled with Holy Spirit and wisdom were prayerfully elected to assist the apostles in church liturgy, 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 (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 spread 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 Valerius (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 of the Church and dispersal of the Christians. 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 twenty two 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.

St. Athanasius, bishop of Alexandria, had stated in an Easter message send to various parishes in AD 367 that there are twenty seven books in the New Testament. The meeting of the Rabbis of Judaism at Jamnia in AD 90 decided that there would be thirty nine 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 recognized the Old Testament containing 39 books and the New Testament with 27 books.

### **Milan Proclamation (AD 313)**

Milan proclamation was made on June 13, 313 AD jointly by Licinius who was the emperor of the eastern parts of the Roman empire and Constantine who was the emperor of the western parts of Roman empire. This proclamation removed restrictions imposed on Christians in the Roman empire and declared Christianity as one of the recognized 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 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 (or Synods; means '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 Councils and the heresies that caused them are given below.

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

These three councils are recognized by all ancient churches. The first three are recognized by the Oriental Orthodox Churches and the first seven are recognized by the Byzantine Orthodox churches. The Roman Catholic Church recognise twenty one councils.

The Council of Chalcedon (AD 451) has great importance in the history of the Church. Eutyches, the old Abbot of the monastery of Alexandria, raised the question whether the Incarnated Word of God, Jesus 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, Armenia, Malankara, Ethiopia, Eritrea). After the division of the Church in 1054 AD, the Church in the Roman empire was split into Eastern (Byzantine) and Western (Roman 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 and worldliness attracted many people to monastic life. Monasticism originated in Egypt. St. Antonios (Antony the Great) is the founder and practitioner of solitary monasticism and St. Pachomios is the founder and practitioner of community monasticism. Monasticism and monks have made invaluable contribution to the Christian Church. Their contributions include Biblical studies, development of liturgy and liturgical texts, social welfare activities, missionary activities and ethical 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 war waged by Western Christians by bearing a cross, against Islamic forces in the West Asia. 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 in the West Asia, Northern Africa and Eastern Europe to the Muslims. The crusades affected the entire Christianity adversely. It led to severe persecution of Christian communities and, quarrels and disputes among the various Christian churches.

## **Reformation Movement**

The attempts at Church reform initiated under the leadership of Martin Luther (1483-1546) 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 (1328-1384) and John Huss (1369-1415) 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 Roman Catholic Church gave impetus to Reformation. Martin Luther opposed the corruption, immorality and nepotism that existed in the Roman Catholic Church. He founded the Reformation movement officially in 1517. Luther's actions were supported by Ulrich Zwingli (1484-1531) and John Calvin (1509-1564) 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 Catholic 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 World Missionary 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. Willem Adolph Visser't Hooft was elected the first general secretary of WCC. H.G. Alexois Mar Theodosios Metropolitan, Fr. K. Philipose (H.G. Dr. Philipose Mar Theophilose Metropolitan) 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. Sarah Chakko, a member of our Church became the first women elected co-chair (president) of the WCC in 1951. It is a matter of pride for us that H.G. Dr. Paulose Mar Gregorios Metropolitan and H.G. Dr. Geevarghese Mar Osthathios Metropolitan are 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 one Centuries is given below.

1. St. Thomas and the Malankara Church.
2. Persian Immigration.
3. Synod of Udayamperor (1599).
4. Koonan Cross Oath.
5. Mar Thoma I
6. Division of the Malankara Church.
7. The Relation between Malankara and Syrian Orthodox Church of 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 eight 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 evangelized in North India is a book titled 'The Activities of Judas Thomas' written by an author from Uraha (Edessa) between AD 180 and AD 230. This book states that apostle St. Thomas propagated the way of Jesus Christ in the country of Gondaphores. Scholars affirm that Gondaphores was the king who ruled over lands adjoining Afghanistan, Baluchistan and Punjab in the first century AD. Coins issued in his name have been found in the later centuries. Gregorios Bar Ebraya, the West Syrian Church father who lived in the thirteenth century says in his historical book 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 fifteenth century. These members of the Roman Catholic 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 Roman Catholic Church. Gradually the Portuguese Roman 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, use of images in worship, hierarchical organization and administration of the Church 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 in order to suppress the powers of Palliyogams.

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 Portuguese 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 members (Nasranis) 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 Portuguese murdered Ahathalla and drowned his corpse at sea spread like wildfire in Malankara. The enraged members 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 January 3, 1653 has been distorted and misinterpreted by later Roman 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 Syriac 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 I**

On May 22, 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 Abdul Jaleel Mar Gregorios of Jerusalem who arrived in Malankara in 1665 legitimized the consecration of Mar Thoma 1. 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 Catholic 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 Mar Thoma I deserted their prelate in favour of Roman faith. Parambil Chandy Kathanar of Kuravilangadu and Kadavil Chandy Kathanar of Kaduthuruthy, two of the four 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 Portuguese in Malankara declined. When the Dutch ordered the eviction of the Portuguese from Kochi, the latter had no option but to raise Parambil Chandy Kathanar as Episcopa. This interference of the Roman 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 Roman 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 Syrian Orthodox Church of Antioch**

The Malankara Church which had been ruled by indigenous leaders till the fifteenth century, went under the Roman Catholic administration in the sixteenth century after the arrival of the Portuguese. It had to bear the Roman yoke for about half a century. After the oath of Koonan Cross Oath in 1653, it severed all relations with the Roman Catholic Church. The consecration of Mar Thoma I and the dissensions regarding his episcopacy led Malankara Church into new relationships. Church historians say that Abdul Jaleel Mar Gregorios of Jerusalem who reached Malankara in 1665 led Malankara Church into its relationship with Syrian Orthodox Church of Antioch. Even though 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 Syrian Orthodox Church of 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 Syrian



Orthodox Church of Antioch. The visit and collaboration of Metropolitans from Antioch in seventeenth and eighteenth centuries strengthened the relationship between Malankara and Antioch. The consecration of Palakkunnath Mathews Mar Athanasios and Synod of Mulanthuruthy held in 1876 formalized this relationship. Even though this relationship helped to sustain the West Syriac tradition of the Malankara Church, it led to decisive changes in faith and liturgy. When the relationship with the Roman 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 Macaulay, Mar Thoma VII who succeeded Mar Thoma VI (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 eight 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 Macaulay. (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 VII and the interest for the three succeeding years was received by Pulikkottil Ittoop (Joseph) Ramban for the construction of the seminary. The interest on this deposit was utilized for the daily expenses of the seminary till 1936. 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 nineteenth 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 Philipose of Kayamkulam and Ramban Ittoop (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 Philipose 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 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 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 (Kottayam College) at Kottayam in 1815. Rani Lakshmi Bai who ruled Travancore at that time contributed sixteen 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 February 15, 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 Churches**

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 (Church Mission Society) missionaries, the missionary arm of the Anglican Church, right from the beginning of the nineteenth century. With the aim of co-operative action with the Malankara Church, the CMS send the missionaries Thomas Norton, Benjamin Bailey, Henry Baker and Joseph Fenn to Malankara. They started their evangelical mission at 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 Protestant Reformist ideas in the Malankara Church. They wanted to alter the liturgy and faith 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 Protestant 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 Malankara Nasranis. On the other hand CMS College, Kottayam and its surroundings, Rupees 20,000 got from the government, and Munroe island were given to the Protestant 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'. Later trustees of the Church were posted.

Later Palakkunnath Abraham Malpan and others tried to implement Protestant 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 Protestant Reformist faction got separated from the Malankara Church and founded a new Church named 'Malankara Mar Thoma Syrian Church' or simply 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 Peter III to Malankara in order to defeat the Protestant Reformist faction in court cases. An assembly of the Malankara Church was held at Mulanthuruthy Marthoman Church in June 1876 and it was presided over by the Patriarch. The Patriarch insisted that Malankara Church should oblige in writing to surrender its independence and sovereignty to the Patriarch of Antioch for the first time in history. Pulikottil Joseph Mar Dionysius V Metropolitan opposed this.

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 Protestant Reformist faction in court cases, it is a sad truth of history that the Synod led to the emergence of Patriarch faction, surrender of freedom of the Church and to its subsequent division.

### **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 Mar Thoma 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.

#### **The Titles of Catholicos and Patriarch**

The word Catholicos has originated from the Greek word ‘catholicos’. This word means ‘universal’, ‘general’ and specifically the ‘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, and Armenia 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 ‘patria’ (meaning ‘family’) and ‘archien’ (meaning ‘head’) which mean ‘Chief Father’. The 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 Maphrian 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 West 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 Maphrian. Catholicos was the leader of Persian Christians, whereas Maphrian was the leader of members of Church of Antioch living in Persia. In those days Catholicos was considered equal to Patriarch and Maphrian was considered as under the Patriarch of Antioch. However the records after the thirteenth 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 fifteenth century AD. The Maphrian 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 leaders (both clergy and laity) of the Church 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 of Antioch 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 Protestant Reformists. The members of the Church desired to found an administrative system (Maphrianate) similar to the one that existed in Tigris, Persia under the Patriarch of Antioch and wanted to raise Joseph Mar Dionysius V to that post. Mathan Malpan of Konattu and Vattasseril Geevarghese Malpan (Saint Vattasseril Geevarghese Mar Dionysius Metropolitan) wrote letters to the Patriarch placing this request before him. Malankara Church demanded the reinstatement of Maphrianate 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 spiritual relationship with the Patriarch or with the Syrian Orthodox Church of Church of Antioch. The immediate cause of establishing the Catholicate was the uncanonical interdict against Saint Vattasseril Dionysius Metropolitan issued by Patriarch Abdulla on May 5, 1911. The Catholicate can be seen as an outward expression of the traditional 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

traditional, historical consciousness, quest for freedom and historical necessity can be listed as the reasons for the founding of the Catholicate.

### **The Founding of Catholicate in Malankara**

The interdict on St. Vattasseril Dionysius 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 Abdulla 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 June 13, 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 Paulose. The consecration took place at Niranam Church on Sunday September 15, 1912. Thus the Catholicate was established in Malankara.

### **Was it Catholicate or Maphrianate 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 Maphrian. 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" (Fr. Dr. V.C. Samuel, 'Truth Triumphs', MOC, Kottayam, 46).

This order was issued on September 17, 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 Maphrian. 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 titles ('Catholicos of the East' and 'Mar Baselios') 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 or misconceptions. 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 autocephalous 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. While Malankara Church is an ancient, apostolic, indigenous, and autocephalous Church.

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 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 leaders of the Church 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. 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. The Supreme Court Judgement of 2017.
5. 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 ancient Apostolic Orthodox 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 December 26, 1934. H.H. Baselios Geevarghese II Catholicos presided this association. 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 subcommittee under the leadership of Shri. O.M. Cherian. This committee prepared a draft document titled 'Compendium of Laws'. At the same time St. Vattasseril Geevarghese Mar Dionysius metropolitan was also preparing another draft of the constitution. While discussions and studies on both these drafts were going on, Vattasseril Mar Dionysius metropolitan passed away on February 23, 1934. The Malankara Syrian Christian Association that met on December 26, 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 from the Roman Catholic domination in 1653, the heads of Malankara Church came to be known as Mar Thoma Metropolitans. These Mar Thomas 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. Even though all the efforts for reconciliation failed, the Honourable Supreme Court of India 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. Baselios 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, metropolitans of Patriarchal factions accepted the 1934 Constitution. The Catholicos, metropolitans of the Orthodox Church and metropolitans of the Patriarchal faction met at Old Seminary Kottayam along with of Elias Mar Yulios, the Patriarchal representative. The meeting took place on December 16, 1958. At 11<sup>o</sup> clock at night both factions exchanged letters of reconciliation. Mar Yulios, the representative of Patriarch Ignatius Yakob III and H.H. Baselios 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 V. S. Malimuth of the Supreme Court was observer at this meeting. This meeting endorsed through voting that H.H. Baselius Marthoma Mathews II Catholicos 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.

### **Supreme Court Judgement 2017**

The Supreme Court of India gave a final verdict in favour of the Orthodox Church on July 3, 2017. The Supreme Court upheld the 1934 constitution of the Malankara Church. As per the order, the administration of the individual parishes should be on the basis of this constitution. The court said that “it is also not permissible to create a parallel system of management in the churches under the guise of spiritual supremacy of the Patriarch”. This way of parallel administration started in the Malankara Church after the Synod of Mulanthuruthy 1876. The Cochin Panchayath Court took this issue and gave the verdict that the Supreme leader of the Malankara

Church should be a native Metropolitan from India. In 1889, the Royal Court verdict also upheld this and has been continued up to the Supreme Court judgement of 2017. The spiritual power of the Patriarch has reached to a vanishing point. So, he cannot interfere in governance of parishes. The Patriarch is not permitted to exercise the power in violation of the 1934 Constitution to create a parallel system of administration of parishes as done in 2002 and onwards. The verdict was given by Justice Arun Mishra and Justice Amitava Roy.

### **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. Baselios Geevarghese II Catholicos, H.G. Alexios Mar Theodosios, H.G. Dr. Philipose Mar Theophilus, H.G. Dr. Paulose Mar Gregorios, H.G. Dr. Geevarghese Mar Osthathios, Fr. Dr. V. C. 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 Mar Thoma 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, Christa Sishya Ashram, Thadagam Ashram in Coimbatore in 1936 and Mar Kuriakose Dayara, Mylapra was founded in 1985. Along with the monasteries, nunneries 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 (H.G. Pathros Mar Osthathios metropolitan) are examples. Besides, the St. Paul's evangelical movement was founded in 1953 by Deacon M.V. George (H.G. Dr. 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 3

## 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:** Human beings are social animals. 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 human beings are given God's image and likeness in the act of creation. What is meant here is that man/woman should grow up in God's nature and should reveal God through his/her 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 Holy 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** (Ephesians 5: 22-32): This part of the epistle is also read during the Sacrament of Marriage. Here we find the term mystery or sacrament. The relationship between Jesus 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 (Monogamy):** 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:** Even though 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 the Holy Trinity. But we should not think that the solidarity of the 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, death and resurrection, 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 the Holy Trinity should become a model for Christian families.

**7. The Holy Family of Nazareth:** Even though 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. They took care to bring up their child in God’s grace and blessings of people 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 twelve 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. Today all think that the growth of a society is contained in its material growth. We desire for the rapid material conditions and technological development. Problems in the modern and cyber family relationships started spreading out into our families as well. Material growth and peace in family will not go hand in hand. Divorces and broken families are increasing significantly in our society. We shall examine the important challenges before our families.

**1. The Sacramental Value of Family Life has Lost its Significance:** The well being 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 recognized 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. 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 globalized 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 realize 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 and 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.

**8. Marriage Related Issues:** The practise of dowry is one of the most demeaning issues for Indian women. It cause huge financial burden on the parents. Dowry related issues result in physical and verbal abuse, and violence against women, even leading to murder or suicide. At times, poor parents are unable to marry off daughters due to high dowry demands and fear. The Dowry Prohibition Act of 1961 prohibits practise of giving or taking of dowry by either parties to a marriage. This is a non-bailable offence. Here we should realize that both male and female children have equal rights and share for properties of the parents.

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**

**L**et 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, and playstation. 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, Instagram and Whatsapp. 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 free time 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 and listening to grandmother stories ceased. Modern houses and flats spoiled neighbourhood relationships. Students join far away public schools for the sake of higher 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.

Estrangement of us from God has resulted in our estrangement from fellow human beings. The consequence of this estrangement from God is fratricide. Love of God and love of co-creatures 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 In depth 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 life 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 marginalized including tax collectors, sinners, prostitutes, blind and lepers. Children should learn and acquire this value from parents. Empathetic 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. Holistic Development of Youth in Christian Values:** 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 and society.

**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 Jesus 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 Jesus Christ in the sacrament of the Holy Eucharist, becomes meaningful

when we share our material goods with those who don't have them. Believers should cultivate family relationship with those related in blood and friendliness with the believers in their prayer fellowship. When we consider the fact that Jesus Christ loved the world, we are compelled in Christ to love all, including those who believe in other faiths, churches, religions or even atheism.

**6. Human Relations Foster Development 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 strong family friendships among families of your parish.

## Chapter 4

# Marriage between Members of Different Faiths, Churches and Religions

### Introduction

**M**arriage 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. However the Christian community of Nasranis 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 faiths, 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. Even though 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 Chaldean 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 faith of the Orthodox Church by taking Holy confession and communion. Members of Pentecostal groups have to receive all liturgical services and sacraments by 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 Roman Catholic Perspective**

The Roman 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-Roman Catholic partner has to give consent to the Roman Catholic partner to retain his/her faith and bring up their children in Roman Catholic faith. The Orthodox Church has not adopted such a perspective. The 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 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 Mar Thoma 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 Jesus Christ's flesh and blood, intercessory prayer to Saints and prayer for the departed would find it difficult to live with a non-rigorous partner in later life. Even though 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 Religions and Culture**

Our Church and the Ethiopian Orthodox Church have communion in the Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist. Hence there are no canonical hindrances 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.

Today, Christians are aware of the targeted befriending and love marriages. There is a sharp rise in cases of young Christian women being subjected to abuse and torture after religious conversion.

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 and faiths 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 liturgical practices in confronting the problems of family life.



## UNIT 4

# 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. Even though 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, witness and mission within this religious plurality.

**1. Human Beings and their Religious Experiences:** Some kind of religious experience is traceable in human beings 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 aborigines or tribal are primal religions.

Developed religions have a developmental history, great souls or saints who are either founders or reformers, religious texts, and common components related to belief or ritual. Most of the religions which are considered developed are 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 Semitic religions. They are Judaism, Christianity and

Islam. Judaism and Christianity are called 'Semitic religions' because historically they begin from the genealogy of Shem, son of Noah. When compared with Oriental religions, Occidental religions or Semitic 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. Even though 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. Even though Confucianism and Taoism originated in China, today they do not have much following anywhere.

**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 Multitudes, Abraham and a history of the God's chosen led by prophets from Moses. The Torah 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. Even though 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. The traditional 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 religion in world history.

(b) **Christianity:** Even though 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 Son of God. 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 different categories namely Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Protestant, Evangelical, Pentecostals and Charismatics. There are subdivisions within each of these categories. Unlike the other categories, Roman Catholics claim that the Pope as the head of the Church. The subdivisions within this category observe unity in belief while they maintain liturgical differences and creedal affirmations.

(c) **Islam:** The Arabic word 'Islam' implies 'submission'. Islam is the religious movement founded by Mohammed (570-632) who gave leadership to the Arabs in the early seventh century AD. Muslims believe that Mohammed was a prophet. He

propagated Islam as a religious movement. The religious text 'Quran' is the basis of Islamic religious belief. The Quran and traditions of Muhammad are the scriptural foundations of Islamic Shariah law. There are two dominant categories in Islam: the Sunnis and the Shias. Islam has the second largest following in the world. The main religious centre of Islam is Mecca in Saudi Arabia. Pilgrimage to this place is known as 'Haj'. Scholars have referred the contemporary militant renewal movement of Islam as 'Political Islam.'

**(d) Parsis (Zoroastrianism):** Zoroaster was lived in Persia in sixth 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 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 sixth century BC. Even though 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 bondage 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'.

**(g) Buddhism:** Buddhism developed under the influence of Gautam Buddha who is believed to have lived in sixth Century BC. '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'. Even though Buddhism originated in India, it spread into regions outside 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 Brahmanical 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 (1469-1539) who lived in fifteenth 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) Confucianism:** Confucius is a philosopher-teacher who is believed to have lived in China in sixth century B.C. Many people looked upon him as holy man and leader and became his followers. Confucians focused on ethical principles and the concept of welfare state. His teachings were known as Confucian classics. This movement was banned in later communist China. Today Confucianism is not a formal religion in China. However Confucianism 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, Lao Tsu who lived in sixth 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.

**(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 Jesus 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?

## **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 extraordinary event of Pentecost energized the mission of the Church. 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 unity with Jesus 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 Jesus Christ is One.

#### **2. One Church and Different Christian Churches**

The one Church which is the body of Jesus Christ, failed to uphold unity of faith among the various regional Christian communities due to human weaknesses in the succeeding ages. As a result divisions developed in the Church and different Christian Churches came into existence. The division of the Church is the consequence of human sin and contrary to God's Will. But as each Christian 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, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church of Jesus Christ. If we learn about the divisions of the Church, the important Christian 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 Christian 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 divine nature and human nature operated in Jesus Christ. The followers of Miaphysitism (who taught that Jesus Christ have "One Incarnated nature of the Word) and Diaphysitism ("two natures") parted ways. The Miaphysites are labelled as 'Monophysites' in mistake.

As the Council 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 Constantinople and Patriarch (Pope) 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 Orthodox Church, Malankara Orthodox Church and Eritrean Orthodox Church belong to this category.

The Oriental Orthodox Churches emphasize the oneness of the Divine and Human natures of Son of God's Unified Personality in His Incarnation. They recognise only first three Great Councils (those of Nicea, Constantinople and Ephesus).

**1. Coptic Orthodox Church:** This is also known as Alexandrian Church or Egyptian Church. Since there is racial and linguistic domination of Copts it is also known as Coptic Church. This Church has the apostolic succession of St. Mark the evangelist. It has its headquarters in Cairo, Egypt. The primate of the Coptic Orthodox Church is known as 'Pope of Alexandria and Patriarch of all Africa on the Holy See of St. Mark the Apostle'.

**2. Syrian Orthodox Church:** This Church has the succession of the Church of Antioch. However today it has no geographic connection with Antioch (currently Antakya in Turkey). This Church claim the apostolic succession from St. Peter. Its headquarters is in Damascus, Syria. Because of civil war, headquarters has been moving to Lebanon. The head of this Church is called Patriarch of Antioch.

**3. Ethiopian Orthodox Church:** This Church has the largest following among Oriental Orthodox churches. Even though 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 fourth century and the nine Syrian monks who reached Ethiopia in the fifth century. This Church had long been under the spiritual supervision of the Coptic Church. The head of this Church is known as 'Patriarch and Catholicos of Ethiopia' (Abuna) and its headquarters is Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

**4. Armenian Orthodox Church:** The Armenian Church has a history of an entire country including its king becoming Christians in fourth century AD. Armenia got its light of gospels from St. Gregory the Illuminator. The Church has its headquarters and followers in Armenia and in Lebanon. The central headquarters is at Vagharshapat (Etchmiadzin) in Armenia. The Catholicos of this region is called 'Catholicos of All Armenians' and the regional head of Church of Lebanon is called 'Catholicos of Cilicia'. The Catholicos of All Armenians have supremacy in all spiritual matters over the See of Cilicia. The Armenian Church suffered in the sustained persecutions by the Turks, culminating in the genocide of 1915.



**5. Malankara Orthodox Church:** Our Church has the apostolic and ecclesiastical succession from St. Thomas and exists in India from first 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 of the East and Malankara Metropolitan. The headquarters of the Church is in Devalokam, Kottayam, Kerala.

**6. Eritrean Orthodox Church:** This is the Church of Eritrea which has gained independence from Ethiopia. As an independent Church, Orthodox Church of Eritrea is undergoing changes today (due to the changed political circumstances). The head of this Church is known as ‘Patriarch of Eritrea’. The headquarters of this Church is at Asmara, Eritrea.

### **Chalcedonian Orthodox Churches (Bzyantine Orthodox Churches)**

The Chalcedonean sect continued undivided till the eleventh century. But in the eleventh 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 Nicene-Constantinoplean Creed or simply the Nicene Creed should be altered as ‘the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son’ (Filioque). A division under the leadership of the Patriarch of Constantinople disagreed with it. They tried to defend the wordings in the Creed as such. That is, “the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father”. Thus those who were opposed to ‘Filioque’ 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. Eastern Orthodox Churches emphasize the difference in the Divine and Human natures of the Incarnated Son of God. They recognize seven Great Councils including the first three Councils as well as the Council of Chalcedon. The following churches belong to this category.

#### **Eastern Orthodox Churches**

<b>Church</b>	<b>Title of the Primate</b>	<b>Headquarters</b>
Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople	Archbishop of Constantinople-New Rome	Istanbul, Turkey
Russian Orthodox Church	Patriarch of Moscow and Russia	Moscow, Russia
Greek Orthodox Church of Alexandria	Pope and Patriarch of the Great City of Alexandria, Libya, Pentapolis, Ethiopia	Alexandria and Cairo
Greek Orthodox Church of Antioch	Patriarch of Antioch and the East	Damascus, Syria



Greek Orthodox Church of Jerusalem	Patriarch of Jerusalem and Holy Land	Jerusalem, Israel
Serbian Orthodox Church	Serbian Patriarch	Belgrade, Serbia
Bulgarian Orthodox Church	Patriarch of Bulgaria	Sofia, Bulgaria
Romanian Orthodox Church	Patriarch of Romania	Bucharest, Romania
Georgian Orthodox Church	Catholicos - Patriarch of Georgia	Tbilisi, Georgia
Church of Cyprus	Archbishop Cyprus	Nicosia, Cyprus
Church of Greece	Archbishop of Greece	Athens, Greece
Orthodox Church of Albania	Archbishop of Albania	Tirana, Albania
Polish Orthodox Church	Archbishop of Poland	Warsaw, Poland
Orthodox Church of Ukraine (Autocephaly recognized by Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople)	Metropolitan	Kyiv, Ukraine
Ukrainian Orthodox Church – Moscow Patriarchate	Metropolitan	Kyiv, Ukraine
Orthodox Church in Japan	Archbishop of Tokyo and Metropolitan of All Japan	Tokyo, Japan
Orthodox Church in America	Archbishop	New York, United States
Orthodox Church of the Czech Lands and Slovakia	Archbishop of Czech Lands and Slovakia	Prague, Czech Republic and Prešov, Slovakia
Orthodox Church of Finland	Archbishop	Helsinki, Finland

**Roman Catholic Church:** After the division of the Church in the eleventh century, the faction of the Church which remained under the Pope of Rome is known as the Roman Catholic Church. The Roman Catholic Church emphasizes the difference in

the Divine and Human natures of the Incarnated Son of God. They recognize twenty one councils including the first Seven Councils. They accept Filioque (that is, including that 'the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son...' in the Nicene Creed). They teach the doctrine of Immaculate Conception of Virgin Mary and the doctrine of transubstantiation of the Holy Eucharist. They recognize Pope of Rome as the successor of St. Peter and the Infallible head of the Church. The Roman Catholic Church insists on celibacy of priests and follows the Bible with seventy three books.

There are several systems of church administration with local flexibility in worship under the Pope of Rome. The Catholic Uniate Rites resemble closely to the Orthodox Churches. They are under the jurisdiction of the Roman Catholic Church while preserving their own languages, rites, and liturgy. The Syro-Malabar Rite and Syro-Malankara Rite are examples. Each of these Uniate rites is headed by its own cardinal or archbishop or local primate who has jurisdiction over the bishops, the clergy, the nuns and the people of that rite. The local heads are members of the Congregation for the Oriental Churches located in Rome.

**Protestant Churches:** Another division which happened in the sixteenth century is known as Protestantism. When Martin Luther, who had been a priest in the Roman Catholic Church, dissented with the evil practices of the Western 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 and Evangelical communities cannot be seen as churches, they are described as sectarian categories. The Protestant churches follow the Chalcedonian stand point in theology (emphasize the difference in the 'two natures'-divine and human natures-of the Incarnated Son of God). They emphasize the literal interpretation and sufficiency of the Holy Bible which has sixty six books.

**Reformed Churches:** The 'Reformed' churches began with the sixteenth century Reformation in Germany and Switzerland. Ulrich Zwingli in Zurich, Martin Bucer in Strasbourg and John Calvin in Geneva were important theologians and leaders of this movement. Reformed churches began in most of the European countries by the end of eighteenth century. Those Reformed churches in Great Britain and Ireland preferred to be known as Presbyterian and Congregationalist. These churches prefer contextual interpretation of Scripture and diversity of confessions. They developed a variety of contextual worship styles and types of hymns. In the twentieth century, many Reformed churches in Western countries began to decline.

Today, in Africa and Latin America, there are many fast growing Reformed churches. The first two general secretaries of the WCC belonged to the Reformed tradition: Willem A. Visser't Hooft (1948-66) of the Netherlands Reformed Church

and Eugene C. Blake (1966–72) of the United Presbyterian Church in the USA. The World Reformed Communion (WRC) promotes ecumenism among Reformed churches. The Byzantine Orthodox Churches and the Reformed churches engaged in a bilateral dialogue that led to two agreed statements, one on the Holy Trinity (1993) and one on Christology (1994). Dialogue with the Oriental Orthodox Churches began in 1992 with the objective of fostering mutual understanding and fellowship.

**Pentecostals:** It is a modern Christian movement that emerged out of the Holiness and Evangelical movements around the turn of the twentieth century. The Pentecostals consider the personal experience of the Holy Spirit as important. William Seymour (1870–1922), the son of a black slave, is regarded as the founder of the Azusa Street Revival in Los Angeles (1906). They teach that contemporary Christians can receive the same spiritual gifts that the early Church experienced. Speaking in tongues is regarded as a sign of baptism of the Holy Spirit. The Pentecostals consider this as a requirement for full membership. They are less bound to traditional forms of worship and liturgy. Members are forbidden to engage in many social activities.

**Charismatic Churches:** These new generation churches grow depending on the success of the pastor or the innovator. Most of these churches were established in the 1970s in the USA. They mould worship, practices and preaching to fit the culture and language of youth. They utilize the seeker sensitive elements. Technically, they belong to Evangelical Pentecostals. The worship and practices are determined in accordance with the intended audience. They preach ‘prosperity gospel’ around the theme of material and spiritual blessing and enrichment. They adopt modern business management and marketing techniques for the growth, spread and operation of the churches.

## Questions

1. Which are the indicators that suggest that the Church is One as far as Jesus 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 Christian churches?

## Chapter 3

# The Ecumenical Movement

### 1. The Meaning of the Word 'Ecumenism'

The word ecumenical comes from the Greek word 'Oikoumene' 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 integration of the entire universe. In this lesson we approach ecumenism mainly as the activity for the co-operation and unity of the Christians divided among themselves.

### 2. Historical Background

When the movements of Spiritual Awakening became powerful in the Protestant and Evangelical 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 nineteenth 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 Society 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 World War II. 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 Roman 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. Even though 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 six to eight 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 Roman 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. Provided 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 liturgy were published by the commissions)
6. Created many joint ventures and opportunities in theological studies and pastoral care.

eg. FFRRRC (Federated Faculty for Research in Religion and Culture). This is a joint program of theological faculty of Malankara Orthodox, Mar Thoma, and 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 Roman 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 World Council Churches

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 of Constantinople, Germanus V 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 realization 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 WSCF (World Students Christian Federation) in 1907. The Istanbul meeting of 1911 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 Stockholm (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 Sarah 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. H.G. Dr. Paulose Mar Gregorios of Malankara Orthodox Church served as the president of WCC from 1983 to 1991.

H.G. 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 Roman 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, Addis Ababa 1965:** For the first time in history, a global meeting of the Heads of Oriental Orthodox Churches was held in 1965 in Addis Ababa. It was hosted by Haile Selassie (1892-1975), the emperor of Ethiopia. A high level delegation under the leadership of H.H. Baselius Augene 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 Roman Catholic Church**

1. Catholicos Baselius Augene held a meeting with Pope Paul VI on December 3, 1964 in Bombay.
2. Catholicos Baselius Marthoma Mathews I met Pope John Paul II on June 3, 1983 in Vatican.
3. Pope John Paul II visited Catholicos Baselius Marthoma Mathews I at Kottayam on February 8, 1985
4. Catholicos Baselius Marthoma Paulose II met Pope Francis at Rome on September 5, 2013.

**(c) Unofficial Dialogues between Oriental and Eastern Orthodox Churches:** The unofficial dialogues between Oriental (Non-Chalcedonian) and Eastern (Chalcedonian) Orthodox Churches initiated by Fr. Nikos Nissiotis and Fr. Paul Varghese (Dr. Paulose Mar Gregorios) were held in Aarhus, Denmark (1965), Bristol, England (1967), Geneva, Switzerland (1970), and Addis Ababa, Ethiopia (1971). The differences in

Christology that existed between these two church groups were only differences of interpretation of Christological terms. Both groups in fact 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. Both families accept the first three Ecumenical Councils. And agreed to lift all the anathemas and condemnations of the past which now divide both families. 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 Roman 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 council 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 Catholicos 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 the National Council of Churches in India (NCCI) and Kerala Council of Churches (KCC) .

### **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 heartily tried to find out without prejudice, the good aspects of the beliefs and practices of other churches. Orthodox Churches have to agree that ecumenical co-operation with other traditions has enabled them to respond creatively to the contemporary 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, Roman 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 Roman 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 5

## HUMAN RIGHTS

### Chapter 1

### The Origin and Nature of Human Rights

**O**ur most valuable possession is life. The rights to live and enjoy liberty are fundamental rights. All human beings are born free. They have equal rights and equal dignity. The fundamental rights and freedom 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 teaches against the exploitation and torture of the poor, oppressed and the destitute. Jesus Christ himself reacted strongly against such exploitation. Hence protection of human rights is a Christian principle 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, and equality before law and economic and cultural rights like rights to education, work, and food. The right to get these rights protected is the right of each individual.

### Human Rights: A Biblical Perspective

God is described as righteous and as one who maintains justice and righteousness in relation to all peoples. People are described as just and righteous when they believe and trust God and obey the commandments of God (Psalms 37:12, Amos 5:24). In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus Christ taught that He has come to fulfill the Torah (Law) and the Prophets, and the disciples must have a righteousness that surpasses that of scribes and Pharisees (St. Matthew 5:17, 20). Jesus also highlighted doing God’s will (St. Matthew 7:16-23) and obeying His teachings (St. Matthew 7:24-27). In St. Luke 1:6, the righteous is defined as “righteous before God, living blamelessly according to all the commandments and regulations of the Lord”.

Beatitudes (St. Matthew 5:3-10) presents aspects related to justice and righteousness. Those who have been denied justice will receive it (St. Matthew 5:6). Those who are persecuted because they stand in solidarity with the poor and oppressed will also experience blessings of God (St. Matthew 5:10). Beatitudes proclaim that those who practice mercy, compassion, justice, peace and concord towards the needs will receive joy and blessing from God. The Song of St. Mary (*Magnificat*, St. Luke 1:46-55) proclaims that injustices that have left the people of God hungry, destitute and oppressed will be reversed.

Jesus Christ is concerned about the least. He said, “Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me” (St. Matthew 25:45). Justice is the theme of the parable of the persistent widow and the unjust judge (St. Luke 18:1-8). The arrival of the Kingdom of God brings justice. So, the teachings of Jesus Christ are overflowing with themes related to justice and righteousness.

### **History**

The history of human rights is very old. The principle that human has got certain rights by nature of birth and that they are natural gained acceptance as a theory in the seventeenth and eighteenth 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. Even though 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 a 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.

Human beings' unbounded desire for freedom is behind such declarations. When the World War II 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 UN.

The term 'Human Rights' became widely accepted with the founding of the UN. The General Assembly of the UN which met at Paris on December 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 human beings are 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. Human being has the right to live with dignity in all fields like health, education, livelihood, and work. When these are denied they become denial of human rights.

Human rights 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 and children, 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 rights 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 rights 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 this regard.

It is the responsibility of not only the elected representatives 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 rights violations.
4. How can we protect human rights?

### **Projects**

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



## **Chapter 2**

# **Basic Fundamental Human Rights in the Constitution**

### **United Nations Organization**

The greatest disaster faced by humanity in the first half of the twentieth century was the World War II. 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 Theodore 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 four 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 humankind.

As a result, fifty nations assembled in San Francisco. Representatives from these nations assembled on October 24, 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.

### **Universal Declaration of Human Rights**

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, and equality before law. 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 international 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.

### **Indian Constitution**

The preamble of our constitution declares our resolve to constitute India into a sovereign, socialist, secular, democratic, republic, and provide equality, justice, and 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. 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.

When human rights violations happen, the national and state human rights commissions can issue recommendations to the government to pay for damages they are convinced of such violations. The commissions have the authority to examine and investigate instances of human rights violations in educational institutions, hospitals, and places of work.

### **Activities**

1. Describe the goals of United Nations Organization.
2. Explain Universal Declaration of Human Rights
3. Explain Human Rights Protection Law.
4. What are Human Right Commissions? Find 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**

**L**ife is God-given. Humans are the sentinel of life. However we have 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 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 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. 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. The cruelty of those who try to kill postnatal female infants in various ways is also shocking. We, humans runs after comforts and selfishness are upholding such injustices. Destroying a life in its foetal state is murder itself. The impression that the girlchild is a financial burden to the family and other liabilities like dowry and marriage expenditure 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.

#### **Abortion**

Abortion means destroying the child in its foetal state. This may be done voluntarily or deliberately. Deliberate destroying 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. 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 wriggling and cries of the aborted child will haunt the mother's conscience till death. Therefore it is our duty, love and responsibility to protect the life that sprouts in the womb.

'Children a gift from God; they are His reward' (Psalms 127:3). 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. Children are 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.

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 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 Jesus 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

**R**ights 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. 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 Jesus Christ who embraced all people equally. All creatures of the universe also have rights over natural resources and it is our duty to preserve and protect them. We should bear witness to Jesus Christ through our life. Along with this we should ensure equitable justice to all.

### Child Labour

‘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, and small scale industrial houses. 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, hard work and cruel torture.

In our society, there are parents and agents generate income 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 studying and playing. 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. We should be able to prevent any instance of child labour and lodge complaints with the authorities regarding it.

### **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 holistic 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.

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, and illicit activities like adultery lead children into mental dissatisfaction and sinful paths. Criminal tendencies are common in such children. Sorrowful 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 6

# THE CHRISTIAN APPROACH TO VARIOUS IDEOLOGIES

## Chapter 1 Gandhian Thought

### A Short Biographical Sketch

**M**ohandas Karamchand Gandhi was born in Gujarat on October 2, 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 January 30, 1948. His auto biography, 'My Experiments With Truth' will give us a beautiful description of his 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, Jesus Christ and especially His 'sermon on the mount' was very dear to him. He has openly confessed his indebtedness to towering personalities like Leo 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, Gandhi 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 and 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. Human beings cannot fully grasp the absolute truth. But relative truth is all that is given to humans. Living in the light of this truth they have 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 humankind was his religious belief. Being the children of God, all are brothers and 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, and 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 *dalits* 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 marginalized. He clearly says that service of all is part of the realization of God, the ultimate aim of human beings.

## 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 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

**R**eligions 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 the Triune God, teachings of Jesus Christ and involvement in the 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 electronic, social 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, Uttar Pradesh on December 6, 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 communal clashes between

Hindus and Muslims. The next terrible persecution was against the Christians in Orissa in 2008 and other parts of the country.

Communalism is 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 Keshav Baliram Hedgewar (1889-1940), Vinayak Damodar Savarkar (1883-1966), and Madhavrao Sadashivrao Golwalkar (1906-1973). By closing the eyes to the pluralistic culture of India, this 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 Orissa 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 three percent 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, and journalists can play a decisive role to promote peace by overcoming fundamentalism by using their creativity in a meaningful way.

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, hospitals and humanitarian concerns. Do we pursue earnestly this mission through these initiatives?

### **‘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 H.G. Dr. 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 Jesus Christ's influence in them, for strengthening and stimulating one's own faith, for contributing to a creative unity of humankind 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 Jesus 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. Find out 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, gender, occupation or 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 and disabled 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 outcast 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 upper castes.

#### Oppression of Dalits

Oppression of *dalits* by the so called upper 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 inhabitants of Indian Subcontinent. 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 outcast. Primarily *dalits* are considered as 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 (fifteenth century) and Tulsi Das (died 1623) and the leaders like Jyotirao Phule (1827- 1890), Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar (1891-1956) and Mahatma Gandhi 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 uplift 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, N.E. Prabhakar, Bishop M. Azariah, K. Wilson, V. Devasahayam, and James Massey were a few important 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 the oppressed Christians that they should always remember the past, how God out of nothing has made them a 'something', a people (1 Corinthians 1:26-28)

From creation account onwards, the Holy 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 humankind 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**

"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).

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, and maternity leave 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 eighteenth century through early twentieth century, which dealt with women's suffrage. Virginia Wolf and Elizabeth Stanton 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 Radford Ruether, Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, Letty M. Russell and Aruna Gnanadason are a few renowned feminist theologians.

### **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 Galatians 2:28 relevant in all fields? Discuss.

## **Chapter 4**

# **Economic Ideologies**

### **1. Capitalism**

**C**apitalism 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 globalized 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 eighteenth century intellectual and working class political movement that criticized the effects of industrialization and private property on society. By the late nineteenth 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 twentieth century, social democratic governments came to power in many countries. Social-democratic thought regards state control and regulation without state ownership as sufficient to ensure development and social justice.

Today, many democratic socialists, especially in Western Europe and the United States, 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 (1818-1883) and Friedrich Engels (1820-1895). 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 twentieth 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 were democratic in nature and maintained regular multiparty elections.

The 1917 October Revolution, led by Vladimir Lenin (1870-1924) 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 Christ 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 and St. Ephrem, and modern Orthodox theologians like H.G. Dr. Paulos Mar Gregorios and H. G. Dr. Geevarghese 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. Dr. Geevarghese Mar Osthathios.
4. Attempt a comparative study of Marxism and Christianity.

