

2006 Diocesan Leadership Conference

Report By: Boney Mathew, Convener

1 Peter 2:9 states, "But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light." Hearing God's call, ninety-nine delegates from the snowed capped mountains in Canada to the sunny beaches in California gathered at the Valley of Blessings Camp in Washington from January 5th-8th, 2006. This also marked a significant event in the history of the Mar Thoma Church of Greater Seattle, as the Youth Fellowship was given the great honor and privilege of hosting the IX Diocesan Leadership in the Pacific Northwest.

Under the theme, "Chosen for a Greater Purpose," the delegates had the opportunity to learn and hear from the leaders of the Christian Church. The Mar Thoma Church of Greater Seattle had the great opportunity of welcoming Rt. Rev. Dr. Euyakim Mar Coorilos Episcopa, who gave the presidential address and released the souvenir to Mr. John Titus. Also in attendance were Rev. Reji K. Philip, Rev. Dr. K.A Abraham, Rev. Isaac P Johnson, Rev. Ninu Chandy, Rev. Biju. S. Cherian, Rev. Varghese John, Rev. James Koshy, and Mr. Ashley George-DYFC Secretary. The Achens played a tremendous role in leading Bible Studies and track sessions throughout the conference. During the inaugural program, the delegates had the unprecedented opportunity of listening to the first Malayalee Bishop of the Episcopal Church—Rt. Rev. Dr. Johncy Itty, who inaugurated the conference. At the core of the leadership conference, the delegates were bestowed by the teachings of Rev. Dr. Martin Alphonse. It goes without saying, from Dr. Alphonse's words to his actions, he was blessing to this conference. His words taught and inspired the future leaders of the Mar Thoma Church.

The delegates were blessed with the amazing music of the Portland Band, they led all the Praise and Worship sessions. During the conference, delegates participated in two of the four following tracks: 1) Christian perspectives on Human Sexuality, (2) Dimensions of Prayer and Worship, (3) Biblical Hermeneutics and Homiletics, and (4) Christianity and other Religions. In the afternoons, delegates had the opportunity to fellowship with one another through recreational activities.

The conference concluded with a Holy Communion Service led by our beloved Coorilos Thirumeni at the Mar Thoma Church of Greater Seattle. The homily was given by the Southeast Youth Chaplin—Rev. Issac P. Johnson. The closing session was led by Mr. Ashley George and the Diocese of Youth Fellowship Committee.

All praise, honor and thanksgiving goes to the Lord Almighty for all the blessings that he showered upon us throughout the conference. We would also like to thank: our beloved Coorilos Thirumeni for his prayer and support, Rev. Martin Alphonse for his inspirational message and his presence, our vicar—Rev. Reji.K Philip for his helping hand and support, Rt. Rev. Dr. Johny Itty, Rev. K.A Abraham, Rev. Ninu Chandy, Rev. Isaac P.Johnson, Rev. Varghese John and Rev. Biju S Cherian, Mr. Ashley George, and the DYFC for their leadership.

This conference wouldn't have been a success without the participation of the twenty-seven churches from all over North America. We take this time to express our sincere gratitude to our Church members; each and every one of them for supporting and helping us financially. In addition, our leadership team put in a lot of time, effort, and hard work to make this conference a blessing to everyone.

Once again, thank you from the bottom of my heart. Remember this is not the end, this is just a beginning. We have been chosen for greater purpose—go and spread the gospel to everyone and declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. The 2007 Diocesan Leadership Conference will be hosted by Baltimore Mar Thoma Church. May God bless you and guide you in your walk with Christ. Thank you.