

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE FIRST MAR THOMA SUNDAY SCHOOLS IN DUBAI, UAE

The Mar Thoma Parish in Dubai was formed on 17 July 1969 and the first Holy Communion Service was held on 29 September 1969. The first Mar Thoma Sunday School in Dubai was started in 1972 in the Cola Colony, Dubai.

Cola Colony was the first housing Colony in Dubai. About 400 single storied buildings were constructed by the Ruler of Dubai H. H. Sheikh Rashid bin Saeed Al Maktoum, near the Cola Company building (soft drinks factory). Karama Colony and other commercial buildings were constructed in the place of Cola Colony. The rent was approximately Dh.2500, that made it affordable for the Malayalee families who had come to work in Dubai.

The first Mar Thoma Sunday School classes of Dubai was started by the Late Mr. Thomas Chacko (Tom Uncle) at his residence at Cola Colony with 6 Children. This was for the benefit

of Christian children staying in and around the colony. Tom Uncle and Mr. Johnny (Burma Shell co-staff) were the teachers. In 1973, Mr. Daniel Varughese (Kunjutty) also joined as a teacher (co-owner of the UAE Exchange Centre in Abu Dhabi). Johnny who taught songs was a member of the CSI church.

There was a strong Mar Thoma prayer group that was functioning in Cola Colony. The then Vicar, Late Rev. M. M. Thomas (from May 1972 to April 1975) gave his whole-hearted help and support for this Sunday School. The details about this Sunday School are mentioned in the 1972 annual report of the Dubai Mar Thoma Parish (Passed by the General Body meeting in February in 1973). As per the report there were 9 students in 1972 (1972 Parish Secretary Late. Mr. K.J. Abraham).

This Sunday School functioned in 1973, also as per Annual Mar Thoma Dubai Parish Report 1973

Cola Colony Prayer Meeting and Sunday School.

Our Vicar Rev. M. M. Thomas' forceful persuasion to start a Prayer Cell in the Cola Colony was well received by our Parish members living in that area and accordingly the first Prayer Meeting was held at the residence of Mr. and Mrs. K. P. Varghese on the evening of 3rd November, 1972. Thereafter, on the 1st Friday evenings of every month, Our Parish members living in the Cola Colony met together for prayers in any one of the house of our members and our Atchen used to lead them in these prayer meetings. The Cola Colony Prayer Meetings paved the way for the formation of a "Sunday School" in that area. There are at present 9 children from various Christian denomination attending the "Sunday School" regularly.

Copy of 1972 - Mar Thoma Dubai Parish Annual Report

(passed by the General Body in Feb 1974). The 1973 Parish Secretaries were Late. K.J. Abraham and Late K.P. Varughese.

The children of Late Mr. K.P. Varughese, Johnny from CSI parish, and Tom Uncle were among the first students. Even the son of Rev. M. M. Thomas

PRAYER MEETINGS:

The Ras-al-Khaima Prayer Group continued to function for sometime and is now not functioning. The Cola-Colony Prayer Group meets on the 1st Friday of every month. Bible Classes were conducted by the Vicar. Sunday School Classes were also held and attended by children of various christian denominations. The Sunday School at Dubai discontinued to function due to lack of regular attendance of students. Will the parents take this as a challenge to bring their children to the Sunday School, which our parents considered as very precious?

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Copy of 1973 - Mar Thoma Dubai Parish Annual Report

(Suresh) used to attend this Sunday School.

In 1974, this Sunday School and the children joined in the Sunday School newly formed by the Parish on 3 May 1974 at the Our Own English High School, Bur Dubai.

Late Mr. Tomas Chacko also affectionately known as Tom Uncle (15 August 1936- 07 June 1982) was a member of the Ivelilkuzhy family of the Chayal Mar Thoma Parish in Ayroor. His parents were settled in Bombay. Tom Uncle came to Dubai from Dadar Mar Thoma Parish in Bombay in July 1968. He worked with Dubai Airport and then for Gray Mackenzie company and finally from 1971 for Dubai Petroleum Company (DPC). His wife Mrs. Mariamma Chacko (Molly aunty) was a staff member of the Laboratory Dept at Kuwait Hospital.

As a family, Tom Uncle was an active member of the Dubai Parish right from its inception in 1969. On 5 August 1976, he donated the first manual organ (keyboard instrument) for the Youth League and Sunday School to use. He was one of the lay leaders of our Parish who negotiated with Holy Trinity Chaplain Rev. Philip Sturdy (Chaplain

from 1972 to 1978) to shifting our place of worship from Our Own School to Trinity Church in 1975. The 1975 Christmas service was held in the Holy Trinity Church. He was good at music and used to accompany our Christmas Carol Party visiting houses in the night. With his baton (choir master's stick), he gave leadership to the carol singing group of the Dubai parish.



Tom Uncle and Family

According to Mrs. Mariamma Chacko (wife of Tom Uncle) "The Dubai Mar Thoma Parish was started by Rev. K.S. Varghese who used to visit from the Bahrain parish. He was a visiting priest for other Gulf countries. After blessing our cola

colony house, Tom and me took him to inaugurate our Mar Thoma Parish at Our own English school corridor which was set apart as a worship place with a few chairs and a Thirasheela and a table for the Achen to use as Thronos. Members who were present then were Mr. and Mrs. Abraham who was a senior officer at Shell Co., Mr and Mrs. D George and Mr and Mrs. P. C. Idiculla, K. P. Philip, M.V. Ommen, 2 or 3 Nurses from Al Maktoum Hospital and Baby Kutty (George Yohannan) who was the lay leader. In all there were 13 adults in attendance. Gray Mackenzie Uncle and wife Amminikochamma, Deenamma Mathew and Ponnachen (Chacko Mathew) all were attending a congregation nearby joined us later with many other members to become one parish.



The Idiculla Family

The Second Mar Thoma Sunday School in Bur Dubai Area

The Bur Dubai Sunday School was started in 1972 by Mr. P. C. Idiculla (Babychayan b. 20 October 1932- d.23 November 2007) and family. Mr. P.C. Idiculla was a member of the Parayil Family, Vadasserikkara, St. John's Mar Thoma Parish. He came to Dubai in 1966, working as a pharmacist. He was a true believer and devoted Christian. He was the Lay Leader of the Dubai Mar Thoma Parish in 1973, 1975, 1978 and 1979. He was the Treasurer of the Parish in 1974.

The Bur Dubai Mar Thoma Sunday School was functioning in his villa type residence in Bur Dubai. Children of Late Mr. Pappen John (Al Rifai Co.) and Late Mr. S. A. Mammen Niranam (B.P. Dubai) were few of the early students. In the 1974 Dubai Mar Thoma Church Annual Parish Report, this Sunday School is mentioned. By the end of 1973, this Sunday School stopped functioning due to lack of enough children. The 1973, the church report reminds and rebukes the parish members for not sending their children to this Sunday School.

The early days of the pioneers of the Dubai Mar Thoma Sunday School should not be forgotten as a momentous milestone is completed. Today Dubai is a global metropolis known around the world, but in the early seventies it was the early days of UAE as a nation and people sacrificed a lot to nurture and grow the Dubai Mar Thoma Parish that is now blessed with its own Church building.

Enter his gates with thanksgiving
and his courts with praise;
give thanks to him and praise his name.
For the Lord is good and his love endures
forever; his faithfulness continues through all
generations. - Psalm 100:4-5



The Mar Thoma Sunday School
Dubai

സ്മൃതി Reminiscence

FRAGRANCE OF CHRIST

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