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Vol 60 July - August 2013 Nos 7 & 8



Indian couple receives blessings from the
Catholicos Patriarch Mar Dinkha IV

L to R. Binni Williams from Goa, (Daughter of the cousin of Mar Aprem metropolitan), H.H. Mar Dinkha IV and Sigil James Mangan from Trichur working for Ph.D. degree in Cincinnati, Ohio

VOICE OF THE EAST



Speech of Rev. Dr. Sr. O U Jincy
at the 47th LRC seminar on the
Liturgical Year of the Syro-
Malabar Church conducted on
23rd July 2013



Cardinal Malcolm Renjith receives Mar Aprem Metropolitan and Prof G P
V Somaratna (CTS Research Professor) at Cardinal's Palace, Colombo.

VOICE OF THE EAST

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(Private Circulation only)

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Voice of the East

Vol. 60

July - August 2013

Nos. 7 & 8

Editorial

Busan Assembly

The 10th assembly of the World Council of Churches is going to be held in Busan near Seoul in South Korea. The first assembly of WCC was held in Amsterdam in 1948 and the second assembly was in Evanston, Illinois in the suburb of Chicago, The third assembly was in New Delhi, India. The last assembly was in Port Allegro in Brazil. Mar Aprem Metropolitan represented our church in that assembly in 2006.

Assyrian Church of the East was not present in the 8th WCC assembly held in Zimbabwe in 1988. In some early assemblies in Australia etc our Church had made the presence of the Assyrian Church of the East visible.

Mar Aprem Metropolitan (Deacon George Mooken) was on a WCC scholarship 52 years ago in England studying in the St. Boniface College, Warminster, Wiltshire (4th year course in King's College, London). During his return journey in 1962 Mar Aprem (Deacon George Mooken) got an opportunity to study at the Ecumenical Institute of Bossey, Switzerland. That is an official institute of the WCC to foster good relations between Christian Churches.

In general it can be observed that the Assyrian Church of the East has not been very active in the WCC circles as some churches have been. The Roman Catholic Church is not a member of the WCC. At the same time official observers from Vatican attend the WCC assembly.

The theme of the 10th assembly from October 29 to November 9, 2013 in Busan is **God of life, lead us to justice and Peace.**

Let us pray that the delegates from all churches from different parts of the world will come and discuss the theme in detail with prayer and Bible study and will issue communiqués for the rest of the world regarding their suggestions and decisions for the different churches to have a guideline. Meanwhile all churches especially youth groups in different denominations will discuss and decide on their concerns for renewing the church life to face the challenges of the modern world.

Mar Aprem

Assyrian Church of the East Receives Rev. Ephraim Ashur Alkhas

On the Fourth Sunday of Summer, 28 July 2013, His Grace Mar Awa Royel, Bishop of the Diocese of California, formally and publicly received the Rev'd Qashisha Ephraim Ashur Alkhas into the Assyrian Church of the East for the Diocese of California. The reception by clerical confession of faith, oath of obedience and vesting was given and completed before the witness of the clergy and faithful at Mar Zaia Cathedral in Modesto, California.

On 14 July, Fr. Ephraim was officially but privately received into the Assyrian Church as a priest of the Diocese of California. He was received from the Diocese of Los Angeles of the North American Archdiocese of the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch (Ḥāṇā Ḥāṇā ʿĀṣīyā ʿĀṣīyā ʿĀṣīyā).

Fr. Ephraim grew up in Saint Mary's Assyrian Church of the East in North Hollywood, later Tarzana. Here he was baptized by Qashisha Barkho Oshana. During his teenage years he enjoyed participating in the daily services at St Mary's. He learned to love the Church and her services through the Very Rev'd Cor-Bishop George Bet-Rasho and Rev. Deacon Dan Daniel, his close lifetime mentor and friend. He was tonsured and ordained a Reader by His Holiness Mar Dinkha IV, Catholicos-Patriarch, at the new St. Mary's church in Tarzana, California, in the summer of 2001. After completing high school and receiving his B.A. degree in Spanish Literature, he continued his studies at Saint Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary where he completed his MDiv in 2010. He was ordained to the Holy Priesthood on 28 June 2009, having been a deacon since 2008.

He and his wife Elaine live in Modesto, with their daughters Shoshanna and Elishwa. Fr. Ephraim will serve the Diocese as an assistant priest and serve full time in the offices of CIRED (Commission on Inter-Church Relations and Education Development), and will be continuing his graduate-level studies at the Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley, California.

First Assyrian Church of the East in Germany Purchased in Borken, Germany.

The Assyrian Church of the East's Diocese of Europe has purchased its first church property in Borken, North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany.

His Grace Mar Odisho Oraham, Bishop of Europe and Patriarchal Representative arrived at Düsseldorf International Airport on 25 June 2013. Accompanied by the Rev'd Cor-bishop Stephan Yalda, the Bishop of Europe was met in Germany by The Rev'd Fr Dr Patros Youkhana (Parish Priest) and Mr Ashur Gewargis (Committee Member).

On the same day His Grace visited the new church property, to be consecrated in honour of Mar Odisho and Mar Qardagh, which has been purchased in the district of Burlo, city of Borken. With the participation of the faithful who had gathered at the newly purchased church, His Grace conducted prayers according to the rites of the Assyrian Church of the East. The Bishop also gave an address in which he expressed his joy at the purchase of the first Assyrian Church of the East property in Germany. Bishop Mar Odisho went on to thank the faithful sons and daughters

of the parish who assisted in the purchase of the church and offered his spiritual guidance to the members of the congregation asking them to remain faithful sons and daughters of the Holy Church.

The prayers were followed by a formal welcome given in His Grace's honour at a local venue. At the function Bishop Mar Odisho was greeted with hymns performed by the children of the parish along with the church choir. A light supper was organised by the Ladies Auxiliary. Rev'd Fr Dr Patros (Parish Priest) formally welcomed His Grace and thanked him for his visit and support of the congregation.

On 26 June 2013 the Bishop met with the parish priests and visited the homes of a number of faithful enquiring as to their welfare and offering his blessings. At 3pm on the same day, His Grace along with the Parish Priest and other relevant individuals finalised the legal purchase of the property at a local legal office.

His Grace then departed Borken to Düsseldorf International Airport returning to his Diocesan See in the Swedish capital Stockholm.

The consecration of the newly purchase Mar Odisho and Mar Qardagh Church in Borken will be held on 4 August 2013. His Grace Mar Odisho Oraham, aided by parish clergy will consecrate the church at 9.30am after which he will consecrate the Eucharistic Liturgy. A function will be held following the holy services to mark the auspicious occasion.

The address of the new church is: *An Der Evangelischen Kirche
46325 Borken – Germany*

OBITUARY

1. Archdeacon Athniel of Hassake, Syria.

We are sorry to hear that Archdeacon Athniel, father of Mar Ephrem Athniel, bishop of Syria, passed away. Archdeacon Athniel was the Administrator of the diocese of Syria until his son Mar Ephrem Athniel was consecrated some 13 years ago.

2. Mr. Ivan Mirza of Yonkers, New York.

One of the best friends of the Indian Church Mr. Ivan Mirza passed away in Yonkers. He was about 82 years of age. Mr. Geevarghese Emmatty of New Jersey represented the Indian Christians in the funeral.

3. Father of Bishop Mar Awa Royel.

Father of Bishop Mar Awa Royel passed away in California on Sunday 11th August 2013 and his funeral was conducted on 11th August, 2013

We pray for the souls of these faithful departed.

Patriarchal visit in August and September 2013

16 August, Friday	- Going from Chicago to New York
18 August, Sunday	- Holy Qurbana in Mar Mari Church Younkers
21 August, Wednesday	- Younkers to New Britain, Connecticut
25 August, Sunday	- Holy Qurbana at St. Thomas Church, New Britain
26 August, Monday	- Return from New Britain to Chicago
6 September Friday	- Going from Chicago to Detroit
8 September, Sunday	- Holy Qurbana at Mart Mariam Church, Detroit
12 September, Thursday	- from Detroit to Canada
14 September, Saturday	- Holy Qurbana in Winsor, Canada
15 September, Sunday	- Holy Qurbana in the church of Mar Zaia, Thuvana, London, Canada
17 September, Tuesday	- Going to Torando
22 September, Sunday	- Holy Qurbana in Mart Mariam Cathedral in Toronto
26 September, Thursday	- Going from Toronto to Hamilton
29 September, Sunday	- Holy Qurbana in Mar Mari Church, Hamilton
30 September, Monday	- Returning to Chicago

NEWS from India

Mar Aprem Metropolitan Visits Ancient Anuradhapura Cross in Official Trip to Sri Lanka

His Beatitude Dr Mar Aprem, Metropolitan of Malabar and India visited Sri Lanka between 22 – 29 July, 2013.

The Metropolitan was the chief guest of honour at the graduation ceremony of the Colombo Theological Seminary on Saturday 27 July, 2013. The Metropolitan visited Sri Lanka at the invitation of the aforementioned institute of higher learning. Other guests included Bishops and Christian leaders from various denominations along with political leaders. The Colombo Theological Seminary is a multi-denominational theological institution founded in 1994 and using the three languages of Sinhalese, Tamil and English.

During his address to those attending the graduation program, His Beatitude Dr Mar Aprem expressed his pleasure at personally viewing the famous Anuradhapura Cross at the Anuradhapura Museum.

During his graduation address, Ivor Poobalan, Principal of the Colombo Theological Seminary welcomed His Beatitude and noted that the visit of the Metropolitan was an opportunity for Sri Lankans to learn more about the Anuradhapura Cross and the Assyrian Church of the East. During his own address, His Beatitude Mar Aprem recited the Lord's Prayer in Aramaic; the language in which Jesus Christ taught the prayer to His disciples.

The Anuradhapura Cross, or 'Nestorian Cross' was first discovered in 1912 at Anuradhapura, one of the ancient capitals of Sri Lanka famous for its well-preserved ruins of ancient Sri Lanka civilisation. The city remains one of the major cities in Sri Lanka and the capital of the Anuradhapura District. The discovery of a column fragment bearing the Christian symbol among the famous Buddhist monuments in the citadel of the ancient capital had been unexpected by the archaeologists involved in the find. Although the English Archaeological Commissioner Edward Ayrton had presumed that the 'Nestorian Cross' was from the Portuguese period, his successor Arthur Hocart confirmed 12 years later that the artifact was in fact a 'Persian Cross' linked to the ancient presence of Church of the East Christians from Persia more than 14 centuries earlier.

Historical records and accounts suggest that a community of Church of the East Christians may have been present in Sri Lanka as early as 443-533 or more generally between the mid-5th and 6th centuries. However, details on the original establishment of this community are limited.

The Honourable Minister with the responsibility for archaeology and culture in Sri Lanka had personally arranged for the Curator of the Anuradhapura Museum to exhibit the Cross to His Beatitude as well as staff of the Colombo Theological Seminary.

Despite the immense historical importance of the ancient artefact proving the presence of Christianity in Sri Lanka centuries before the arrival of western Christianity, most Sri Lankans have not yet seen the monument, although some are aware of its presence.

In addition to the Anuradhapura Cross, a similar item was discovered by the archaeologist Professor John Carswell in 1984 at the ancient port of Mantota known as Mantai. As part of this archaeological find, Professor Carswell found three Sassanian period items. These included a gil muhrag (clay bulla) with three seal impressions, two oval seals placed close together being a gopatsah (a Persian mythological creature with the head of a man and the body of a winged bull) and a Pahlavi inscription reading abzay farroxih ('may your fortune increase'). The third seal set within a diamond field was a Nestorian cross with unmistakably similar features to the Nestorian cross of Anuradhapura. As the Museum is currently undergoing renovations, the Metropolitan was unable to view the smaller cross found in 1984.

Amongst a large number of official engagements during the trip, His Beatitude also called upon His Eminence Albert Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith, the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Colombo. His Beatitude noted that during his visit with the Cardinal, the image of the Anuradhapura Cross was present on the altar of the Cardinal's chapel.

In discussions with the Metropolitan, academic staff of the Seminary noted that the institution wishes to introduce Aramaic language instruction as part of its courses due to increasing interest in the study of Christ's language.

It is noteworthy that during his visit the Metropolitan was also featured in an interview on Swargeeya TV.

The Metropolitan of India's visit to Sri Lanka underscored the breadth of the Assyrian Church of the East's famous missionary enterprise. The discovery of the Anuradhapura Cross confirms the ancient presence of Christianity and the Assyrian Church of the East in Sri Lanka and the immense contribution of this venerable church to the spread of Christian faith throughout Asia.



His Grace Mar Awa Royel, Diocese of California pictured with new Qasha Ephraim Ashur Alkhas after the reception on 28 July 2013 for the Diocese of California



His Grace Mar Odisho Oraham, Bishop of Europe with other relevant individuals signing the document for the new Church at a local legal office in Borken, North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany on 26 June 2013



Committee members of the Voice of the East (Malayalam edition) felicitate Mar Aprem Metropolitan on his 73rd birth anniversary on 13 June 2013 at the Metropolitan's Palace, Thrissur.



At Anuradhapura Seminar on 23 July 2013.
Dr Mar Aprem at the meetings of church leaders in Anuradhapura (L – R: Mrs Nishika Perera (CTS Extensions Coordinator – Anuradhapura), Prof G P V Somaratna (CTS Research Professor); Rev Reggie Ebenezer, Mr Simon Fuller (CTS Librarian)



Mar Aprem pictured with Anuradhapura Cross at the Anuradhapura Museum.



The Anuradhapura Cross, or 'Nestorian Cross' discovered in 1912 at Anuradhapura, Sri Lanka



Mar Aprem inaugurates the Seminar at Anuradhapura by lighting the lamp



Two top writers of religious humour, Mar Aprem Metropolitan (aged 73) shares his jokes with Mar Chrysostom (aged 96), Metropolitan *emeritus* of the Mar Thoma Syrian Church when he came to Trichur for the celebration of the 60th anniversary of his consecration as a bishop and also to receive Paul Valappappila award at the Basilica auditorium.

GRADUATION ADDRESS

at Columbia Theological Seminary, Sri Lanka

Dear brothers and sisters,

I deem it a privilege to deliver the graduation address to the students of the Colombo Theological Seminary. I graduated from Leonard Theological College in Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh in 1961. We had our commencement service in April. As a young man of just 21 years I began to wonder why the College called it the commencement service instead of concluding service. The College authorities explained it saying that it was the beginning of our service to the community. We are commissioned to commence our duties. The four years we spent there was to equip us to the great challenges of ministry in the Church.

The Nestorian Missionary Enterprise: A Church on Fire authored by John Stewart in 1928 had gone out of print. My Church in Trichur reprinted that great book in 1961 and distributed it to the delegates of the World Council of Churches assembly held in December 1961 in New Delhi. I spent time in Mar Narsai Press and assisted my High School teachers, V.K. George and M.L. Paul in proofreading that book.

That book was a great inspiration for me. It was again out of print for more than a decade. As I felt that people should read the great missionary history of this Asian Church, I wrote a summary of it in 1976 in my book *Nestorian Missions*. Dr Akbar Haqq, Associate Evangelist of Dr Billy Graham, wrote in his Foreword to my book as follows:

At such a spiritual juncture in the history of the Church in the Orient it is time to hear from her long forgotten past—the thrilling story of the Nestorian Missionary Enterprise, during the early centuries of the Christian era. These Christians did not have great material means nor were they able to engage in planning great missionary strategies computerized and perfected in world conferences to win the world in our time.

That is indeed true. Those Nestorian missionaries never had funds or strategies like the recent centuries of missionary expansion. Yet they went to Sian-fu in China in 635 AD, they came to Anuradhapura around 650, to Sir Bani Yas Island near Abu Dhabi around 600, to Japan in 737 AD, to Leh in Ladakh around 800 AD, and to many other places in Asia.

Unfortunately, many people do not know the glorious history of Christianity in Asia. In some of these countries, the archaeological evidence such as crosses is still buried under the earth awaiting excavation.

Only recently the world learned that there was a Christian monastery near Abu Dhabi. The emirate of Abu Dhabi is developing tourism by telling the details of this historic monastery in Sir Bani Yas Island. I had the privilege to visit this monastery in July 2012 and I have written about it in my 74th book *14th Holy Synod and Sir Bani Yas Island*. Ongoing archaeological excavations on the eastern side of island have uncovered the ruins of an early Christian monastery, which was probably founded in the late 6th century AD. It was abandoned by the last few monks in about 750 AD.

Early Christianity in Sri Lanka and India and Issues of Identity

*Most Rev'd Dr Mar Aprem, BD, M.Th, STM (New York), D.Th, Ph.D
Metropolitan of the Assyrian Church of the East, Trichur, Kerala, India*

The Apostolic Foundation of the Church in Sri Lanka and South India is linked to St Thomas, the doubting disciple of our Lord Jesus Christ.

India had Christians from the very early times, and there is no doubt that they would have had some impact on Sri Lanka especially because of the geographic proximity of these two countries and also because of the trade and commerce between them.

The Apostolic Origins and Relations with the Persian Church

The 'East Syrian' or Assyrian Church of the East traces its origins to the evangelistic ministry of the Apostle Thomas along with Mar Mari and Mar Addai (Syriac for Saint Thaddeus), who were among Christ's seventy disciples (Luke 10:1).

Several of the most ancient Syriac writings such as *The Doctrine of Addai*, *The Chronicle of Arbela* and *The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles* record that Saint Thomas sent Thaddeus and Mari to preach to Abgar Ukkama (the Black), King of the Assyrians at Osrhoene. Eusebius, the Father of Church History, writing in 325 AD, states that he personally searched the state archives of the Assyrians in the capital city of Edessa and found official records of this apostolic visit which he translated from the Syriac originals and included in his monumental work *The Ecclesiastical History*, which is the first universal history of the Christian church to be written.

There is a wealth of corroborative evidence to support, and no reason to doubt the living tradition of the St. Thomas Christians that the Apostle arrived in Kondungalloor (Muziris) in Kerala in 52 AD, established seven churches, and moved on to other kingdoms, returning to Madras (Mylapore) in 72 AD where he was martyred that year. The church founded by St Thomas must have been rather spread out in the subcontinent, including the North-west, the Western and Eastern coasts of the peninsula, probably also reaching Sri Lanka.

The Chronicle of Seert also states that in 470 AD Bishop Mana of Edessa translated the writings of Diodore of Tarsus and Theodore of Mopsuestia from Greek into Syriac with the assistance of an Indian priest named Daniel. These translations, along with Syriac religious discourses and hymns, were sent to India. Assyrian Christian communities from Persia came to India in the 4th and 8th centuries. They found an open position in the society that they were able to fill in that there was an absence of a Vaishya or trader caste at this time. Assyrians became a type of merchant class and were welcomed by every ruling family in south India.

Fernando de Queyroz in his book *The Spiritual and Temporal Conquest of Ceylon* has recorded this as follows: "In the suburb of Colombo the church of the Apostle St Thomas, where resided the father of the Christians...there was preserved a Cross on a small column stone; one of those which the glorious apostle worked with his own hands, and it was the second which they had in Ceylon."

Cosmas Indicopleustes [*Indicopleustes* is Greek for ‘Indian Navigator’] was a Christian merchant from Egypt who traveled to South India between 520 and 525 AD. He wrote about his experiences in 535. He wrote about the Christians of India and Ethiopia. Cosmas documents the existence of large Christian communities in Southern India, Sri Lanka, and Socotra. His book, *Topographia Christiana*, written in the first half of the 6th century gives us very valuable and interesting information regarding Sri Lanka which he describes as “A great emporium of trade in the Indian ocean”. In his description he records the existence of a Christian church as well as a Christian community in Sri Lanka in the 6th century. He states that “Even in Taprobane, an island in further India, where the Indian sea is, there is a church of Christians with clergy and a body of believers.”

He further states that this church received the Persian Christian traders who had settled in these shores and mentions that they had even a Christian priest. Referring to the church Cosmas says: “The Island has also a church of Persian Christians who have settled there, and a Presbyter who is appointed from Persia, and a Deacon and a complete ecclesiastical ritual.”

Christianity in Sri Lanka in 6th Century or Before?

Dr T V Philip, an Indian Church historian and ecumenist, making his observations on this statement of Cosmas says:

“From the above observations of Cosmas it is often assumed that in Ceylon in the sixth century there were only Persian Christians who settled there and there were no indigenous Christians. We need to remember that Cosmas was a Persian and a Nestorian and it is understandable if his main interest was in the Persian Christian communities in places which he mentioned in his book. Moreover, he did not personally visit all the places he mentions and did not claim to have made a complete survey of Christianity in those places.”

By the very fact that Cosmas writes “I do not know whether there be any Christians in the parts beyond it” it is clear that he is not making a comprehensive observation about all the Christian communities in Sri Lanka at that time. Furthermore, there is no evidence to connect the Anuradhapura cross with a Nestorian community that is supposed to have lived in Sri Lanka. Once again, as Philip says in his book: “We do not know when Christianity came to Ceylon, probably earlier than the sixth century as there were Christian communities in South India from the First Century onwards”.

The bishops Mar Sabr-ishu and Mar Peroz strengthened the Assyrian community upon their arrival in 794 AD, bringing with them more settlers as well as spiritual guidance. The Assyrian immigrant merchant community in India brought both material and spiritual prosperity to Kerala.

Islamic intolerance

Islamic intolerance decimated the churches on Socotra and elsewhere. The Church of India is the only living testimony of the former missionary glory of the Assyrian Church. According to Stewart, “With the exception of the small remnant in the neighbourhood of Qudshanis in Kurdistan, the only section of the Nestorian Church that has been able to maintain its distinctive identity down through the centuries to the present time is the Syrian Christian community of South-West India.”

After the 7th century, there is no literary trace of Persian Christianity in Sri Lanka. None of the medieval travelers who visited the island mentioned Nestorian Christians there. It seems that Persian Christian communities disappeared on the island after the Islamic conquest of Persia. More conclusive assessment of Persian Christians in Sri Lanka cannot be completed unless more related archaeological discoveries are made.

Evidence of the Persian Church in India and Sri Lanka: Crosses

The Cross is the primary symbol of the Christian faith representing the cross on which Jesus Christ died. It is the most venerated symbol among Christians. There are several ancient artifacts of the Christians of India including the crosses of the Old Syrian church at Kottayam and on Saint Thomas' Mount near Mylapore. Both date back to the 7th or 8th Century. The inscriptions on these crosses are written in Pahlavi, the language of the Persian Sassanid Empire. The other crosses at Kottayam date back to the 10th century and bear inscriptions written in Pahlavi and Syriac. One such ancient inscription reads, "My Lord Christ, have mercy upon Afras, the son of Chaharbukht, the Syrian [Assyrian], who cut this."

A second cross was uncovered on a small clay seal excavated at the ancient port of M̄ntota (Mantai) by John Conswell, in 1984. It bears resemble to the Anuradhapura cross. The class seal also has a Pahlavi inscription which clearly establishes its Persian origin.

Identity Crisis

In more recent times, People who became Christians through the work of Western missionaries were forced to rethink their identity. Nationalism became very prominent in Sri Lanka after Independence. This situation promoted national Christians to indigenise their religious expressions. People desired to experience the gospel in a truly Sri Lankan context, expressing their faith and worship of God in their own language, arts, music, and other cultural idioms. The chapel is decorated with Sri Lankan woodcarvings. The congregation remove their footwear and sit on the floor. Indigenous musical instruments such as tabla, violin and sitar mainly accompany worship. Christian ministers who will work in the community with a sound understanding of Sri Lankan realities and make bridges between various socio-cultural and religious groups.

The Present Situation of Christianity in India and Sri Lanka

India has about 30 million Christians which include Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant, and Pentecostal churches. The Indian Census has established that Hinduism accounts for 80.5% of the population of India. The second largest religion is Islam at about 13.4% of the population. The third largest religion is Christianity at 2.3%. The fourth largest religion is Sikhism at about 1.9%. In Sri Lanka, the Buddhist population is 70.2%, Hindu 12.6%, Islam 9.7%, and Christian 7.4%. Of these Christians, 82.4% are Roman Catholic and the rest are 17.6%.

Kerala is 50% Hindu, 28% Muslim and 22% Christian. Kerala's literacy rate is 90%, the highest in India. It is the most progressive state in India. Its living standard and progress is almost equal to that of Europe. Within these Christians there are Syrian Christians, Latin (Roman Catholic), Protestant, Anglican and so on are included. The Syrian Christians are now divided into seven denominations:

1. Chaldean Syrian Church (Assyrian Church of the East)
2. Syro-Malabar Catholic Church
3. Syrian Orthodox Jacobite Church
4. Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church
5. Malabar Independent Syrian Church, Thozhiyur.
6. Malankara Mar Thoma Syrian Church
7. Syro-Malankara Catholic Church

Summary and Conclusion

Personally speaking, my Cathedral in Trichur (established in 1815) has a connection with the church in Sri Lanka going back a few years before the Anuradhapura Cross was discovered. In 1899, Mar Abdisho Thondanat Metropolitan, my predecessor consecrated Luis Mariano Soares by the name Mar Basilius. He was given authority over Tamil regions in Madurai, Dindigal etc. Mar Abdisho died in Trichur in November 1900. Mar Basilius came to Ceylon in December 1902 and worked here for about 2 years. He is believed to have died of cholera in 1904.

THE 47TH SEMINAR OF LRC (LITURGICAL RESEARCH CENTRE OF THE SYRO-MALABAR CHURCH)

Rev. Dr. Sr. O.U. Jincy was a speaker at the 47th LRC seminar on the Liturgical Year of the Syro-Malabar Church conducted on 23rd July 2013, Tuesday – 25th July 2013, Thursday at Mount St. Thomas, Kakkanad, Kochi. Around 15 papers were presented in this three days seminar. There were 100 participants. The presence of Major Archbishop Mar George Cardinal Alencherry, Mar Andrews Thazhath, the Chairman, LRC, Mar Joseph Kallarangatt, Mar Bosco Puthur, Mar Pauly Kanookadan, etc., encouraged the participants with lot of enthusiasm and expectation. Around 15 papers were presented in this seminar by the scholars from different areas. Sr Jincy Othottil presented a paper about “Theological Implication of the prayers of the Liturgy of Hours for the period of *Qyamtha (Easter)*” in this seminar. H.G. Dr. Mar Aprem had participated in many seminars of LRC in last many years.

Death of Fr. M. I. David

Fr. M.I.David aged 93 years passed away on Wednesday 21 August and was buried in the clergy cemetery in Mar Yohannan Mamdhana parish, East Fort, Thrissur on Thursday 22nd under the leadership of Mar Aprem Metropolitan, Mar Yohannan Yoseph Episcopa and Mar Awgin Kuriakose Episcopa and a large number of clergy and the faithful. Some condolence messages from the Bishops from all over the world is given below.

CONDOLENCE MESSAGES

1. Emmanuel Joseph

Dear Dr. Mar Aprem,

May the Lord God rest the soul of the late Reverend M.I. David in peace and reward him among the righteous in His Kingdom to come. I pray that you are doing fine and also convey my regards to the clergy in India and especially to our brethren HG Mar Youkhanan and HG Mar Awgen.

Your servant in Christ,

Emmanuel

2. Gewargis Sliwa

Dear Brother H.B. Mar Aprem,

I offer my deep condolences at the passing away of Qasha David. I wish Your Beatitude good health. Please pray for us.

Sincerely Yours,

Mar Gewargis, Baghdad

3. Mar Awa Royel

Dear Mar Aprem,

Thank you for the information regarding the demise of the late Fr. M.I. David. We shall remember him in Holy Qurbana.

Mar Awa Royel

4. Mar Aprim Khamis

Beloved brother in Christ H.B. Mar Aprem Metropolitan

Greetings in Christ: Amen.

I received a copy of your email sent to HH concerning the fall asleep in the Lord the late Rev. M.I. David Aug. 21, 2013.

I trust that as a priest serving our Lord, the late Rev. David had completed his duties faithfully in the vineyard of our Lord who choose him to serve him in His Holy Church. Rev. David seems to dedicate himself for humanitarian services, and thus was founding of Mar Timotheus Hospital, and Old people's Home as well.

May our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ rest him with saints and righteous in His Kingdom of Heaven. Heartfelt condolences offered for his immediate family. May The Lord remove the veil of sorrow from their hearts, comfort and richly bless each and all of them.

Sincere condolences offered to Your Beatitude as His spiritual father, and to all clergy and faithful in your blessed Archdiocese. Please be assured that we will offer his name at the Altar in the Holy Mass. Heartfelt greetings to your beatitude and the faithful of our Church in India.

Fraternally Yours,

+ Mar Aprim Khamis

5. Mar Meelis Zaia AM

Dear HG Mar Aprem,

With deep sadness I heard the departure of our beloved Rev. Father MI David. I had the pleasure of meeting him during my 2 visits to India and I saw in him a great humility and love. His dedication for the Church of the East will never be forgotten. I on behalf of myself, the clergy and all members of the Church in Australia extend our deepest sympathy for his family and the Indian Church.

May the Lord keep him in His loving-kindness and grant him His kingdom.

In Christ,

Mar Meelis Zaia AM, Metropolitan.



The body of Rev'd
Fr. M I David in Mar Yohannan
Mamdana Church on
Thursday 22nd,
August 2013
L to R: Mar Yohannan Yoseph
Episcopa, Mar Aprem
Metropolitan and Mar Awgin
Kuriakose Episcopa



Students who participated in the 'Student's Meet' conducted by the Central Women's Youth Association pictured with Mar Aprem Metropolitan, Bishop Mar Awgin Kuriakose and the members of Central Women's Youth Association led by Sister O U Jincy



Group Photo of Sisters and Clergy with two Episcopas and Metropolitan just before the burial ceremony of Rev'd Fr. M I David in Mar Yohannan Mamdana Church, East Fort Trichur on Thursday 22nd, August 2013

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