

History of the Church

Church, the Eternal Plan of God.

In theological sense Church began in the Old Testament. the people chosen by God to “the Congregation in the wilderness” (Act 7:38)

The word “church” originated from the Greek “ecclesia” which meant the assembly of citizens in a public place for deliberations. The Hebrew equivalent for “ecclesia” is “qahal” meaning the nation of Israel as assembled before God in a divine atmosphere (Jud 21:8; 1 Chr. 29: 1; Deut. 31:30)

History of the Church

Abraham and his descendants were chosen to worship God, to form a congregation to hear the divine commands, and to proclaim His eternal promise to the rest of the world. This was the church in the wilderness

New Testament

Church- Body of Christ

- *This is my Body, Eat*
- *This is my Blood, Drink*

Jesus Appointing

- Last supper: Jesus and 12 apostles, beginning of church – Christianity
- Luke Chapter 22:28-30 He said to the twelve, ***Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations. And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; That ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.***

Origin of Church during New Testament Time

Church did not truly come into existence until the New Testament time. However, the design of the Church was an eternal plan of God, with Christ as the cornerstone. Like the Israel of the Old Testament as God's chosen assembly, the church of the New Testament is His choice through Jesus Christ to unite believers of all nations to share the blessings promised to Abraham "All the people on earth will be blessed through you."

Origin of Church during New Testament Time

Therefore, the “Church” is literally “an assembly of people called out” from the realm of sin and darkness to bear the light of the kingdom of God where the light is God Himself.

Mar Thoma Church recognizes that we are a church called out in the land of India to lighten that part of the world first, and then beyond its borders, and hence our logo “lighted to Lighten.”

Peter and the Beginning of the Apostolic Age

Jesus used the word “church” only three times in two different passages (Matt. 16:18; 18: 15-17) When Jesus said, “And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church,” (Matt: 16:18) h used the term in universal sense to include all future believers throughout the world. Here Jesus meant that Peter is the great leader of the Church.

In another context Jesus said that the differences between brethren should ultimately be taken to the church (Matt. 18: 15-17). Here he used the term in the local sense, referring to a body of believers within a particular geographic area.

Peter and the Beginning of the Apostolic Age

The New Testament church began with 120 faithful who waited patiently in Jerusalem praying for God's guidance.

Day of Pentecost— When the Holy Spirit was poured out on people, Peter addressed the crowd citing the prophecy of the Old Testament “In the last days, I will pour out my spirit on all people ... I will pour out my Spirit in those days” (Act:2:14-2; Joel 2:28, 29)

This was the first Christian sermon, and 3000 people were baptized into the new church. This was the fulfillment of the New Testament prophecy.

Peter and the Beginning of the Apostolic Age

Spread of the early church to other areas: Syria, Greece, Rome , Italy and Asia Minor.

Paul's conversion to Christianity

During his three missionary journeys he established several churches in the western region of Asia Minor. The first European church was established in the city of Philippi. Ephesus, Corinth, Thessalonica and the regions of Galatia had important roles in the spread of Christianity.

Many of the disciples took the Gospels following the Great Commission Jesus had entrusted them.

Name	Role	Mission	Death
Peter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Simon - Fisherman - Great commision -- Some scholars ascribe I and II Peter to him -Jesus Called "The rock" 	He did evangelistic and missionary work among the Jews, going as far as Babylon.	Crucified upside down In Rome
Andrew	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Brother of Peter Fisherman Discipe of John the Baptist 	<p>He is the first to have the title of Home and Foreign Missionary. He is claimed by three countries as their Patron Saint---Russia, Scotland and Greece. Many scholars say that he preached in Scythia, Greece, and Asia Minor. Andrew introduced others to Jesus. His main purpose in life was to bring others to the Master .</p>	<p>it was in Achaia, Greece, in the town of Patra that Andrew died a martyr. When Governor Aepeas' wife was healed and converted to the Christian Faith, and shortly after that the Governor's brother became a Christian, Aepeas was enraged. He arrested Andrew and condemned him to die on the cross. Andrew, feeling unworthy to be crucified on the same cross as his Master, begged that his be different. So, he was crucified on an X-shaped cross</p>

Name	Role	Mission	Death
Bartholomew (Nathaneial)	<p>Came from Royal blood of David</p> <p>Jesus said "Isrelite Indeed in him there is guile"</p> <p>- Scholar of scripture</p>	<p>- Founder of Armanian Church</p> <p>- Bartholomew went on a missionary tour to India, where he left behind a copy of the Gospel of Matthew. Other traditions record him as serving as a missionary in Ethiopia, Mesopotamia, Parthia, and Lycaonia.</p>	<p>- Martyed in Armania</p> <p>- He was flayed alive with Knives</p> <p>- Some documents claim he preached in India and martyred in India</p>
James, the greater (Saint James, son of Zebedee)	<p>Brother of John</p> <p>Former fisherman</p> <p>Saint James is the Patron Saint of Spain.</p> <p>- John and James also known as "Sons of Thunder"</p>	<p>- Jeruselem and Judia</p> <p>- Spain</p>	<p>- Martyed</p> <p>- Beheded by herod Judea, where he was beheaded by King Herod Agrippa I in the year 44</p>

Name	Role	Mission	Death
John	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Son of Zabadee -Brother of James the greater -Wrote Gospel of John, I,II,III John, and Revelation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Preached among Judea, Roman Empire, Asia minor -Later banished to Patmos 	-Natural death in Asia Minor
Mathew(or Levi)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Former Tax collector -Wrote Gospel of Mathew (oldest written doc of Life of Christ) 	Ministry in Ethiopia to the south of the Caspian Sea (not Ethiopia in Africa), and some Persia and the kingdom of the Parthians, Macedonia, and Syria.	Martyred it is not known whether he was burned, stoned, or beheaded.

Name	Role	Mission	Death
Philip	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Friend of Nathaniel -Saint Philip is always listed fifth among the apostles 	Greece, Phrygia, and Syria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Through a miraculous healing and his preaching Philip converted the wife of the proconsul of the city. This enraged the proconsul, and he had Philip, Bartholomew, and Mariamme all tortured. Philip and Bartholomew were then crucified upside down, and Philip preached from his cross. As a result of Philip's preaching the crowd released Bartholomew from his cross, but Philip insisted that they not release him, and Philip died on the cross. His remains were later placed in Constantinople, were they were transported to Cyprus after the conquest of the City in 1204

Name	Role	Mission	Death
<p>Simon</p> <p>(Simon the Zealot)</p>	<p>one of the most obscure among the apostles of Jesus</p>	<p>Middle East and Africa</p>	<p>- he was put to death by a saw</p> <p>Christian Ethiopians claim that he was crucified in Samaria, while Justus Lipsius writes that he was sawn in half at Persia. However, Moses of Chorene writes that he was martyred at Edessa in Caucasian Iberia. Tradition also claims he died peacefully at Edessa. Another tradition says he visited Britain -- possibly Glastonbury -- and was martyred in modern-day Lincolnshire. Another, doubtless inspired by his title "the Zealot", states that he was involved in a Jewish revolt against the Romans, which was brutally suppressed.</p>

Name	Role	Mission	Death
Thomas(Didi, mus in Greek Name)	Doubting Man	Parthia, Persia, India	Martyrdom in India (killed with a spear) Near Chennai (formerly Madras) in India stands a small hillock called St. Thomas Mount, where the Apostle is said to have been killed in AD 72 (exact year not established).
Judas Iscariot	-Betrayed Jesus	-Be with the church body/Committ ee and steal money	Hanged himself

Name	Role	Mission	Death
Jude Thaedddeus	-Healed	Preached in Assyria, Persia -Healed many near River Euphrates River	Died a martyr in Persia -Killed with Arrows
James (lesser)	-Brother of Jude -Wrote of epistel of James	Preached in Palastine, Egypt	Crucified in Egypt

Name	Role	Mission	Death
Mathias		<p>Peter advised the brethren, "Judas, who was guide to those who took Jesus... For he was numbered with us, and received his portion in this ministry... For it is written in the book of Psalms, 'Let his habitation be made desolate, Let no one dwell therein', and, 'Let another take his office'... So one of the men who have accompanied us during all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John until the day he was taken up from us, must become with us a witness to his resurrection" (cf. Acts 1:15-26). So, between the ascension of Christ and the day of Pentecost, the remaining apostles elected a twelfth apostle by casting lots, a traditional Jewish way to determine the Will of God. The lot fell upon Matthias, who then became the thirteenth Apostle in the New Testamen</p>	

- Apostole Paul, is the author of Christian Theology
- We will cover his ministry/teaching in a separate Session by Dr M.M Ninan

Spread of Christianity

Spread of Christianity was not an easy task. The persecution of the Church was so severe in the first two centuries that so many became martyrs. Historian Eusebius wrote, “ So many suffered that the murderous axe was dulled and executioners grew weary.”

Emperor Constantine— religious toleration and soft attitudes towards Christians. He accepted Christianity in his death bed.

Flavius Theodosius made Christianity the official religion of Rome.

Important Periods in the History of the Church

- The Apostolic Age (30-100 AD)
- Ante Nicene Age (100-325 AD)
- Nicene Age (325-600 AD)
- The Middle Ages (600-1500 AD)
- The Reformation Age (1500-1650 AD)
- The Modern Age (1650-2000 AD)

Major Historical Events in Church History

- Ecumenical Councils
- Protestant Reformation of the 16th Century
- Role of Martin Luther
- Luther's reformation was aimed at purging the Church of of unbiblical doctrines and practices
- Break between Roman Catholic and Protestants

Key points of Reform

- Sola Scriptural (scripture,(bible) alone, 2 Tim. 3:16-17)
- Solus Christus (Christ Alone, Acts 4:12)
- Sola Fidel (Faith Alone, Gal.2:16)
- Sola Gratia (Grace Alone, Eph. 2:8,9)
- Sola Deo Gloria (the Glory of God Alone, 1 Cori. 10:31)

Roman Catholic

- Portuguese Influence
- Arch Bishop Menezies and his efforts to bring Malankara Church under Papal authority
- Oath of Coonan Kurisu
- Pazhaya Koottu & Puthen Koottu
- Consecration of Mar Thoma I
- Between 1665 & 1843 there were 9 Metropolitans, 5 of them with the title Mar Thoma and 4 under the title Dionysius

British Influence

- British gained power in India by the end of the 18th century
- Tippu Sultan's plan to invade Travancore and Cochin and Colonel Macaulay's arrival
- Claudius Buchanan arrival in Cochin in 1806. He took the initiative to translate the first four Gospels into Malayalam

Thozhiyoor Church

- Mar Gregorios, Metropolitan of Jersusalem consecrated a priest from Kattumngattu family as Bishop with the title Mar Coorilos.
- Dionysius VI opposed this, so Mar Coorilos had to go away to British Malabar area. He established his seat at Thozhyoor, 3 miles from Kunnamkuklam

Starting of the Seminary in Kottayam

- In 1813 a Seminary (now called Old Seminary) was started at Kottayam through an endowment from Colonel Monroe for 3000 British pounds, the interest of which was to be used for the training of the clergy. The interest was not paid since the death of Dionysius I in 1808. This amount was kept in a bank in Madras and was known as *Vattipanam*.

Reform in Malankara Church

- State of Malankara Church at the time of the British rule
- Colonel Monroe's invitation of the Church Mission Society in London
- Arrival of Thomas Norton and Benjamin Bailey. Bailey established the first printing press and the whole New Testament was published in Malayalam and the whole Bible into Malayalam in 1841

Reform...

- Conflict between the missionaries and Mar Dionysius
- The reform in Malnkara Church suggested by the missionaries were not acceptable to Cheppat Mar Dionysius
- Synod at Mavelikara in 1836
- The Synod recommended not accepting the reform
- The Synod affirmed their allegiance to the Patriarch of Antioch and thus obliged to uphold the faith and practices of the Jacobites.

Reform...

- In 1837 Cheppat Mar Dionysius proclaimed in his congregations not to accept missionaries in Syrian Churches
- Settlement of rights for properties between the Metropolitan and missionaries
- According to the arbitration award, Seminary and the compounds and the endowment fund for education (Vattipanam) of the clergy were given to the Metropolitan. The missionaries received Monroe Island, the education fund and the school for higher education at Kottayam
This was the end of the relationship between the missionaries and the Malankara Church

Reform...

- Influence of the Missionaries
- Emergence of Abraham Malpan
- Abraham Malpan was the Vicar of Maramon Church at that time
- The missionaries built a church in Mallappally for those who wanted to worship in the Anglican Order. In 1878 the Anglican Diocese of Travancore and Cochin was formed.
- Abraham Malpan and few others wanted to remain in Malnkara Church rather than joining the Anglican Diocese.

Reform...

- Abraham Malpan and few others wanted to bring about changes in Malankara Church according to the light of the Gospel. This was the movement that led to the reformation under Abraham Malpan
- 24 incorrect practices, pointed out by Abraham Malpan and 11 other clergies
- Trumpet Call of Reformation
- Abraham Malpan celebrated the Holy Qurbana in Malayalam in his church at Maramon, using the modified liturgy

Reform...

Most important points of reformation:

- Return to the Gospel message of salvation by faith in Jesus Christ;
- Cleansing of wrong ways of living;
- Taking up responsibility to be witness of Jesus Christ to others;
- Focusing on the study of the word of God

Reform...

- Mathews Mar Athanasius as the first Metrapolitan of Mar Thoma Church
- Royal Proclamation declaring Mar Athanasius as Metropolitan of Malankara Church
- Rev. Joseph Pulicot becoming Joesph Mar Dionysius
- Mathews Mar Athanasius ordaining his cousin, Abraham Malpan's son as Thomas Mar Athanasius

Resolving the Dispute

- Joseph Mar Dionysius petitioned to the Government of Travancore to proclaim him as Metropolitan
- Court cases in favor of Mathews Mar Athanasius
- The reform party had possession of the Old Seminary and Mathews Mar Athanasius had been declared as the Metropolitan of Malankara Church in 1877 Mar Athanasius died and the litigation was carried on by Thomas Mar Athanasius

End of the litigation...

- Twelve years after the death of Mathews Mar Athanasius, the case was finally decided in the Royal Court of Appeal in Trivandrum.
- Two judges in the High Court decided that Joseph Mar Dionysius was the rightful Metropolitan of the Malankara Church

Result of the Verdict

- Thomas Mar Athanasius had to leave the Old Seminary. He left all his possessions behind. But kept his faith with the agenda and continued the Apostolic faith.
- So they called themselves as Marthomites and their as “Mar Thoma Syrian Church.”
- The reform party got only Maramon and Kozhencherry churches
- They put up small sheds in other places and continued worship
- Although the reform party lost all, they turned to God and went forward in their faith, trusting in the power of God
- Spiritual awakening and the starting of Maramon Convention in 1895

Our faith

- Mar Thoma Church is less Orthodox
- We are not Protestant Church of the West
- It is oriental in worship, autonomous in administration, and missionary in its actions
- Mar Thoma Church affirms faith in one, holy catholic, and apostolic church.
- It accepts the first three Ecumenical Councils (Nicea 325 AD), Constantinople (381 AD), and Ephesus 431 AD) as authoritative