



Union Christian College Alumni Association of North America (UCCAANA)

IRS Section 501(c) (3) Tax Exempted Non-Profit Charitable Organization

Tax ID # 20-4794742



VOLUME VI

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Dr. Thomas P. Mathew (Ohio), President
Mrs. Kuttimol Kurian, Vice President
Mr. Thomas Varughese, Secretary
Mr. George Varghese, Treasurer
Dr. Simon Thomas
Dr. M. G. Samgadharan
Dr. Bhamini Nayar
Mrs. Elizabeth Pothen
Mr. Leo Mathai

BOARD OF ADVISORS

Dr. Kamakshi Krishnan
Dr. Pothen Varughese
Dr. K. M. Koshy
Rev. Thomas John (Manager)
Dr. Thara K. Simon (Principal)
Dr. M. I. Punnoose (Bursar)

*This is a **Special Edition** as a tribute to our retired Principal and Manager, Dr. A. M. Chacko*



Dear UCCAANA members and friends,

On December 6th we heard the sad news that our beloved Chacko Sir went to his eternal home to be with the Lord Jesus Christ. I knew that his health condition was getting worse, as I had some limited contacts with his son Prasad, and indirect contact with his daughter Preetha. A few months ago, when I contacted him, he sounded very weak and his memory also was going down. When he was in better health, I had frequent contacts with him. The last time I met with Chacko Sir was at Aeli Hills in 2014. I haven't been to India since then.

As most of us are fully aware, in 1996 Chacko Sir planted the seeds for organizing alumni chapters in different parts of USA by meeting with U. C. College alumni in various cities. I cannot help it, but I must add here that during this visit Chacko Sir became my 'Comforting Angel.' On October 21, 1996 it was pre-planned for me to pick up Chacko Sir while he was travelling in northeastern Ohio. I returned from Kerala a week earlier after visiting my father who was in the hospital. That morning my father's condition got worse, and he passed away. Within couple hours I was supposed to pick up Chacko Sir. As planned earlier, I went and picked him up, and on the way, I told Chacko Sir about my father's demise. Chacko Sir was with us for the next few days, and he comforted and prayed with us during this time of our personal grief. He was God sent to comfort me during such a painful time. After Chacko Sir returned to Kerala, he took time and visited my mother at our family home. Now my 'Comforting Angel' went back to his Master. Chacko Sir was placed to rest in Ahmadabad on December 8th by the side of his wife Sodari Kochamma. I had made arrangements on behalf of UCCAANA to place a wreath, and we were able to get a few photos of funeral service also.

It is only fair to acknowledge that Chacko Sir was one of the most selfless persons. After finishing his Ph.D. from USA in 1960's, if his motivation was only making money, he could have stayed here. But his interest was only going back to U C College and working there. Chacko Sir relentlessly committed his life for the glory of our alma matter by serving as lecturer, professor and head of department of the Chemistry, Principal and Manager in addition to various other positions. He was one of the great Principals who followed and perfected the vision of founding fathers of U. C. College.

In 2007 UCCAANA Board of Directors decided to organize the official inauguration of UCCAANA, and to invite Chacko Sar as the Chief Guest. We were able to arrange that. In fact, Chacko Sar traveled with me and my family from Trivandrum to New York. That journey helped us to get closer with Chacko Sir. He was in USA for about two weeks and he was able to visit a few old friends during this visit. That was his last USA visit.

On behalf of UCCAANA, its board of directors, members and friends, we express our heartfelt condolences in the demise of our beloved Chacko Sir, and we are dedicating this special edition of the Newsletter as a tribute to him. Several of his friends and students also shared their reflections/tributes. We thank each one of them for their concern and compassion.

May his soul rest in peace. It is our hope and faith that we will meet our beloved ones for an eternal life with our Lord Jesus Christ. May God the Almighty comfort and provide His ever-lasting peace which surpasses all human understanding to Prasad, Preetha and their families.

Dr. Thomas P. Mathew
President, UCCAANA



Dear brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ,

In the passing away of Dr. A. M. Chacko the College has lost one of its links that connected the present generation to the founders of the college and those that immediately followed them. He loved the college so much that it was his major re-occupation till he moved to Ahmadabad. He was one of its illustrious old students; he served the College as Professor and Head of the Department of Chemistry and its Principal and finally, its Manager. His association with the college spanned about 6 decades. As a teacher, he exemplified the virtues of the founding fathers of the College, especially their deep compassion for students. More than anything else, he was a faithful follower of Jesus Christ. Not only that he read a large number of theological books, but he also wrote many books and articles on theology and Christian Mission. He was an embodiment of all the virtues that made UCC unique and he passed it on to the numerous students and teachers who passed through its portals.

Chacko Sir, comes from a middle-class family in Kurianoor, close to Maramon, the citadel of Naveekarannam, known for its deep commitment to Christ and his mission. One of his brothers was an Achen of the Mar Thoma Church. One of his sisters was a missionary in Hoskote Ashram. All other sisters were married to Achens of the Mar Thoma Church. He carried that rich legacy of faith. Coming from a rural and rather middle-class background, he worked his way up by drawing nutrients from the rich and fertile soil of UCC.

About two years ago, when the old students streamed UCC in great numbers for the UC ente Snehatheeram event, Dr. Chacko was also there. Students were prostrating at the feet of their beloved Guru. It was a moving occasion for all of us. In a world where teacher-student relationships, for that matter, all relationships are becoming formal and utilitarian, it is heartening to find such islands of love and sacrifice. He was a role model for all of us to follow. Sodarikochamma and Chacko sir opened their home to young faculty like us and our families to enjoy the blessings of meal fellowship. Sodarikochamma constantly reminded us that Christian Fellowship transcended praying together and should manifest itself in actively caring for each other; meal sharing or love feast was an essential aspect of it.

We wish if he were with us in Aluva during his last days; but I am sure we still may not be able to give him such loving care as Prasad and Sherly extended to him. Space does not matter; we will rise up with all the faithful at the end time to meet our Lord. Chacko sir has joined the great cloud of witnesses; may God give us the grace to "run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith." Representing the College Community, let me express our deepest condolences to Prasad and Preetha and their families. We, as much as you, face a void; let us face it together and fill that void by persevering in the race marked out for us.

May his soul rest in peace. May God's peace and love fill our hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God and His son, our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Rev. Thomas John
Manager, U C College



Dear friends,

Our dear AM Chacko sir is no more. When someone close to our heart moves on, we make an earnest effort in search of suitable words to describe them. I am also in search of the best words to describe him as manager, principal, warden, teacher, and administrator above all a great guru and mentor for generations of students.

When I heard about his sad demise, I had a very clear priority of people to whom it must be informed, that too senior people whom I have met only 2-3 times, through whom I could understand how a teacher has to be an ardent Ucean envisaged by the founders of the college. My family was fortunate to live next door to Chacko sir and Sodarikochamma. I remember them coming to my house not only in the joyful moments in our life, but always in saddest moments. From Dr Thomas Mathew, President of Alumni Association of North America, to Mariyamma aunty, one of Chacko sir's ward who stayed in East hostel had shared many times how Chacko sir took pains to visit their family when they lost their parents. Dr Titus Mathews and Mrs Sarah Titus founder donors of Centre for the Studies of Religion and Society, U C College wrote to me yesterday "I have known him since our school days together in Kuriannoor and we remained friends ever since. He dedicated his life to U.C. College as he served as teacher, principal and Manager. He gave everything he had to the college and I hope UCC Alumni will remember him and honour his memories"

The young UCC faculty whom Chacko sir appointed, asked me yesterday morning, are we going to give a holiday today? No. If he was alive he would have never permitted to lose an academic day. Our morning worship started with the song 'My faith looks up to thee' which I have seen him singing beautifully always, and remembered him in our prayers. The college community observed a moment of silence at 10. am. The students were amazed seeing, even when the canteen staff paying respect to dear Chacko sir.

Keeping an extraordinary simplicity in personal life, Chacko sir enriched and motivated us abundantly with his faith in God, unfailing vision in the fellowship mode of life and administration of the college and made his signature from international partnerships to teacher student relationships, the cornerstones of Union Christian College. On behalf of Union Christian College community, may I extend our heartfelt condolences to Mr. Prasad, Ms. Preetha and all members of the family. May the soul of dear Chacko sir rest in peace

Dr. Thara K Simon

Principal, Union Christian College



A Tribute to Dr. A.M. Chacko sir

Dr. A.M. Chacko sir was Professor and Head of the Chemistry department when I joined UCC as a Junior Lecturer in Zoology (December 1980). Three months later he became the Principal. At that time, I was staying in Skinner hostel along with about 10 junior lecturers, all fresh from the University with MA/MSc degrees. From the day I joined the college, it seems that Chacko sir had marked me to take on the responsibility of the college choir, and so encouraged me to practice on the chapel organ whenever possible. Sodari kochamma was also very keen in organizing a College choir. One of the things which I cherish about that period is the solemn Sunday evening worship in the chapel as the sun was setting, with a number of faculty members and the hostellers thronged to the chapel to almost its full capacity and singing with gusto the well-known hymns of faith. Chacko sir's strong baritone voice from the men's side and Sodarikochamma's soprano voice from the ladies' side led the singing.

Ever since Chacko sir moved to the Principal's quarters, we the bachelors of Skinner hostel were encouraged to come over and relax a bit, sing a few songs, partake of some home-made snacks, exchange funny anecdotes, and return to our duties refreshed. Chacko sir was a mentor to all of us.

It was Chacko sir who inducted me and a few of my colleagues into the Fellowship (now known as the Inter Church Fellowship). He used to call us to his office and expound to us the traditions of UCC, and what it means to be a Fellowship member, and what the college expected from us. Chacko sir, brought up in a deeply God-fearing family with a missionary zeal, firmly believed in the all sufficiency of God, and in being an instrument in God's hands for executing what God had planned for the College. He used to spend a fair amount of time regularly with the newly appointed teachers, striving to inculcate in them the ethos of UCC, even after his retirement in 1994, and even during his tenure as Manager of the College two decade later.

Chacko sir led a simple life – no splurging, no pomp, and no limelight. Yet he was always most generous in helping the needy and the marginalized. UCC was his first and foremost passion even to the very end. But then, how could he be otherwise? He came to UCC as a teenager in the Intermediate class, assimilated the mission and vision of UCC from the founding fathers themselves, and was a genuinely vibrant person who greatly enjoyed being on campus and interacting with the college community for over 6 decades. His deep commitment and loyalty to the college, humility, high thinking, passion for mentoring students and young faculty, his fondness for participating in discourses on a wide range of topics, and above all, a well-grounded faith in God, shine brightly before us. With his demise, UCC has lost a beloved son, a staunch stalwart, and a well-loved and respected ambassador.

Let us thank God for Chacko sir's life, and all the services rendered by him for the staff and students of UCC and the Ucean community, and for being a guiding light for years to come.

Dr. T. Thomas Philip

Principal (2010 – 2013)





MEMORIES OF A.M.CHACKO SIR

(By Thomas Varughese, Secretary, UCCAANA)

Chemistry was not one of my electives. So, I never had the chance to attend a chemistry class of Chacko Sir. However, I personally know a number of his former students who loved his style of teaching and respected him for his mastery of the subject. He had his Ph.D from a reputed university in the US.

My interactions with Chacko Sir was from my hostel life and from some extra-curricular activities. He was my warden in two different hostels. Every evening at the roll-call time we had to stand in front of our rooms waiting for the warden. Chacko Sir would start from his room at one end of the building and walk past every room greeting his wards— and of course checking attendance—with folded hands saying 'Namaste' or 'Good evening'. As a warden, he was a strict disciplinarian. At the same time, he was a caring and sincere mentor to all of us in the hostel.

Though not very athletic, he had a keen interest in occasionally joining students' playing field hockey or basketball. He became the college NCC (National Cadet Corps) Officer after completing the officers' training course, for students, joining the NCC was voluntary in those days. I volunteered and had the opportunity to be a 'foot soldier'— I mean a cadet— under the command of Chacko Sir. That was fun and sometimes just the opposite as well. If we made careless mistakes in the drills, punishments were swift and usually severe— frog jumping, crawling with a rifle held by raised hands etc.

Another area of his interest was music, especially devotional music. He used to hold special classes on Saturday evenings for practicing gospel songs. Anyone interested could attend. I was neither interested in nor good at singing. However, I attended a couple of times with friends for a time pass when there was nothing else to do on a Saturday evening. Since they were held from about 7 to 9 pm, most of the attendees were residents of men's and ladies' hostels. The ladies were always accompanied by a chaperone. Incidentally, the chaperone was also good at singing and teaching songs. She started assisting Chacko Sir at these Saturday evening sessions. It seems gradually they developed a mutual attraction for each other and later they became life partners. As some of you may know, that chaperone was none other than Sodari Kochamma.

After leaving the college, I saw Chacko Sir only a few times during our vacation trips to India. While visiting the U.S he stayed with us a couple of times. He visited many states in the U.S. Wherever he went, he encouraged the UCC alumni to think of the idea of forming an alumni association in North America. He played a very prominent role in the formation of UCCAANA (Union Christian College Alumni Association of North America).

From all my interactions with Chacko Sir, I have found him to be a man of integrity, honesty and straightforwardness leading a simple and humble life. He had a deep affection for his alma mater U.C.C. He served the college in various capacities as listed elsewhere in this Newsletter. I salute him for all his qualities and for a life dedicated to Union Christian College, Aluva. I have only fond memories of A.M.Chacko Sir.



Remembering Dr. AM. Chacko

(By George Varghese, Treasurer, UCCAANA)

When I try to remember Dr. A.M. Chacko, the words that come to my mind are Lee Iacocca's reverential statement regarding teachers. "In a truly rational world, the best of us would be teachers, and the rest of us would do something else". This I think summarizes Dr. A.M. Chacko and his indelible impact on many of us. He was the best and teaching is what he chose to do in life. My association with Dr. Chacko goes back way before he became my teacher, principal and mentor. My father Mr. Varghese T Varkey was a student at UC College in the Chemistry Department couple of years junior to Dr. A.M. Chacko. I believe that Dr. Chacko was an instructor at UC College when my father was finishing his B.Sc. in Chemistry. While he was student at UC College, he also had a printing business that he owned (MGM Press, Aluva). For the next three decades, MGM Press would provide many printing services to UC College. I also worked in the family business and one of the chores that I had to do was to take proof of various printed materials to the College and back. Dr. Chacko was the Professor and Head of Chemistry Department at that time and I had several interactions with him during those days. Moreover, Prasad Chacko, AMC's son was my school mate at Rajagiri High School Kalamassery. In 1976, I joined UC College for my pre-degree course. Being a science major, I had to study Chemistry. It was at this time, I became AMC's student. I distinctly remember my first encounter with him in the Chemistry Lab; he was a strict teacher and no horse playing was allowed in the lab. At that time, it he was considered a kill joy; but looking back, lab safety was a paramount concern for AMC and hence the need for being very strict. When I finished my pre-degree and continued my B.Sc. course at UC College, AMC was the Principal. Although he did not teach me during those years, I had more opportunities to interact with him more as a proxy for my father related to the printing business. In 1981, I completed my undergraduate studies and sought admission to UC College for the M.A. program in English Literature. It was AMC who made the admission possible.

After immigrating to the United States, I used to visit AMC during my annual visits to Aluva. We had good conversations about the life in the US and he shared some of his own experiences as a student in the US in the early sixties. In 1996, when he visited New Jersey he encouraged me to be active in the Alumni Association. I was fortunate in coordinating the establishment of UCCAANA along with stalwarts like late Dr. K. C. Chacko. UCCAANA inaugural meeting was held at Suffern, NY and AMC was the guest of honor. He outlined his vision for the Alumni Association and his vision continues to be the corner stone for the vision and mission of UCCAANA. AMC visited New Jersey 10 years later and he stayed with me for a few days. My children Betty and Neil had the good fortune of learning "counting colors in the rainbow" from AMC and I still keep a video of that teaching session in my archives. I am saddened by his loss. But I find solace in the fact that "A teacher affects eternity. No one can tell where his influence stops." Our beloved Chacko Sir will live on for eternity.



Memories of Professor A. M. Chacko

The recent passing of Professor A. M. Chacko was a major loss to many who knew him for several reasons. He represented a long and cherished tradition of teachers and administrators at UC College that is synonymous with high morals and impeccable integrity. He touched every aspect of the life of the College, and he was approachable to every student who had anything to discuss with him. He had our trust.

I was one of Professor A. M. Chacko's earliest students. I was admitted to U. C. College in the Freshman Class (Intermediate) in 1954, the year he started teaching there, right after finishing his B. Sc. (Chemistry) degree. Although the contact hours with him during the 2 years that I spent at UCC were limited to time in the chemistry lab during the 'practical' classes, he left indelible impression on me and the students as an earnest teacher sincerely devoted to our welfare. He was following in the footsteps of a great number of legendary teachers and educators at the College who had made teaching their primary calling in life. The students in turn responded with admiration and trust in their teachers, and that mutual respect and trust created a sacred cultural and educational institution. When we moved on, our experience at the College lingered in our memory as a defining period in life. Professor Chacko would become one of those who maintained and enhanced the rich traditions of this great learning center of excellence.

I had the good fortune of being at other great institutions with rich traditions and great teachers, but I always look back on the days I spent at UCC as fundamental to whatever I have achieved in my career. Among all my teachers there who have left lasting impressions, including several senior professors, there was Professor A. M. Chacko who was just beginning his long and illustrious career. Each time I met him over the years, mostly once a year, when I was still studying elsewhere in India, and less frequently after I came to the United States, he always found time to talk to me about how I was doing, and how my studies were going. When I published some good research papers, he seemed to find out about the work.

In the middle of the 1980s I was part of a group that made a major discovery in biomedical science that significantly impacted public health on a global scale. The news also reached UCC. Professor Chacko was extremely proud about me, and told me so. He invited me to the College for a reception in my honor, at which he spoke so eloquently in layman's terms how my work benefited modern medicine. Keeping with the College tradition, all retired teachers living near the campus were invited to the function, and I got to see after a long time two of my favorite teachers, Professor C. T. Benjamin and Professor T. B. Thomas.

In later years, my interactions with Professor Chacko covered the functions of an educational endowment we set up at the College in the name of my father, Mahakavi Vidwan P. G. Nair. Professor Chacko was influential, along with several key individuals in the College administration, for making sure that the program started on a strong footing and its forward path was smooth. The Endowment is working very well, and we view it with great pride.

The last few times that I visited him, he was staying at a facility near Aluva, called Aeli Hills. He was undergoing some physical therapy, but his intellectual capacity was still strong. He showed the same generosity and graciousness. I feel a tremendous loss in his passing.

Dr. M. G. Sarngadharan

McLean, Virginia



Tribute to Dr. A M Chacko Sir by friends and students

Dr. A. M. Chacko and I were classmates at Mar Thoma High School, Kuriannur, Kozhencherry from preparatory class onwards to Intermediate classes at Union Christian College, Alwaye. Not only we were class mates but life - long close friends. He was a humble, genuinely affectionate and caring person.

After working as a Demonstrator in Chemistry for a year, he went to St. John's College, Agra for M.Sc. and joined back to UCC as a lecturer in 1958. Later he went to the United States and took a Ph.D. from University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. Though he could have continued to work there, he decided to return to UCC and serve there.

He was a member of the Fellowship and dedicated all his life for the college as a teacher, Principal and after retirement, as the Manager. He was an excellent teacher, friend, mentor, and was deeply interested in the all-round wellbeing of the students. He was as illustrious as any of the founders of the college or anyone who preceded him. AMC was instrumental in ensuring that the Centre for Study of Religion and Society (CSRS) was established.

My wife Sarah is a student of AMC, and Sodari, his wife was a friend of her's in UCC. So even after marriage we kept our friendship strong and active. Whenever we visited Kerala, we made it a point to visit them in Alwaye and enjoyed time with them.

He had the misfortune of losing out benefits given to college teachers when he retired. But he never allowed that to interfere with his commitments to the college. He always tried his best to make others be the best they can be. His death is an irreparable loss to the UC College community. May his soul find solace.

Dr. Titus Mathews.

Calgary, Canada

I had the fortune to know Chacko Sir as Demonstrator, Lecturer and Principal. My greatest surprise is his unchanging personality irrespective of the different positions he held. He was the Advisor when I was the President of S C M (Student Christian Movement). He was kind enough to visit us in Atlanta when he visited U S for the formation of the alumni in 1996. Though the visit was short it is really memorable. If I am asked to say something about Dear Chacko Sir, without even thinking I can say "embodiment of unparallel simplicity and down to earth humility.

George Thomas.

Atlanta.

I am saddened to learn about the passing away of Dr. A. M. Chacko. My thoughts and prayers are with those that he left behind. My association with Dr. Chacko goes back to 1954, when I joined U C College for my Intermediate course. A. M. Chacko was doing his final year B. Sc at the college. We both stayed at the Tagore Hostel for that academic year; he was the "Prefect" of the hostel under warden Prof. K. P. Mathew. Living away from home for the first time, Chacko was like a big brother to me and helped me settle to the hostel life. Chacko, myself and a few others often got together at the Fellowship House for prayers and discussions. We all called Chacko by his nick name "Appachen" and he called me "Thampikunju". After completing my Intermediate program at U.C. College, I continued my engineering studies and ended up in Canada. Chacko returned to U C College after his Master's degree and had the distinguished career that the UCCAANA members brag about with gratitude. I visited Appachen and Sodari at Alwaye on a couple of occasions when I visited Kerala. I must say that the two years that I spent at U C College had a significant influence in my becoming the person that I am today.

Kachappillil I Verghese

Quebec, Canada

Professor A.M. Chacko, affectionately known to his students as Chacko Sir, belonged to the first batch of BSc students in Chemistry to graduate from the Union Christian College. He served as the first demonstrator in the Chemistry Department under my father, Professor Anantharaman. My father was very fond of Chacko Sir both because of his proficiency in Chemistry and his overall friendly demeanor. And Chacko Sir had deep respect for Prof. Anantharaman. My father encouraged him to go abroad to pursue his doctoral studies and then return to the UC College. Chacko Sir followed this advice, having performed brilliantly in his PhD program at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. On his return he joined the Chemistry faculty at UCC.

I had the privilege of being Chacko Sir's student when I pursued my Bachelor's Degree in Chemistry at UCC. Chacko Sir was a great teacher and excelled in communication skills following the traditions set by Prof. Anantharaman. In interacting with students Chacko Sir was more a friend than a teacher. This special quality was very characteristic of him and endeared him to his students.

Chacko Sir and my father had a special friendship. When my father was living in retirement in the Punkunnam village in Trichur, Chacko Sir was a frequent visitor. The two of them also corresponded regularly. During his visits to the US he made special visits to our house which I consider to be a great privilege and honor.

Chacko Sir will long be remembered with affection and respect for his dedicated service to the UC College both as professor in the Chemistry Department and later as principal of the College. On a personal note I consider it my good fortune to have studied under Chacko Sir. He will always have a special place in my heart.

Dr. Kamakshi Krishnan

Somerset, New Jersey

Dr. A.M. Chacko and I both got our B.Sc degree in Chemistry from U.C. College in the 1950s. He was 2 years ahead of me. If I remember correctly, he was a Chemistry Demonstrator while I was doing my B.Sc from 1954-56. He went on to Agra to get his M.Sc degree and I went on to the University of Saugar to get my M.Sc in Physical Chemistry. In 1959, I received my M.Sc and in the summer I was on a bus travelling to Mallappally and Dr. A.M. Chacko was on the bus. We talked and he asked me what I was doing and I told him I just found out that I passed my M.Sc degree in the first class with 2nd rank from Saugar University. He said U.C. College is looking for a physical chemist and asked me to apply. I did and I was interviewed by Prof. Anantharaman and Principal T.B Thomas. I was offered the job and I taught at U.C. College from 1959-61. Dr. A.M Chacko was a friend and a great colleague. We even sang together in the college chapel on special occasions and I still remember his great tenor voice. After two years at U.C. College, I went on to Cuttington College in Liberia, West Africa and taught there from 1962-68. Meanwhile Dr. A.M Chacko went to University of N. Carolina, Chapel Hill to work toward his Ph.D in Organic Chemistry. We kept in touch with each other and he invited me to apply to his University for admission to the Ph.D program. Unfortunately, I was under contract with Cuttington College for another 2 year period and could not take this offer. Later, I went to Kent State University in Ohio and got my Ph.D in Organic Chemistry and stayed on in the United States, teaching at Indiana University of Pennsylvania.

A few years later, UCCAANA was formed and Dr. A.M. Chacko was the honored guest from U.C. College at the inauguration ceremony which I attended. After the ceremony, Dr. Chacko was my guest for a few days at my house in Indiana, Pennsylvania. My wife and I had a great time with him and took him around to see western Pennsylvania. I cherish a lot of good memories of the times I had with him. Whenever I went to Kerala to visit family, I visited Dr. Chacko and Sodari at U.C. College. He always made sure that I gave a lecture to the chemistry students who were very interested in hearing about research and scholarly studies in American Universities. These are some of my memories of Dr. A.M. Chacko and his services to U.C College. U. C College was blessed by his life and service. I will always cherish my memories of him. May his soul rest in peace.

Dr. Pothen Varughese

Indiana, Pennsylvania

My acquaintance with Dr. Chacko dates back to the time I was a student at UCC [old two year 'Intermediate'] and he was a demonstrator in the Chemistry department. He was affectionately called Appachen – a name he earned in his student days. Later when Dr. Chacko became Professor, I had the privilege to work with him. I fondly remember that my decision to join the teaching staff of UCC was influenced by Dr. Chacko's encouragement.

Dr. Chacko immersed himself in the spirit of complete dedication of the founders of UCC with emphasis on academic excellence and character formation. Just like many of his predecessors on the teaching staff, the college was his life. Every breath that he took resonated his dedication to the college. The development of the Department of Chemistry in terms of newer facilities and starting of post graduate program, are shining examples of his achievements. His complete commitment to the art and science of teaching Chemistry was very evident from his interaction with students and other members of the teaching staff.

The Union Christian College has a great tradition of conducting the business of the institution, whether it be teaching or administration, with absolute honesty and sincerity. When Dr. Chacko became the Principal, this tradition was taken a step further. He performed his duties of the Principal 'without fear or favor or prejudice or selfishness' and did not hesitate to accept the consequences.

Dr. Chacko possessed a remarkable ability to keep in touch with former students and colleagues. The result of this was a warm mutual friendship. The seeds of UCCAANA were sown in such a fertile climate. He had the foresight to see how this organization would benefit both the college and the alumni.

Dr. Chacko was a dear friend to all of us. Let us keep his memory alive. May his soul rest in peace.

Dr. K. M. Koshy

Toronto, Canada

The sad news that Dr. A.M Chacko Sir has bid farewell, reached me on an otherwise beautiful winter morning in Florida. Profound sadness and a deep sense of loss punctuated my day at the loss of yet another great teacher, and the news took me back to my college days so long gone. As an attempt to pay homage to an exceptional teacher and a great human being, I am putting down a few lines here.

I crossed the thresholds of UCC as one of the first students in the newly formed "Pre-Degree" course, a two-year curriculum which replaced the "Pre-University" course. My 5 ½ year stint there took up my entire teenage years - UCC and a handful of dedicated, wonderful teachers- Dr. A. M. Chacko Sir among them- molded me in a fashion that no other institution could ever have. The new Pre-Degree guinea pigs had to face a lot of challenges including a hastily formatted syllabus in a planned attempt to channel students in different directions depending on their aptitudes. As a "First group" student, my classes included a good amount of Chemistry and Dr. A. M. Chacko Sir had a few classes allotted to him. Chemistry was a bafflingly new subject to us, and as a result, it was also quite formidable. Chacko Sir's classes allayed our anxieties: his patient, gentle demeanor and the vastness of his knowledge was evident to all of us. The complicated concepts in Physical Chemistry were unraveled in an easily understandable and coherent manner with his narratives and crystal-clear explanations. Very soon he had inculcated in us a genuine liking for Chemistry. Certainly, he must have inspired numerous students to pursue a career in Chemistry. When the time came for me to choose a main subject for my Bachelors, I had no hesitation to choose Chemistry because of the way the subject was presented to us by all the great teachers like him in the Chemistry department.

Apart from being a phenomenally knowledgeable teacher, Chacko Sir was a great human being with a heart of gold. I still remember an incident that highlighted this characteristic in him. During my final exam in Chemistry I saw my hopes of ever getting a good grade crashed, as I looked at my crucible that held a stained, ugly, blackish excuse of a residue instead of a white metallic Silver compound. The compound was left overnight in a dark cupboard, but apparently it got exposed to light, triggering a photochemical reaction. With a fine balance of compassion and a sense of fair and just evaluation, he gave me (and another unfortunate student like me) a new experiment, quizzing us about all there is to know about Silver compounds and photochemical reactions.

Dr. A.M. Chacko Sir's personality, his method of delivering lectures, his knowledge and love for the subject, are all still fresh in my memory. Recollections of some of his lectures are still very vivid in my memory. I am sure this is true for many of the thousands of students whose lives he has touched, as well. The fact that a student can remember such clear details of the lectures given more than half a century back, is

a shining testimony to the teaching prowess of the teacher. This is the ultimate yardstick of success for a truly gifted teacher and such teachers live forever through the lives they have enriched.

As I bow down in reverence and humility to one of the best teachers I have ever had, I wish I had the good fortune to be in contact with Dr. A. M. Chacko Sir in later years. Along with my humble prayers for his blessed soul to rest in peace, I extend my heartfelt condolences and prayerful salutations to his bereavement.

Sushama Venugopal, M.D.

Pediatrician, Florida

"Grace is but glory begun, and glory is but grace perfected." This is very true with the glorious life of our beloved Dr. A M Chacko Sir.

Lal Varghese, Attorney at Law

Dallas, Texas

My thoughts and prayers are with the loved ones he leaves behind. I met Dr. Chacko, a few years ago when I visited the college. I was trying to recollect when, but it could not have been more than four years ago. Though frail and slower in his movements, his mind was still very alert and his determination was not any less than seen in his younger days. He was visiting the college almost on a daily basis, and participating the administration though he did not hold any official role, but was in an advisory one. He told me how it energized him to continue his passion—the college! During the brief conversation he mentioned the recent book he authored and presented me with an autographed copy, which I have preserved. He leaves behind some wonderful memories for everyone who was associated with him and his life will be rejoiced for many years to come, after we get over these few days grieving his loss. For the life he led and the great services he made to the college and the decades of students who benefitted from his knowledge and wisdom, he would certainly be in a better world. My prayers are for the eternal rest of his soul.

Sunil Sivanand

Ontario, Canada

Chacko sir has been a family friend. I grew up very near his home in Kuriannoor. When my father died, Chacko sir wrote a letter to my mother. My condolences to his family.

Jacob George

Slidell, Louisiana

Sorry to hear the sad news. My deepest condolences to Chacko Sir's family. May he find eternal happiness and peace in the Almighty's loving embrace!

Dr. Trikur Ramanarayanan

Princeton, New Jersey

Dear Union Christian College Alumni and Friends,

Greetings. We all thank God the Almighty for allowing our beloved A.M. Chacko Sir to become a part of each one of our lives. We hope all of you had a pleasant year and a blessed Thanksgiving.

Since we established the UCCAANA Educational Endowment in 2011, U C College has been awarding scholarships every year to 25 - 30 students in need. We should be very proud of this, and we will be able to assist even more students if we can add to the Endowment. We are asking you to do your best to help these students by donating what you can.

I am sure you are aware of the devastating flood that occurred during August - September of this year which caused extensive damage to almost every family in Kerala. U C College had the largest Flood Relief Camp in all of Kerala. We are very glad to report that we were able to assist a physically challenged 2nd year B.A. student to buy a new motorized wheelchair, as her old wheelchair got damaged in the flood. Also, now she is staying at Skinner Hostel. I talked with her, and she is very thankful for our assistance. She got the new wheelchair just this week. With your financial support UCCAANA is hoping to give a helping hand to a few more students who were most affected by this unbelievable catastrophe.

To attract new and younger alumni to UCCAANA we started a Facebook page earlier this year (<https://www.facebook.com/UCCAANA>). Please share this with other alumni and friends and ask them to join the group. We need your help to expand our membership base.

Please drop us a line with any suggestions or questions that you may have. We would love to hear from you. My email is thomasmathew@hotmail.com.

May the joy and peace of the Christmas season come your way. May you, your family and loved ones have a prosperous and blessed New Year.

With warm regards and prayers,

Dr. Thomas P. Mathew

President, UCCAANA



Thanks for all I have

*A prayer for every moment,
A 'thank you' to all that went,
Making this treasure from the past
This life, worth living the best.*

*Thank you to all those guided,
Thank you to all those challenged,
Thank you to all those cared,
And thank you to all nurtured.*

*Grateful for all who put blockades
In paths to rise above, one must so,
Strange it must feel so, it seems,
But they too helped me grow so.*

*Plenty are to be thankful for,
How could one count that far!
Eternal-continuous- moments thus far,
Stretching to infinity, to note so far.*

*Thank you for all that shaped me,
Thank you for all I have.
Thank you for all you gave,
You are all I have.*



*By Bhamini Nayar
November 22, 2018*

Dr. Bhamini M. P. Nayar

She completed her Pre-degree, B.Sc. and M.Sc. (Mathematics) at UCC from 1967 to '74. Now she is a Professor at Morgan State University, Baltimore, Maryland.

A CARPENTER'S SON

By Lal Varghese, Esq. Dallas

Jesus was chosen to be born as a carpenter's son in a manger and to be buried in borrowed tomb. A west Texas man was in a Church with shabby clothes. The pastor of the Church was upset about his dress and asked him to talk to God and come back dressed like others. He came back wearing the same rugged clothes. Pastor asked him I thought I told you to talk to God and return dressed like all others. He said I talked to God, but He said He was never been to your Church. Christ chose to be born in a manger and not in a palace. He is known as the son of a carpenter. He never had any priestly robes or attire or never lived in parsonages or Aramana. There is no mention in the Bible at all where he lived especially during His 3 years of ministry. If Christ has come to our parishes, probably we may not recognize Him and may even ask to Him to do the same thing the pastor asked the west Texas man. It is not in the way we dress, and the appearance when we attend the church matters, but it is our faith and commitment to live the gospel, which matters.

Christ must be born within us so that we can be Christ like. The one who created the whole world chose to be born in a manger. The one who has our destiny in His hands chose to submit to His father's will to die on the cross. We celebrate Christmas without knowing the reason for the season. We often forget the child born in the manger when we celebrate His birth. This child's life and His death on the cross should be able to change our life and the life of others around and through us, and our parish life.

He became poor so that we may become rich because of His grace. When we live in a market

culture we often forget about the Christ. Christmas should be an experience of emptying ourselves. Birth of Jesus Christ was a painful experience for Joseph and Mary. But they listened and obeyed God so that their agony became our joy. Unless and until we experience the pain and agony of others we cannot celebrate the joy of Christmas in its true meaning.

Christmas must be an embodiment of the sacrifice and obedience to God. Our celebrations should reflect the pain and sufferings of others, then only it would become real celebration. God is the master carpenter who created the whole world. Are we still searching the Christ in the manger or the crucified Christ on the cross? His birth and death should challenge the way we live and should enable us to transform ourselves, and the life of others around us. The resurrected Christ's presence in our lives should enable us to face the challenges of the world.

Let us celebrate this Christmas by glorifying God for redeeming the world being born as a human. Let us search the crucified and resurrected Lord Jesus Christ. There is a reason for every season and let the true reason behind the birth of Jesus Christ hover on us and our families as we continue the faith journey. Let me take this opportunity to wish all a Merry Christmas and a blessed New Year and may our Lord continue to help us to glorify our Lord Jesus Christ in our lives.

Attorney Lal Varghese

He is one of the founding members of UCCAANA, and helped to get the state registration and IRS approval as a charitable organization. Was in the UCCAANA Board as Vice President and later as Legal Advisor. He is an Immigration Lawyer in the Dallas area.

What does Christmas mean to you?

(By Dr. Anju M Philip. Postdoctoral Fellow, St. Michael's Hospital and the Zebrafish Center for Advanced Drug Discovery, Toronto, Canada.)

I think we can all agree that Christmas can be quite crazy and chaotic, but it is also a very meaningful and beautiful time of the year.

So, what does Christmas mean to you?

I like to follow the analysis from a sermon I once heard. There are essentially THREE CHRISTMASSES

1. **Commercial Christmas-** This is all about buying stuff, which isn't necessarily a bad thing. As a kid, I remember making extremely long wish lists for Santa and just blatantly telling my parents what I wanted for Christmas. Now, I take the subtler approach--leaving websites open on my laptop or pictures from Christmas catalogs strategically placed throughout the house. Either way, buying gifts for the people you love and care about, and receiving gifts from the people who love and care about you, is definitely one of the most beautiful things about Christmas.

2. **Cultural Christmas-** This is all about Christmas trees, Christmas lights, Candy canes, Santa Claus, poinsettias, stockings hung by the chimney and surely, Rudolf the red nosed reindeer! So, what do people mean by these cultural symbols of Christmas? I think it is a combination of nostalgia and bringing on the Christmas spirit. Traditions bind families and cultures together and in this fractious era, I think this is warranted.

3. **Christian Christmas-** I recently saw a bumper sticker which read "Jesus is the reason for the

season". As a Christian, I find Jesus at the very core of Christmas. The best Christmas gift ever is God's gift to each one of us--sending His only son to earth to save us from our sins. We have beautiful carols celebrating Christ's birth and Christmas plays and pageants to commemorate this wonderful part of history and the very essence of the Christian belief.

I am sure each one of you reading this article can identify yourself with one or more of these three Christmases.

Dr. Anju M Philip

Anju got her B.Sc. and M.Sc (Biotechnology) from UCC during 2003 to 2008, and was a faculty member in 2009. Her father is former Principal Dr. T. Thomas Philip

As for me, Christmas means a combination of all three. It is absolutely my most favourite time of the year and coincidence or not, both my boys were born around Christmas time. So, I have two more reasons to be happy and thankful about, every Christmas.

My hope for all of us is that, in between the hustle and bustle of this festive season, we get some quiet time to reflect on and appreciate what is truly important to us. Christmas is truly the holiday of giving and love. To quote Charles Dickens' classic tale, "A Christmas Carol," "I will honor Christmas in my heart and try to keep it all the year." Words of wisdom that should be echoed this Christmas season and all the days yet to be.

I wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Wonderful New year.

Rev. Dr. Philipose Mar Chrysostom Mar Thoma Valiya Metropolitan

Most Rev. Dr. Philipose Mar Chrysostom Mar Thoma Valiya Metropolitan received Padma Bhushan, the highest civilian award from the Honorable President of India Sri. Ram Nath Kovind on March 20, 2018. Before becoming a priest, from 1938 to 1940, as Philip Oommen, Thirumeni attended U C College. Thirumeni was recognized for his manifold contributions to the country, especially as an ecumenical commentator on inter-religious harmony, and as the people's Bishop. People of all faiths also celebrated his birth centenary on April 27, 2018. Thirumeni visits UC College whenever he gets a chance and always entertains students and faculty with humor during his speeches.



Prof. K. P. Mathew (Retired) with Principal Dr. Thara K. Simon.

Everybody agrees that K P Mathew Sir is a saintly person. He was the HOD of Mathematics and the Main Warden of Chacko Hostel before he retired. A few months ago, I got a chance to talk with him on the phone while he was visiting UCC. I still remember a situation when I was a student at UCC. During the Great Lent season in the hot Summer sun Mathew Sir used to walk all the way from Chacko Hostel to the Vegetarian Mess behind Holland Hostel to eat lunch. Once someone asked him why don't you send someone to pick up the lunch for you instead of you walking all the way here in the sun. Immediately he responded, either that person had to walk under the hot sun or I have to walk under the sun. So why I need to bother someone else? He is such a simple and saintly person. He lives in Trichur. Even now he visits UCC by taking regular bus. May the good Lord give him many more healthy and happy years.



Dr. M.G. Sarngadharan is with Kerala Chief Minister Mr. Pinarayi Vijayan About Kerala Institute for Advanced Virology

Kerala experiences, on an ongoing basis a large number of viral infections every year. These epidemics of emerging and re-emerging viruses cause tremendous public health crisis every year. In addition to loss of life and disruption of families and communities, these events impose much economic burden on the government and cause incalculable amount of pain and suffering for survivors and the society in general. The population is accustomed to expect these events as normal. But India as a nation, and Kerala, especially with such a high level of education, needs to be better prepared to respond to these medical emergencies. Some of us from Kerala living in the United States with some medical background approached the Chief Minister of Kerala, Mr. Pinarayi Vijayan with a suggestion that the state consider it critically important to develop a research institute in Kerala to study viruses that devastate the region on a regular basis. Teaching of virology, particularly clinical virology is not generally part of the medical school curriculum in India. These deficiencies need to be addressed. Some of us have some experience in virology, and we knew experts in the field who would be supportive in the effort. We assured the Chief Minister of our unconditional support in the process. The Chief Minister welcomed our idea with much



UCCAANA Board of Directors member Dr. M.G. Sarngadharan is with Kerala Chief Minister Mr. Pinarayi Vijayan during his USA visit in July 2018.

interest, and set up team of senior officers, and the team working diligently in developing a detailed plan in for setting up a virology institute that would grow up and eventually become one that meets global standards. Plans were drawn, budgets were secured, and adequate land was allotted, and founding of the Institute of Advanced Virology became a reality. The site is Thonnakkal near Thiruvananthapuram.

The state fast-racked the institute, as you may

read in a recent The Hindu report (the link is given below). First phase of the building has been completed, and the official inauguration is scheduled for some time in early 2019.

As part of studying other virology institutes in the world, Mr. Pinarayi Vijayan visited Institute of Human Virology (IHV) of the University of Maryland during one of his USA visits in July 2018. Dr. M. G. Sarngadharan had a meeting with the Chief Minister during that visit at IHV.

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/kerala/state-fast-tracks-virology-institute-at-thonnakkal/article23951789.ece>

In Memoriam

Dr. Abraham Philip got his Bachelors (B.Sc.) from U C College, Masters (M.Sc.) from St. John's College, Agra and his Ph.D. in Biochemistry from North Carolina State University. Before he came to the US, he was a lecturer in the Chemistry Dept. at UCC and was a Warden at Holland Hostel in the 60's. He was the beloved husband of Mrs. Achamma (Ramani) Phillip. In addition to Ramani Kochamma (UC College alumna), he is survived by his son, Mr. Teebu Phillip and his wife, Mrs. Rachel. In April 2018 he went to his eternal home. The family has been very actively involved with the St. Gregorios Orthodox Church, Raleigh-Durham, North Carolina. He was buried there.

Dr. David Jayakar Daniel died in April 2018 while visiting family in New Jersey. He was a lecturer in the Mathematics Dept. at U C College and was a warden at the Holland Hostel in the 60's. He was known as DJD Sir. He was the Senior Officer of the NCC (National Cadet Corps) at UCC. He got his B.Sc. degree in Mathematics from Malabar Christian College and M.Sc. from St. Joseph's College, Calicut. He then joined UCC and was at UCC for several years. After leaving UCC, he came to Canada for higher studies and joined Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario, Canada. He completed another master's and his Ph.D. there. He worked as a Professor of Mathematics at Vanier College, Montreal, Quebec, Canada until his retirement. He was married to Mrs. Jamuna Aaron-Daniel, and they have two children, Jyothish and Rekha. They are both married and living in New Jersey with their families. DJD Sir and Kochamma have been living in Brampton, Ontario, Canada since they left Montreal, Canada. He was buried in Toronto.

Mr. Varghese Varkey, father of our Treasurer, Mr. George Varghese, passed away in May 2018 in New Jersey. He was an alumnus of U C College. He got his B.Sc. in Chemistry from UCC, and Dr. A M Chacko Sir was his senior. He used to own MGM Printing Press

near Thrikkunnath Seminary, Alwaye, before he moved to the US. His funeral service was at St. John's Malankara Orthodox Church, Orangeburg, New York, where he was also buried.

Dr. V C Kuriakose passed away in August 2018. He got his B.Sc. and M.Sc. Degrees from U C College from 1996 – '71 and his Ph. D. from Cochin University in 1983. He was on the Physics faculty of UCC from 1971-89. He was a Warden at Chacko Hostel and was a member of the UCC Standing Council. He joined Cochin University of Science and Technology in 1989 as a Reader. He was promoted to Professor in 1998 and became the HOD in June 2004. He retired from the service of the University in 2007. His wife Prof. Dr. K. K. Leelamma was the HOD of Physics Dept at UCC until her retirement.

Professor C G Varghese, who succeeded C. P. Andrews Sir as Director of Physical Education at UCC started his college education at U C College in the early 60's. After his retirement, he continued to be active in college activities. He was living very close to the college. He was the brother of the late Rev. C. G. David, a well-known priest of the Mar Thoma Church. Professor Varghese passed away in January 2018 in Alwaye.

On behalf of all UCCAANA members we express our sincere condolences to each of the bereaved families. Please remember each of them in your thoughts and prayers. May God the Almighty give hope in the midst of sorrow, comfort in the midst of pain, and peace to all family members. May their souls rest in peace.

GREAT QUOTES

An investment in knowledge pays the best interest.

Benjamin Franklin

5th Death Anniversary: A Remembrance of late Dr. K. C. Chacko

Our beloved KC went to his eternal home five years ago.



We warmly remember him for his commitment and enthusiasm in establishing UCCAANA, his guidance and generous contribution to our alma mater. Being the first President of UCCAANA we always remember KC for the relentless services he had rendered. Our prayers are with Shanti and Graig and may God the Almighty comfort and strengthen them.



Centre for the Study of Religion and Society (CSRS)

Warm Greetings from CSRS U C College!

At the outset let me thank UCCAANA for all the support and encouragement given to us. We have been able to do a variety of activities for the year 2017-18.



Organized a lecture on Third Gender and a book reading session on Juxtapose: Seven Stories of Adoption.

Arranged a half day orientation class for the project coordinators to familiarize the various steps in Documentary film making.

Three mock interviews were arranged to equip the team for the remaining interviews of the three-year institutional project of UBCHEA titled Understanding Alternative Lives: Equipping students for a Peaceful co-existence.

Conducted five interviews during the period with well-known personalities.

To make students understand and explore the various aspects of documentary making and imbibe a visual culture, a three-day workshop was organized in the college.

*Dr. Mini Alice
Director, CSRS*

Flood Relief Camp at U C College

By Meera Jacob.

I along with the Associate NCC Officer, Lt. G. Geethika and a few cadets went to a relief camp at Kottapuram near Parvoor to give food as part of the Independence Day Celebrations at the college. Little did we know what we saw and experienced there was about to be a life changing experience. It

officials called and asked the principal to be prepared to conduct the camp at UCC and that they expected around 500 people. And they came, by Taurus Trucks it was almost midnight they haven't had any food or dry clothes or anything. The

at Skinner hostel prepared some stew. At that point no one knew what was happening or where would it end. As the sun rose, water level started increasing at a faster pace. Every hour there seem



was a small camp with around 200 people. We helped out in the administration, the food and the medical area. By 3.00 pm we got a phone call saying the bridges on either side of Aluva will be closing and the last bus out of here will leave from near the college in half an hour. We packed up all the things and quickly dispersed. Cadets left on the last bus and then there were a couple who could not go home because there were no buses plying to their area because of the water rising. By midnight the

principal got in touch with Modern Bread Factory in Edapally and arranged for 500 bread packets. The cooks



principal got in touch with Modern Bread

to be a hundred more coming in. At first it was the Platinum Jubilee Auditorium that was meant for people to stay but all the doors were opened when the number of

people shot up. Last night's dinner ended up as next day's breakfast. Every room in the college except the labs were opened. The Library served as the collection point and distribution for cloths while the main staffroom served as the





It is with great pride that I say I am an alumna of this college. I think we were able to uphold the saying adhiti devo bhava. The college gates were

see a different side of people when crisis like these come. The way that people came together in time of crisis forgetting their religion or status restored my faith in humanity.



stockroom. By the third day the numbers had reached near 13,000 and many stayed in cars within the campus. We were literally water locked with no electricity or phone coverage. There was no official who were there to take down the



open at all times and all were welcome. I can never forget the NCC cadets who

worked tirelessly for days or the teachers who showed the heart to be part of this. It's always a choice to help or to turn a blind eye like many did. I guess we

Meera Jacob

She got her B.A. and M.A. from UCC. And she is the oldest daughter of Principal Dr. Thara K. Simon

numbers and it reached a point where we needed to give in count for food to be brought in. That is when the students divided themselves and went around taking the count of people. By the fifth day the water receded and the authorities were able to come in and take charge.

