



written & illustrated
by

dr. abraham thomas eettickal
&
dr. chinchu ann varghese

first edition © 2012



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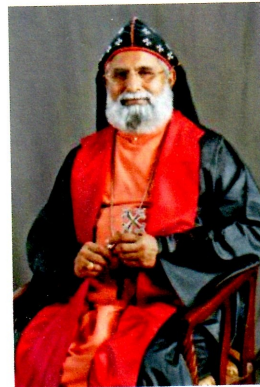
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Mar Thoma Syrian Church of Malabar

Adoor Diocese

Joseph Mar Barnabas Episcopa



Prayerful Felicitations

Congratulations to this innovative venture where the Mar Thoma church is being presented to the new generation through a modern medium and language. I liked very much, the title and content of the book, **My Mar Thoma Church**. In an era where identity consciousness has been awakened, each of us should have a clear understanding of who we really are. This in turn will lead to a better understanding of one's self, community, church, our saviour and the divine love that was revealed to us through God the Father.

May Christ's message and the history of our church that leaves an imprint of in our hearts and minds be displayed ever so clearly through the picturesque pages of this book. May the scribbles and notes be beneficial for all people beyond the Mar Thoma community to touch and feel our humble church.

On behalf of the Mar Thoma church, I congratulate Dr. Abraham Thomas Eettickal and Dr. Chinchu Ann Varghese who are partners in this venture. May God bless you both abundantly in this initiative that you have commenced.

+Peace, Great Lent 2012, Canberra (Camp).

Handwritten signature of Joseph Mar Barnabas Episcopa

Joseph Mar Barnabas Episcopa





Rev. Blysu Varghese

Vicar, Sydney Mar Thoma Church.

Remembering and Sharing the Life Stories and Resources

How can we be relevant in a multicultural setting where the specific identity is questioned in many avenues of life? The psalmist says that they wept as they remembered Zion when sat by the rivers of Babylon (Psalm 137:1). As a migrant community, we are puzzled by the questions of identity by all around us. In contrast to the self-hate or following the cultural pattern of the dominant groups, the quest for identity becomes a counter tool for survival. The search for the affirmation of the identity is evident in the presentation of 'own culture' as the effective deterrent against the predominant cultural condition of their country of migration rather than uncritically following the cultural ethos of their fostering country.

My Mar Thoma Church is an attempt to look into the roots of 'own culture' by Dr. Abraham Thomas Ettickal and Dr Chinchu Ann Varghese with their unique style and using the God given gift of caricature and cartoon. I have a greater appreciation for their creativity, zeal and enthusiasm for evangelism, commitment to God and loyalty to the Mar Thoma Church. They have played a significant role in the formation of Sunday School in Canberra, led Vacation Bible School in Brisbane and continuously drawing cartoons in the monthly newsletter Parish Herald of Sydney Bethel Mar Thoma Church and the list goes on. I take this opportunity to thank them for preparing a historical document and engagement which should be republished with more inputs in later editions. I recommend this book to a wide audience all over the Mar Thoma Diaspora as a guidebook to answer the first questions about our identity in relation to faith and traditions.

With love and prayers,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Blysu Varghese', written over a diagonal line.

Rev. Blysu Varghese

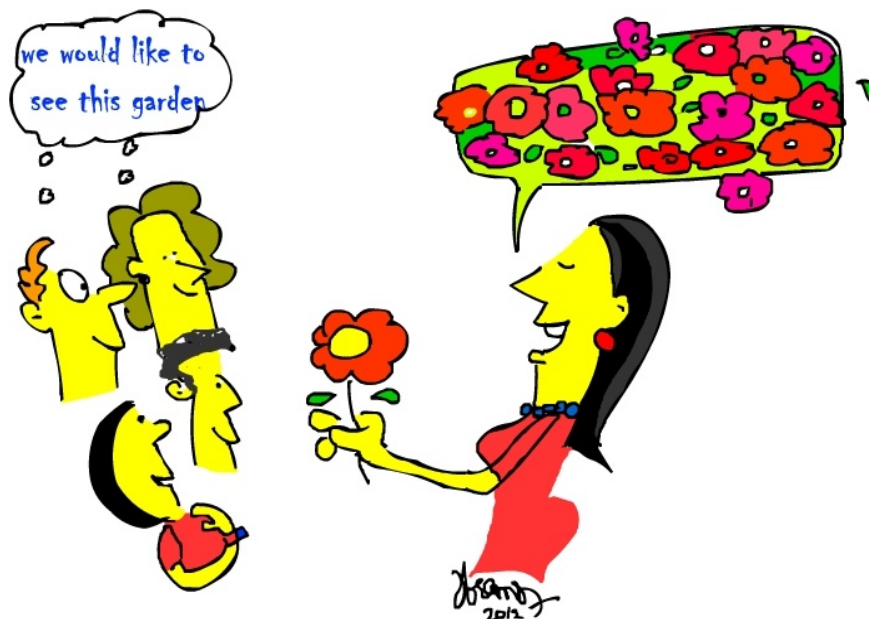
A word from the authors....

It can be a very daunting task for any new generation kid to read through the history of MarThoma Church. Not only is it a 'heavy read' but also a topic ridden with controversies. The ones who attempt this soon lose interest before they grasp the core essentials. So for those kids who are curious to know a bit more about the past of the Church which they attend every Sunday this book can be really handy.

In this book we have tried to address the bare essentials a Marthomite need to know about his/her Church. We have kept the jargons to minimum & illustrated it to generate interest & get the gist of things in few lines.

This is 'a flower' from the beautiful garden named 'Mar Thoma Church'. If you like this 'flower' please feel free to explore & learn more of this beautiful Eastern Church with a rich tradition.

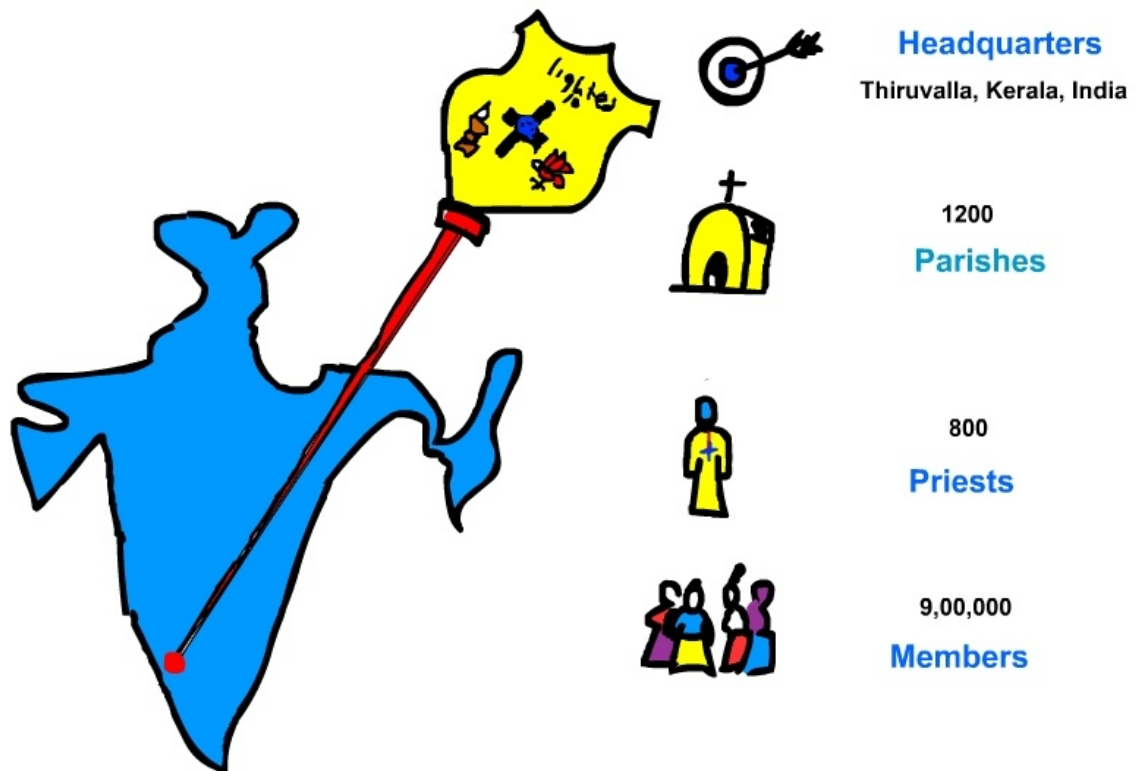
Dr.Abraham Thomas Eettickal
Dr.Chinchu Ann Varghese

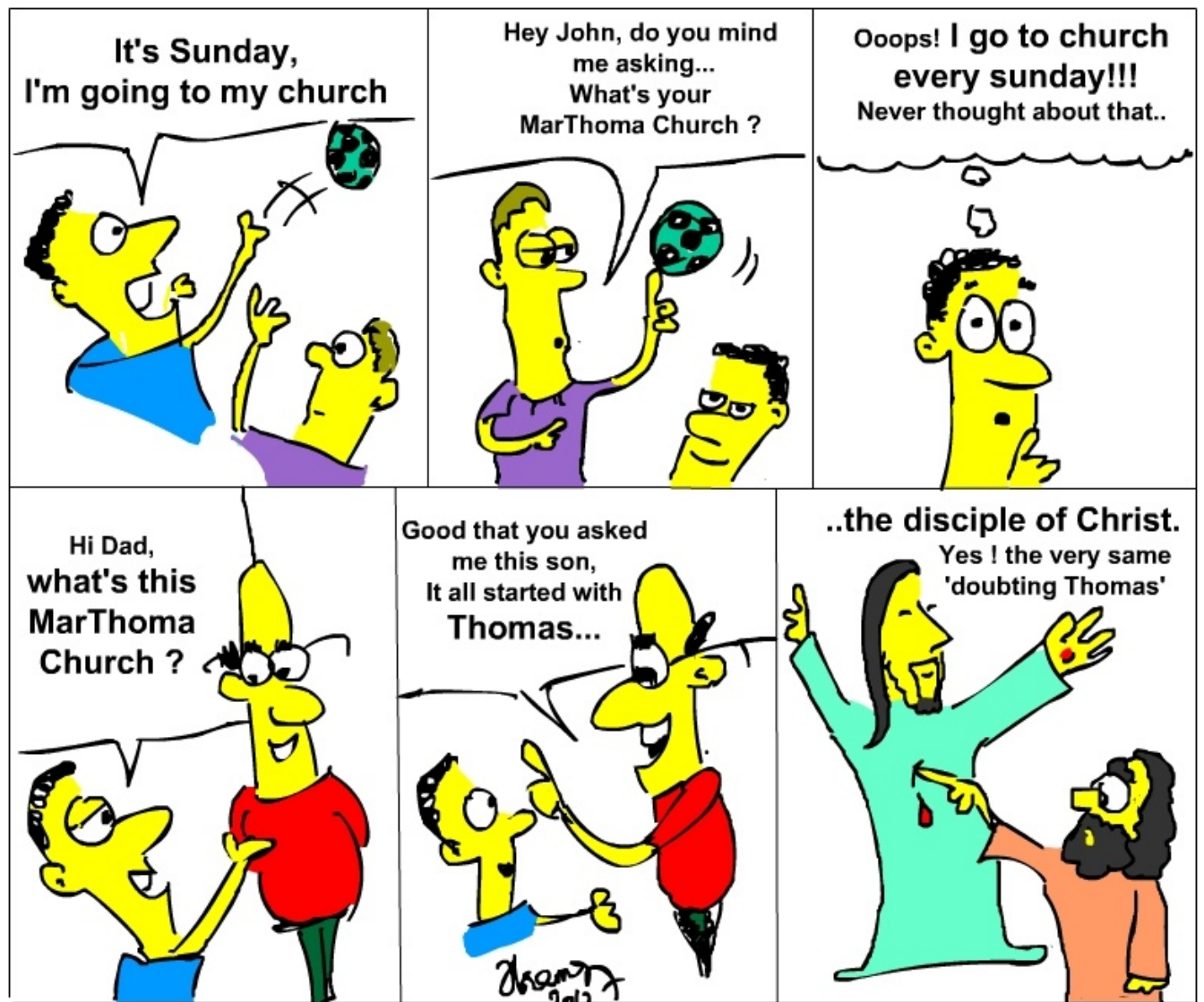


if this flower is so beautiful...the garden she is talking about should be marvellous...!!!

The Mar Thoma Church is an Eastern reformed church which began in Kerala, India & has now grown into a church with parishes all over the world. It is believed to be started by St. Thomas, one of the disciples of Christ in AD52. Mar Thoma Church is quiet indebted to the Reformation & Revival Movements of the 19th century that took the Church to greater heights. The Church has now over a million members worldwide & nearly 1200 Parishes. The head quarters of the Church is in Thiruvalla, Kerala, India.

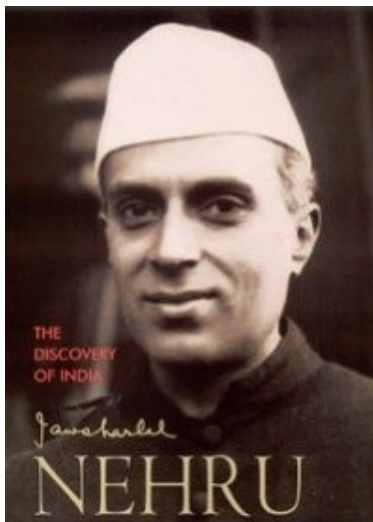
Our Mar Thoma Church





How it all began...

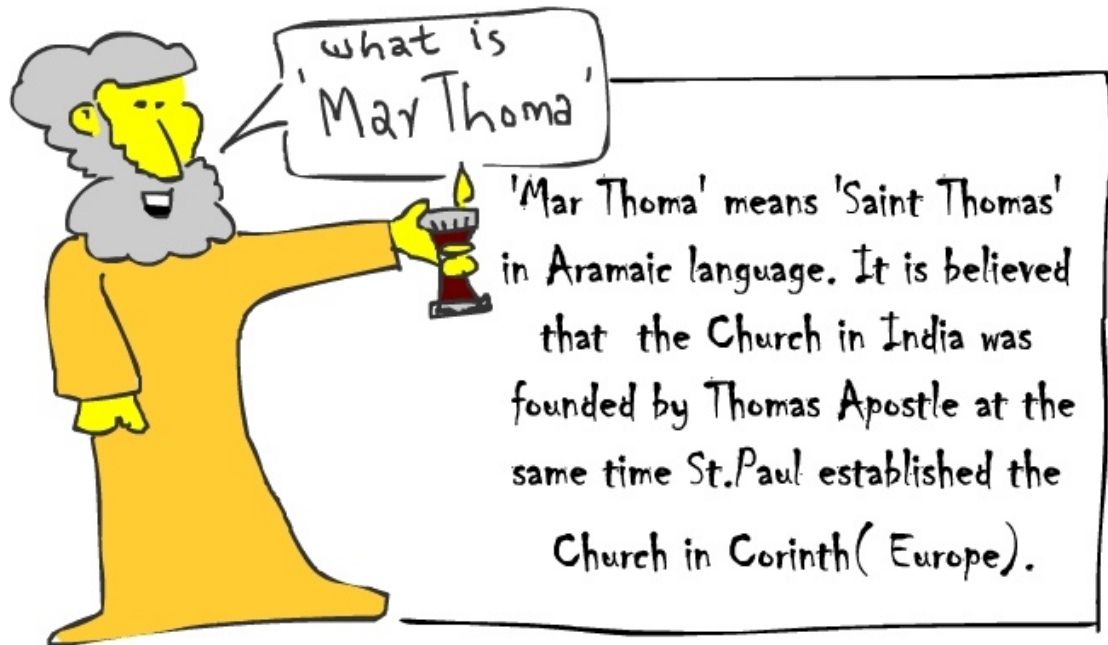


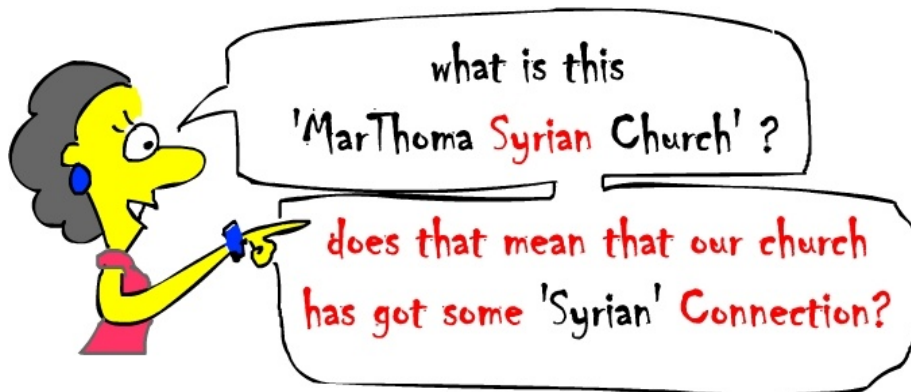


"You may be surprised to learn that Christianity came to India long before it went to Europe, and when even in Rome it was a despised & proscribed sect. Within 100 years or so of the death of Jesus, Christian Missionaries came to South India by sea. They were received courteously & permitted to preach their new faith. They converted large number of people, and their descendants have lived there, with varying fortune, to this day. Most of them belong to old Christian sects which have ceased to exist in Europe."

- 'Glimpses of World History' (1934)





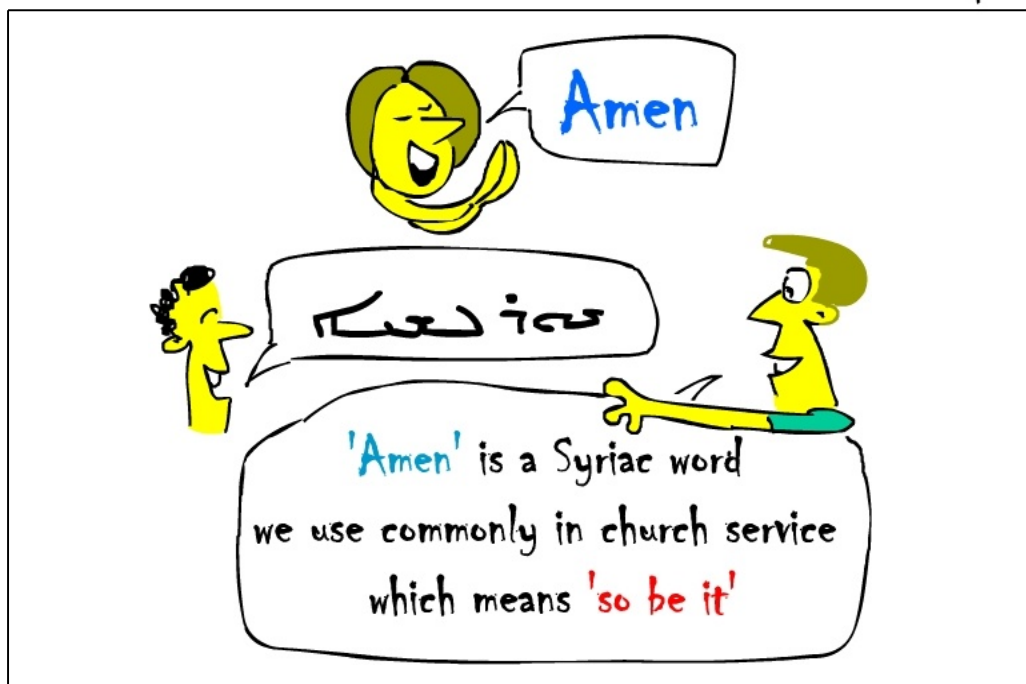


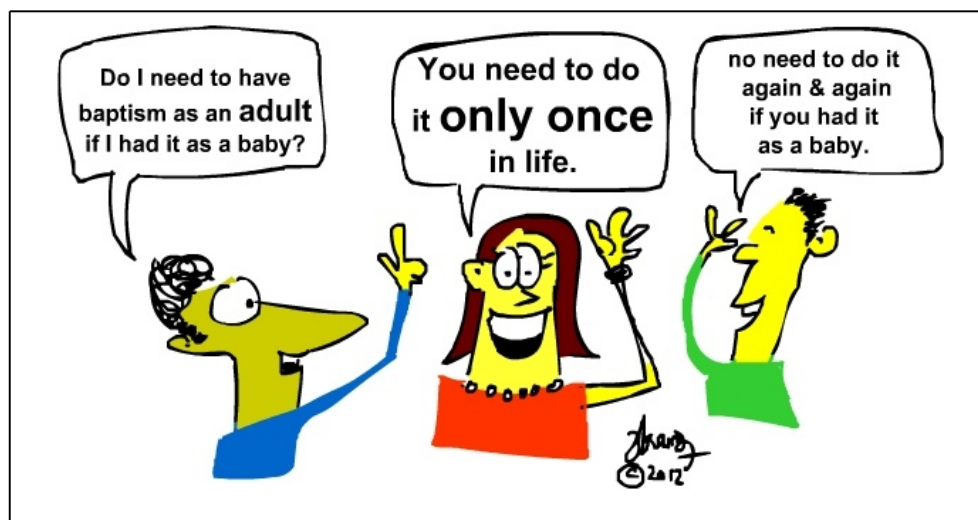
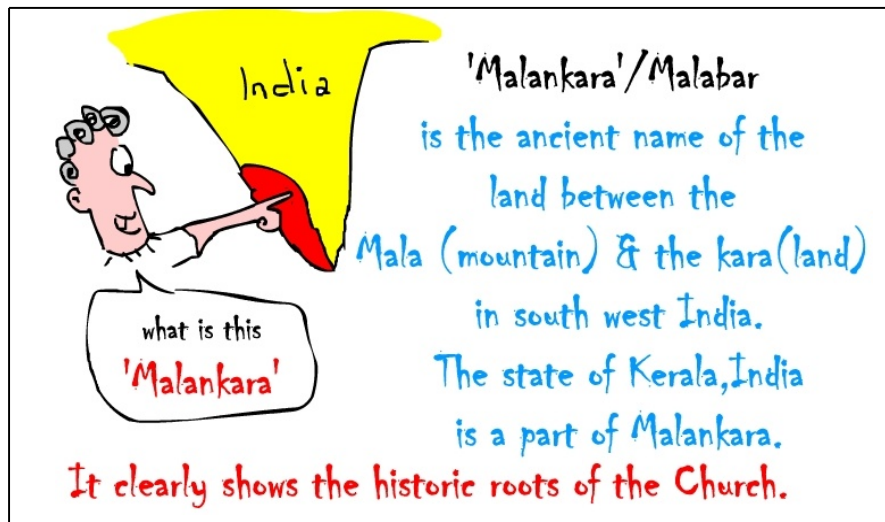
Syriac was a major language spoken in the Middle East before arabic took over between 4-8th century.

It became a popular language of worship among Christians during that time.

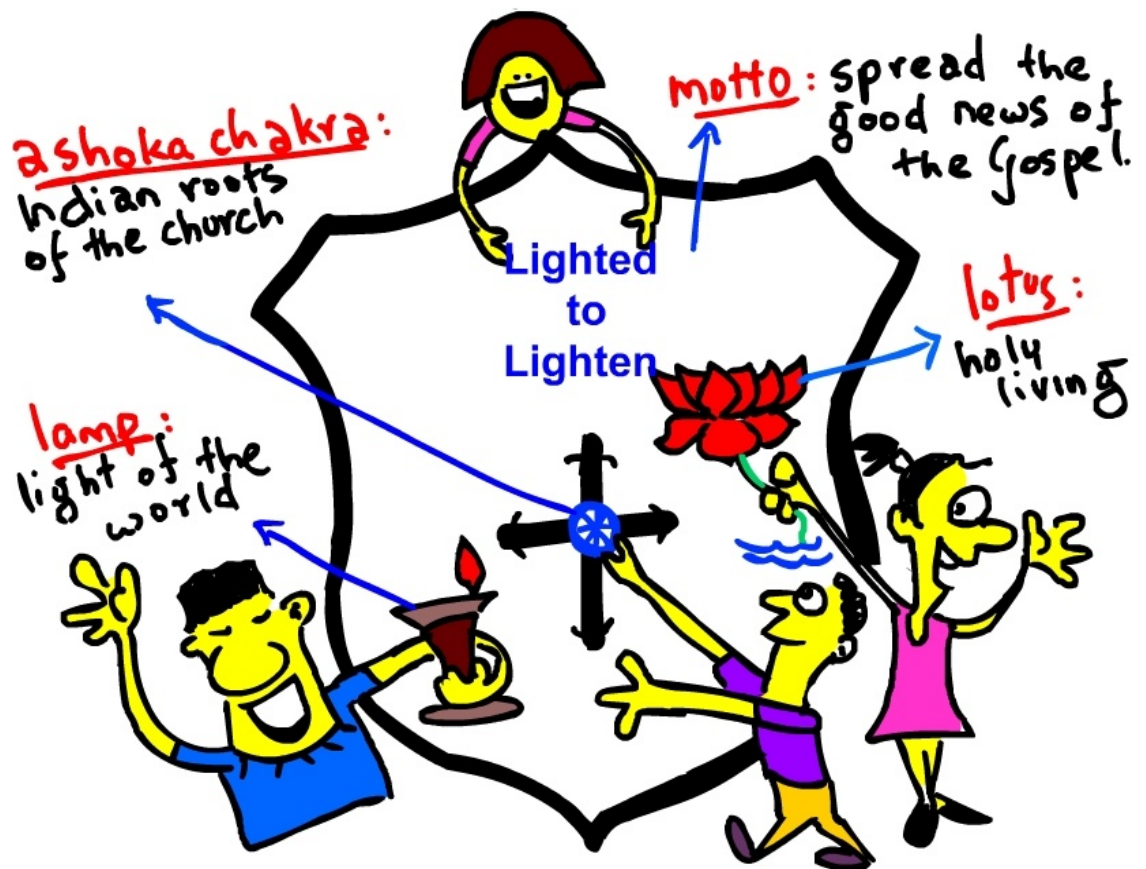
our order of worship is in 'Syriac', hence the name 'Syrian'.

It shows the rich tradition we have over centuries....

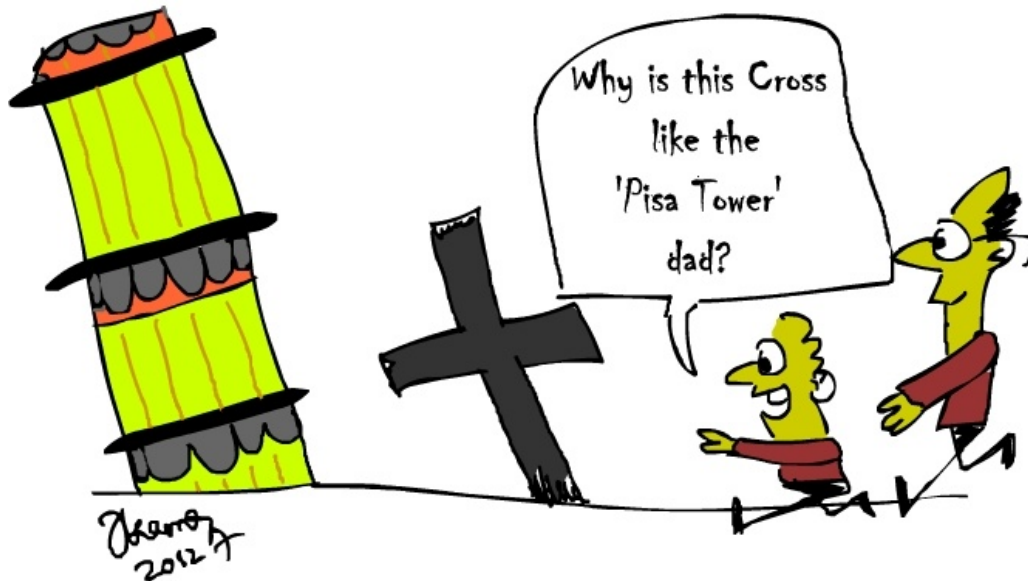




Logo of MarThoma Church



Oath of Coonen Cross



The Church shook off the supremacy of Roman Catholic Church after over half a century of submission in the historic event in 1653. Nearly 25,000 Christians and 630 priests led by MarThoma I declared independence by holding on to a rope which was tied around the stone cross in front of the church in Mattancherry, Kerala & took the oath now known as 'Oath at the crooked Cross'.

**Please don't play our big boss.
Can we have our worship please!!!!**



Reformation Movement

A group of believers in the Church led by **Palakkunnath Abraham Malpan** stood for reforms-a positive move to take the church in a new direction.



Maramon Convention

Maramon Convention is the largest annual Christian Evangelical gathering in Asia, organised by the MarThoma Evangelistic Association, the missionary wing of the Church. It takes place on the banks of River Pampa in Kerala in February every year. This convention has been conducted every year since 1895 with world renowned speakers being part of this popular meeting.





Sacraments

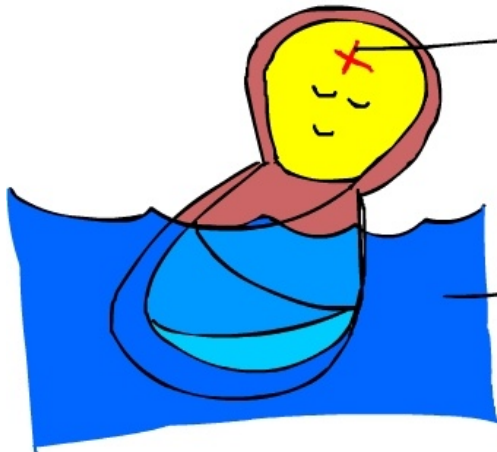


A sacrament is a visible means of experiencing the invisible grace of God



without the help of symbols & visual expressions it is hard to communicate spiritual truths....

Sacraments



Confirmation

- done after baptism by anointing with holy oil
- means that the person is accepted into full fellowship of the Church

Baptism

- baby is immersed in water in the name of father, Son & Holy Spirit
- signifies & seals our engrafting in Christ



Confession

- sacrament in which a person confesses his sins
- confession is incorporated into the service of Holy Qurbana



Holy Communion

- The sacrament where we remember the last supper, death & resurrection of Christ



Marriage

- sacrament where the bride & bridegroom are blessed to enter into a wedded life



Unction

- sacrament of forgiveness of sins performed by priest for a sick person & burial service for the dead.



Ordination

- it is a selective sacrament for those who become a priest
- it is done by bishops

Holy Qurbana



It reminds that we are all one in Christ.

' There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female .


For you are all one in Christ. ' (Gal 3:28)

I confess my sins publically
I'm forgiven by God , not because I'm smart
but because he loves me.




we publically confess our sins &
requests for grace of God for forgiveness

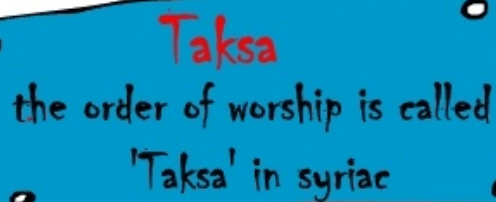
Liturgy




what is this
'liturgy' ?




It is a form of arrangement
of public worship & hence
an expression of faith



Taksa
the order of worship is called
'Taksa' in syriac

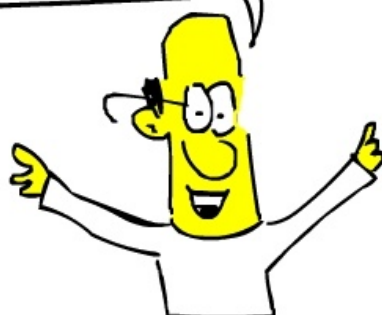


mum , why do we need to
go through the same stuff
every sunday. Isn't it boring ?



Son, Marthoma Church uses
St. James liturgy .The oldest
order of worship in
the Christian Churches !

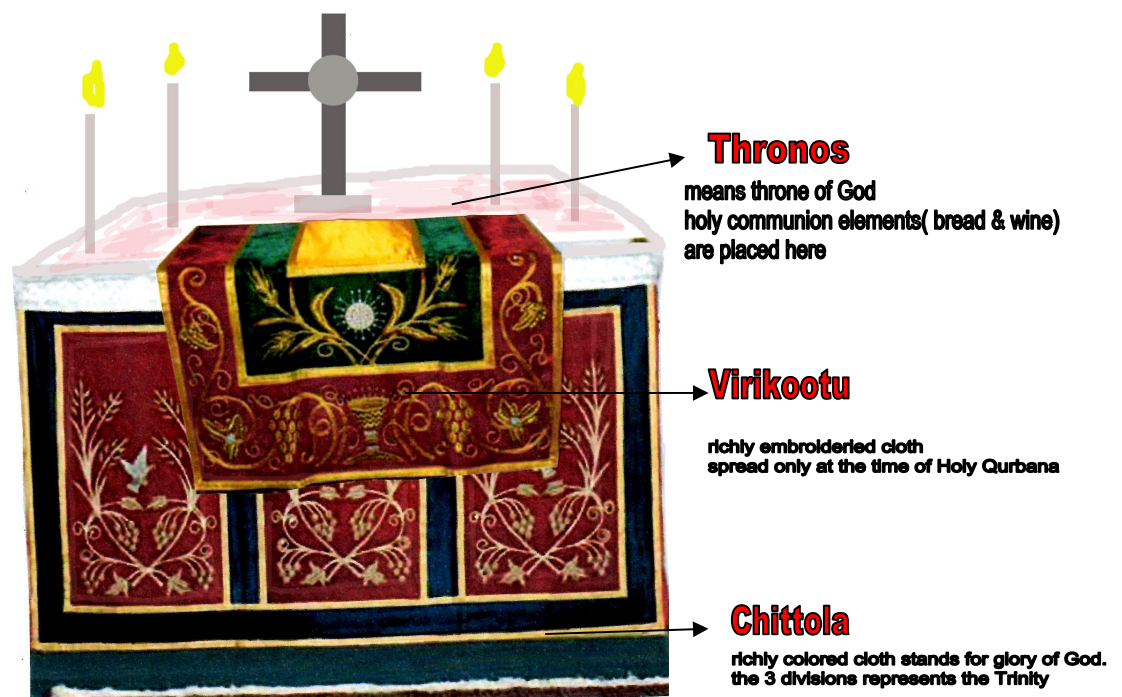
so imagine, if you think it is just repetition...
people used this resource effectively
to worship God 100s ' of years before you were born



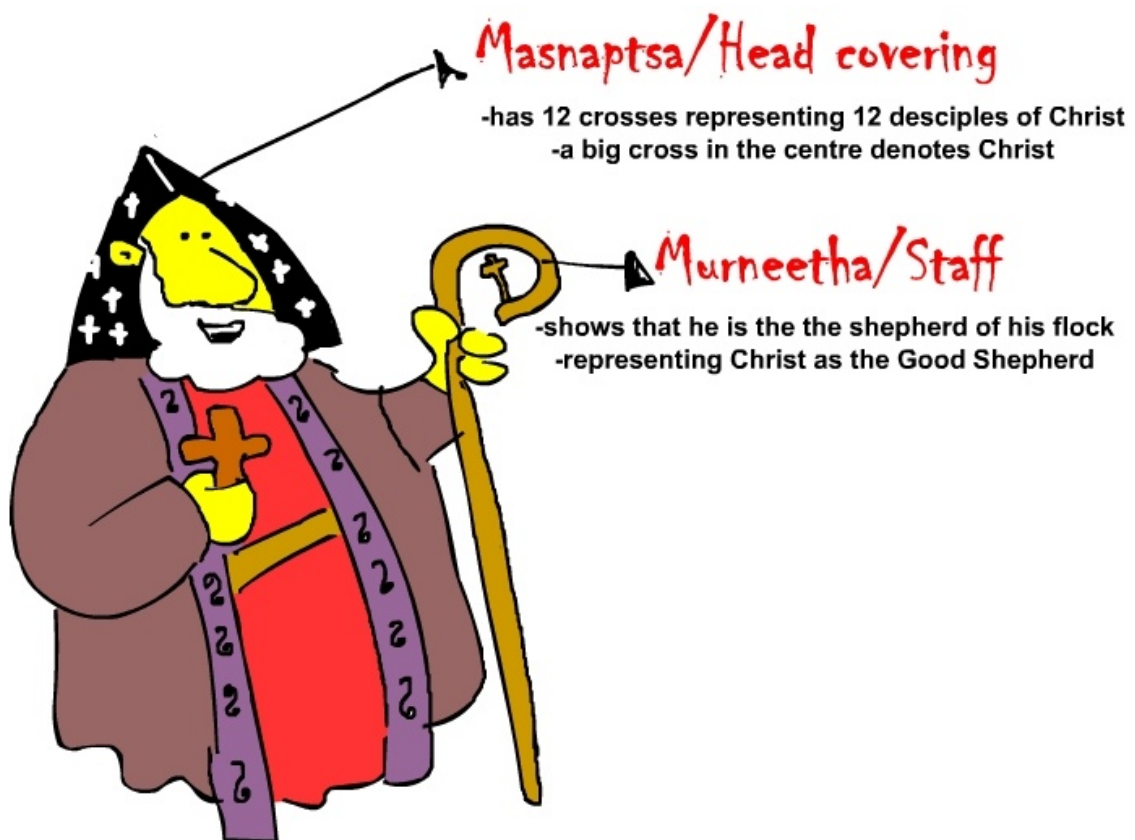
Inside my MarThoma Church



Madbaha



Bishop's dress code

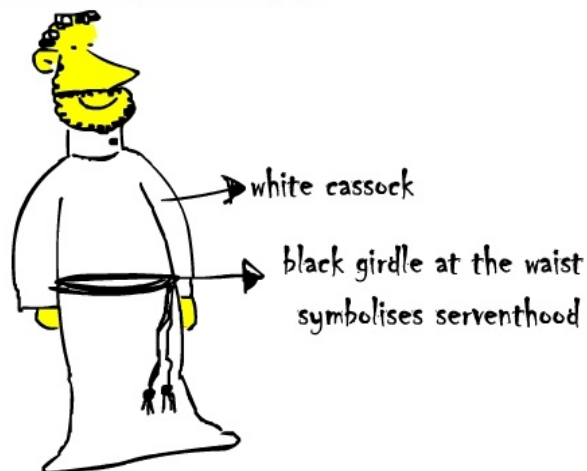


The dress code of Bishops'/Thirumeni shows that he is a disciple of Christ leading a disciplined life according to the values of God's Kingdom.

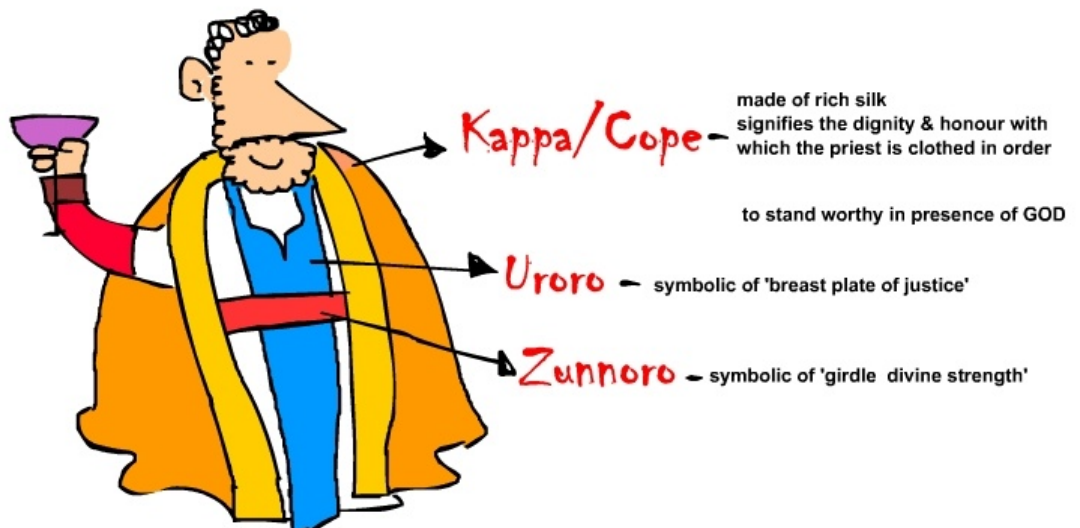




Normal dress code:



Dress code during Holy Qurbana

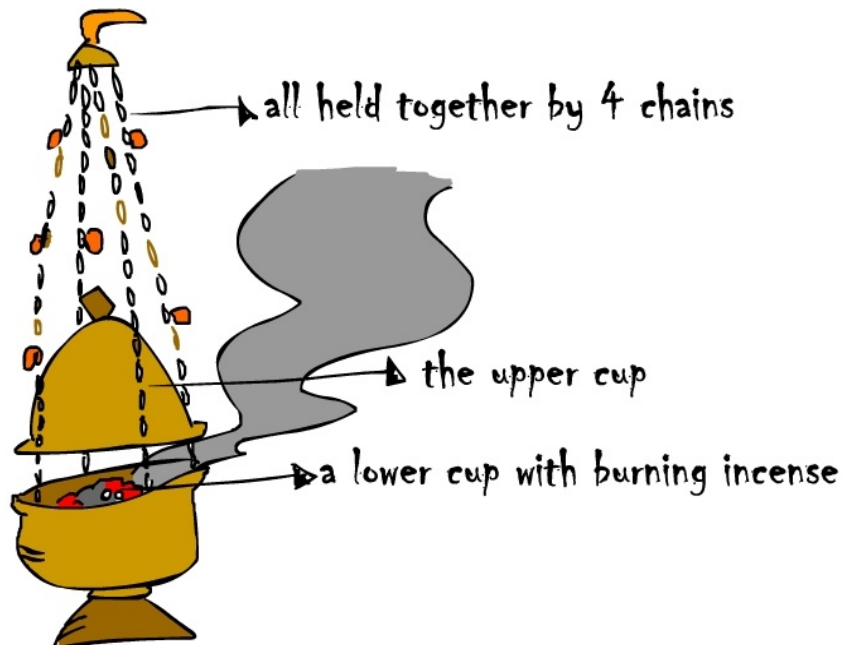


Censer / Dhoopakutty



May my prayer be set before you like incense

Psalms 141:2

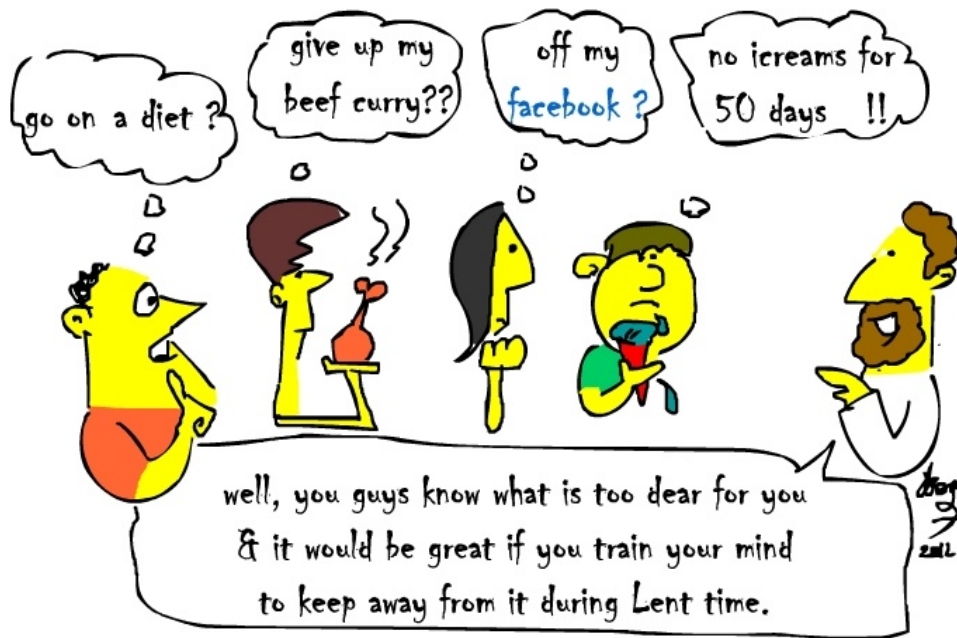


Censer/Dhoopakutty denotes the sweet smelling sacrifice to God.

Use of Censer is part of Old Testament worship.

It is generally used on important occasions during church worship & house warming service.

Great Lent / Valiya Noyambu



Lent is observed 50 days before Easter. This is a time kept apart by the Church for fasting, praying & meditation. Lent is a good time to exercise some spiritual discipline.

We fast not to get any special favors from God. Fasting prepares a person to train his body, mind & soul towards God & the need of people around him.



Lent is a good time to look deep within & know the will of God rather than be carried away by daily pleasures.....



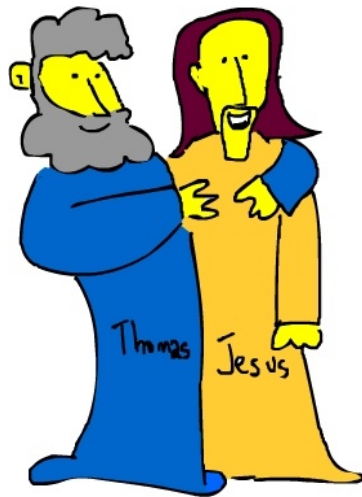
Offering your bodies as living sacrifices holy & pleasing to God
-this is a spiritual act of worship.

Rom: 12:1

Post Lent achievements



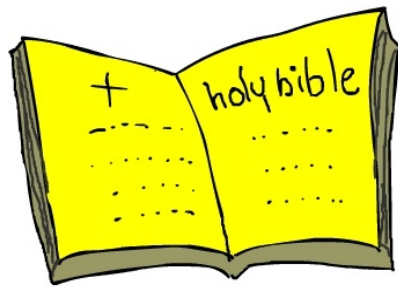
MarThoma Church in essence..



Apostolic in origin
from St. Thomas



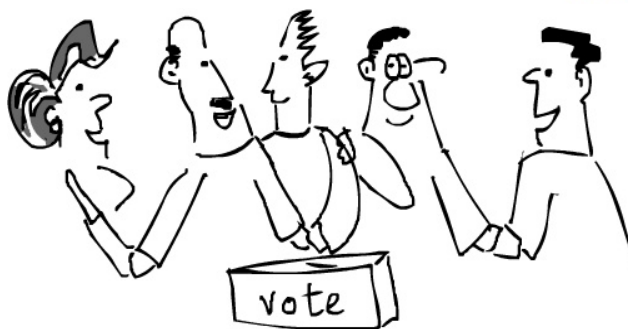
Oriental in Worship



Biblical in Faith



Episcopal in tradition
led by Bishops



Democratic in function