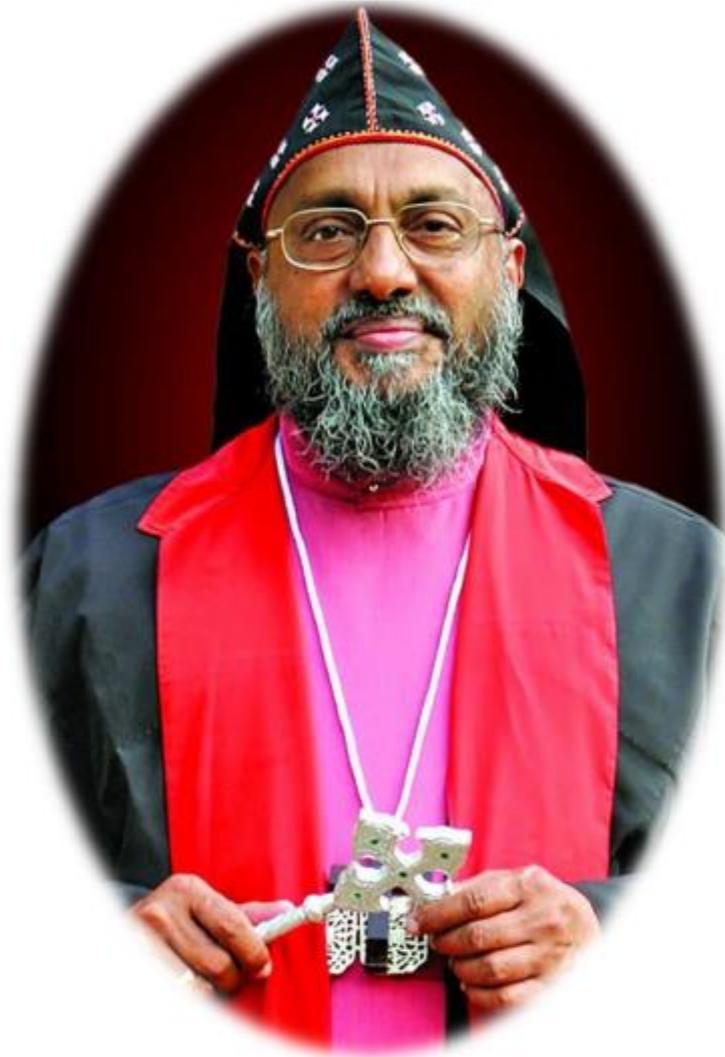




The Mar Thoma

ECHO



A Publication of the Council of Mar Thoma Parishes in Europe





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## Message from Diocesan Episcopa



Dearly beloved in Christ

Greetings from *Sinai MarThoma Center!*

It brings us much excitement as the UK and Europe Zone was officially inaugurated on June 9, 2018 by Dr. Joseph Mar Thoma Metropolitan Thirumeni. The massive crowd gathered for the function experienced the vigor and charm of being together in Christ for the expansion of His Kingdom. Thank God for the guidance in the life and ministry of Mar Thoma community in this part of the world and the commitment to carry on with the great legacy that they inherited from our forefathers and foremothers. It gives the church the vision to continue with its task as an instrument focusing on the transformation of life and to promote values of the Kingdom of God.

As this issue of the ECHO is dedicated to the life and Ministry of beloved Geevarghese Mar Athanasius Suffragan Metropolitan, it gives another opportunity to keep the memory of Thirumeni's versatile personality. A man of clear vision and profound theological understanding, he captured the minds of the faithful listeners to take up the challenge in changing the context and move further in spiritual life. Thank God for the gift that was invested in him and the life and

contribution for the expansion of the mission of the church.

We are also getting prepared for the family conference of UK & Europe from August 24 to 26 at Birmingham. The theme 'Spiritual journey in a digital world' will be discussed on the basis of the biblical notion of 'journeying with a vision'. When God declares that 'Let my people go...' (Exodus 9:1), the journey has a definite purpose and goal. The journey of the Exodus community was always directed with the divine guidance and providing instant communication whenever needed. In today's world there are many distractions in the movement of people due to the misuse of technology. Addiction to the digital technology especially the social media must never to be allowed to lose one's free will and to insanity of one's time. More attention is needed to properly use the digital technology for a healthy living keeping the value of community life.

Let us look forward in serving the Lord with renewed strength and confidence. The God of love and peace will keep everyone united for the life transforming mission of the church. The World Council of Churches in its 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary has given the call to 'long common pilgrimage on the path of unity, walking together, serving justice and peace'. It is our wish and prayer that all people of good will and of faith communities realize the need to walk together in a world where the challenges of inequalities, suffering, violence and division exist while even the earth itself is despoiled. The need of prayer together each day can be 'let God's will to be done'. As the Mar Thoma community, let us uphold the richness that we received and work for the well being of humanity through our committed action. With prayerful regards,

Rt. Rev. Dr. Isaac Mar Philoxenos  
Diocesan Bishop

## Editorial

*'Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he'. Proverbs 29:18*

*'My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge'- Hosea 4:6*



The Mar Thoma church is deeply saddened by the unexpected passing away of Rt. Rev. Geevarghese Mar Athanasius Suffragan Metropolitan on the 18<sup>th</sup> of April 2018. We dedicate this issue of ECHO to honour the life and leadership of our beloved Thirumeni. We acknowledge Thirumeni's faithful and immensely rich contribution to the Mar Thoma community and to the society. We hope that the vision and leadership of Thirumeni will continue to inspire present and future generations to carry the banner for Christ in building His kingdom here on earth with undying passion and fervency. We offer our deepest condolences to all those who cherished Thirumeni's life, work and mission and pray for wisdom to carry out the vision Thirumeni had for wider church community.

It is true that the Mar Thoma church lack no visionaries. It is the vision and passion of our church leaders that helped us to withstand the tides and pressures of the changing world. Visionaries have the potential to transform any dire situation and bring changes in the world which no one else can. To accomplish their task, they need support from the people they surround with.

In Proverbs, 29, verse 18, the author brings it our attention the consequence of people who lack a vision, specifically the law of God. The vision Christ gave His disciples is to bring the good news to all, to set the captives free and build His kingdom. The Mar Thoma church is inspired by this command to become the light of this world, to dispel darkness and expand His kingdom, wherever opportunity comes. We see

the official inauguration of UK and Europe Zone on June 9, 2018 by His Grace The Most Rev. Dr. Joseph Mar Thoma Metropolitan, as a fulfilment of this vision; to be salt and light for the community in UK and Europe.

Vision is essential to church and is subject to change. The dynamic nature of vision encourages the church to renew, adapt and adjust to the cultural context in terms of its congregational needs. However, the core value and missional statement of church does not change. This has to be always the Great Commission. When the church feels empowered with a vision, the mission of each parish and each individual becomes clear. To transform the world by the love of God shown through Christ our Saviour. With this in mind, we anticipate the 36<sup>th</sup> annual family conference of UK & Europe from August 24 to 26 at Yarnfield Conference Centre. The theme 'Spiritual journey in a digital world' will challenge and inspire us to carry this vision forward in the changing cultural context we live in. It is true that we need leaders with true grit and passion to make this happen. The staff that Moses carried will not facilitate the conveyance of the message to reach the unreached today. We need tools and platforms that gets appreciation in the present age we live in to get the message across. Only people with a true vision, sees the perspective and pushes forward to see our world changed by God's perspective, irrespective of the means of communication.

There will be uncertain times and difficulties we might have to face as a diaspora church, yet if we are diligent in following the mission that is set upon each one of us, we shall see the glory of our Lord and say like Job, the servant of God, 'My ears had heard of you but now my eyes have seen you' (Job 42:5). May the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob enable us to fix our eyes on Him who was crucified for our sake and carry out His vision in transforming the world, through us.

## A Bishop with a difference

Geevarghse Mar Athanasius Suffragan Metropolitan

Revd Dr. M.J. Joseph, Kottayam



May I begin this obituary tribute with the words of (late and lamented) Geevarghese Mar Athanasius Suffragan Metropolitan: “Funeral is for the dead; whereas the funeral service for the living”. It is quite legitimate for the Faithful to remember the one who has “*passed over us*” (Acharya Fr. Francis) to the place of eternal rest. We should remember the good deeds of the one who lived the gospel in his/her life time; these are words to be etched on our hearts.. The response of Jesus to the woman who anointed him is worth recalling: “She has done a beautiful thing (*kalon ergon*) to me”(MK.14:6).The Greek word “*kalos*” stands for the English translation “beautiful”; it makes a spiritual sense as it speaks of the vibrations of love beyond the seen and into eternity.

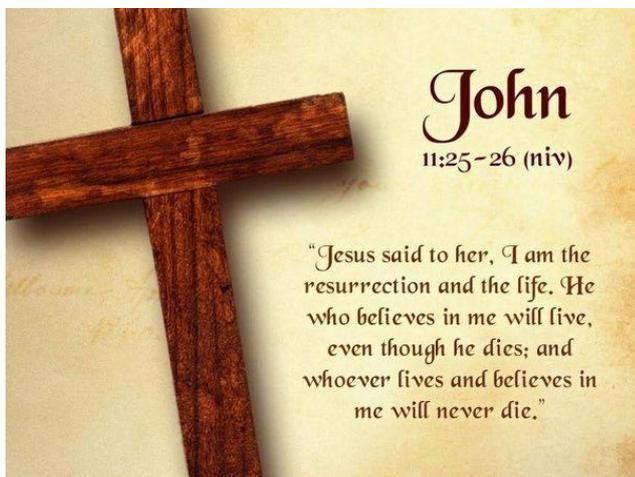
Mar Athanasius was a bishop with a difference. He always wanted to traverse ‘the path less travelled’ by others. In his speech and pastoral vocation, Thirumeni has been following Robert Frost at his best “Two roads diverged in a wood; I took the one less travelled by; and that has made a difference.” This could be demonstrated through the re-building/renovation of several dozens of churches in his diocese (Ranni-Nilackal) and even in the purchase of 10-acre plot at Sriperumbathoor, Chennai, during his tenure as parish priest at Madras Mar Thoma

Church. The land he could purchase with the help of the parish is a prime land now in Chennai. I could cite several such examples to demonstrate his God- given talents to initiate and to innovate something beautiful for God and people (See, The Saba Directory, 2015, pages 407-409). His book of sermons under the title *Daiwasnehathinte Nerchalukal* (Mal.CSS 2000) bears testimony to his exceptional skill in communication.

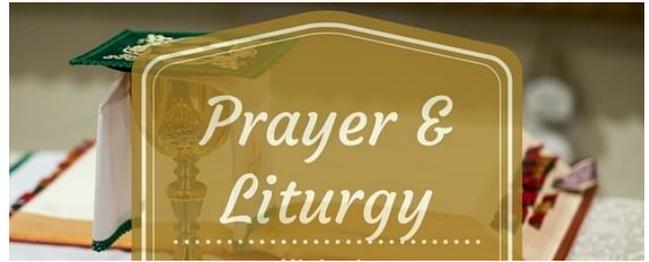
It is the moral responsibility of the present living community to translate the legacy/heritage of people who had made history into living traditions. “Remembering the past is illuminating the present; remembering the present is illuminating the future.” The biblical mandate goes like this: “Remember your leaders . . . and imitate their faith” (Heb.13:7). The opening chant of the Holy Qurbana recalls the good deeds of Abel for us to imitate. By faith Abel still speaks us to us, “. . . he died, but through his faith he is still speaking” (Heb. 11: 4). This is well stated in the funeral homily preached by Dr. Geevarghese Mar Theodosius Episcopa at the SC Seminary grounds on April 20,2018: “What matters in life is not being applauded when you arrive, but being missed when you leave.” Life is often judged by one’s relations, responses, and reactions.

Thirumeni has to pass through a series of physical ailments during the latter part of his Episcopal ministry. He was bold and courageous in spite of his physical weakness. His faith in God had sustained him in times of trial. Rev. K. G. Joseph (the present Sabha Secretary) and Rev. P. M. Abraham, who had been with him during the period of his physical ailments, bear testimony to the dignity of Christian ministry he had manifested during the period. He always tried his best “to do things well” according to his inner voice. Thirumeni used to create friendship with the rich and the poor, the skilled and the unskilled across any divide as he believed that life is to be lived in a holistic manner. In my personal relationship with

Thirumeni, I have quite a few memorable instances to recall. He wrote a preface to my book, *'Aatmavinte Daaham (CSS ,1995)'* and later he shared words of felicitation ( in writing) on my 50<sup>th</sup> year of ordination (2015). He believed that “big is not great, great is that which is nearer to truth”. For him, “beauty is truth; truth is beauty” (John Keats). This perception of Thirumeni urged him to live with a voice of dissent. None can deny the Mexican proverb which says: “Heroes tomb is the cradle of the people”. His death is a silent grief and a pleasant memory.



## Reformation as Affirmation



Liturgy was affirmed in Malakara reformation(1830s). Abraham Malpan and other leaders of reformation were committed to translate the liturgy in to Malayalam. It was neither negating the Syriac liturgy nor correcting it. It could be studied that Syriac and Malayalam was printed parallel almost until the 1960s. Reformation was an affirmation of liturgy because it connects us to the summary of Bible. As the summary of the bible, liturgy celebrates the redemption and renewal of whole of creation by God in Christ. Maybe it is possible to argue that reformation was affirmation of liturgy as connecting to God in Christ. Each time a liturgy is celebrated, in truth and love, the Holy Spirit help worshippers to be renewed and transformed in Christ. So this personal and communal transformation for the cosmic good through the worship was the mind of reformers when they affirmed liturgy. Hence it is an evangelical call for every Mar Thomite to take liturgy carefully and prayerfully that it may transform his or her to a new life in Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior.

Rev.Sam Koshy.T  
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 University of Bern, Switzerland.

# Understanding Religion and Spirituality in Media Landscape: Media Black Hole or Eclipse?

By Rev. Sijo John – Canterbury Mar Thoma Church



Virtuality has become a life reality today. Human beings exist in a mechanised and mediated world of machines and computer binaries. Religion, media, and the transmission of truth now often come in the same plane. Stewart M. Hoover offers an extensive analysis of the influence of media on religion and spirituality. He serves as a professor in the School of Journalism and Mass Communication and joint professor in the Department of Religious and American Studies at the School of Colorado. He has several books and journals authored to his credit. His important works are *The Electronic Giant: A Critique of the Telecommunications Revolutions from a Christian Perspective* (1982), *Mass Media Religion: The Social Sources of the Electronic Church* (1988), *Religion in the Media Age* (2006) he co-edited *Rethinking Media, Religion, and Culture* (1977), *Religion in the News: Faith and Journalism in the American Public Discourse* (1998), *Practicing Religion in the Age of Media* (2002), *Media, Home, and Family* (2004), *Faith Online* (2004), *Media, Spiritualities and Social Change* (2010), *Does God Make the Man* (2015), and authored many articles. Hoover interestingly observes the enlargement of the media landscape and its functioning in the pedagogy of religion and spirituality as a carrier of knowledge and

medium of communication. It can be portrayed as either a fading of religion to the media black hole or an eclipse effect. No doubt all aspects of human life is vigorously attached to the media world. Accessibility of religion is also made possible through media, and hence we have a mediated spirituality<sup>1</sup> in the media landscape. This paper is an ongoing critical evaluation on Hoover's claims that "the media landscape is the one that carries within it a wide range of symbolic material relevant to the issues of religion and spirituality."<sup>2</sup>

## Religion and Spirituality, Media landscape; Hooverian Understanding



In 1964 Marshall McLuhan suggested that "the medium is the message"<sup>3</sup> and it has the potential to radically influence our way of observations, interpretations, and understandings.<sup>4</sup> A paradigm shift was noticed during 1970's in the media history. Hoover claims that media has been changing its pattern and process from an information facility to media community. A

<sup>1</sup> For Hoover, the term spirituality is a result of re-articulation of religion to 'less problematic.' Stewart M. Hoover, "Religion, Media and Identity: Theory and Method in Audience Research on Religion and Media," in *Mediating Religion*, Sophia Marriage and Jolyson Mitchell, eds. (London: T&T Clark, 2003), 12.

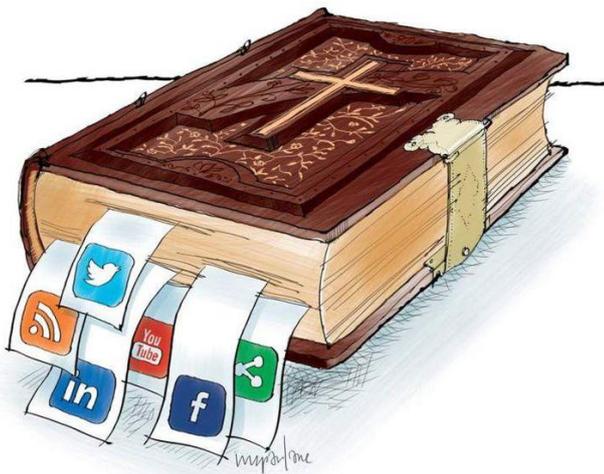
<sup>2</sup> Stewart M. Hoover, *Religion in the Media Age* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 66.

<sup>3</sup> Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media* (London & New York: Routledge, 1964), 7.

<sup>4</sup> Harold A. Innis, *Empire, and Communication* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1950).

medium turned to be an appealing landscape and stands for the social solidarity beyond the traditional boundaries of social identities. Thus, Hoover argued that the etymology of *religere*<sup>5</sup> can be attributed to the modern media and the boundary line between private and public, local, and national get blurred in a media landscape. It becomes hard to define the line of control between the individual and the mass; media and religion.<sup>6</sup> Thus Media landscape has attained immense influence especially on the political (opinion leaders<sup>7</sup>), economic (add-media market), and cultural realms (popular) of the society.

### Media and Mediated Religion



The question of historical contexts, textual formations, structure, cultural peripheries of religion is necessitated to be revisited in the hedged media landscape. The post-structural media landscape has been radically changed by the invention of printing technology, telegram, telephone, television etc. The accessibility barriers of geography, social class, and economic prospects have been relinquished by the

<sup>5</sup> Latin root, means ‘to bind together.’ It is the functional definition of what we understand as religion.

<sup>6</sup> Stewart M. Hoover, *Religion in the Media Age* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 12.

<sup>7</sup> Elihu Katz and Paul Lazarsfeld, *The Personal Influence* (New York: The Free Press, 1955).

involvement of “massification”<sup>8</sup> of profit-driven media. Hoover classifies media broadly into two categories; ‘religious media,’ and ‘secular media.’<sup>9</sup> He made a comparison between Roman postal system and information technology;<sup>10</sup> both operates in the same principle, ‘information is power.’

For Hoover, media is not a neutral term. It is potentially capable to challenge, reconstruct, replace those institutions and practices which are normative to religion. Thus, media became a medium which has the power to lead and mislead.<sup>11</sup> The critical, dominant, grand paradigms of Chicago, Frankfurt Schools of American media research carry the wider sketch of today’s media landscape. Now religion is being fashioned to ‘perform’ in a mediated space and time ghettos. Thus, virtuality tended to be a reality for religion in a mediated space-time and ‘display’ to human senses. Emile Durkheim considers this phenomenon not as a “massification” rather a “cult of the individual” and pointed out that human is no longer to fear religion but to change them according to their consciousness.<sup>12</sup> Hoover failed to see this irreducibility of religion in the process of mediation.

Hoover argues that religion and media are no more polarised; they converge and shape each other. For Hoover, religion is possible through a ‘magical and miraculous’ media landscape and it has the capacity to reach beyond the religious barriers.<sup>13</sup> It can be viewed as a phenomenon leads to destabilisation of social power from religion to mediated religion. Media has made both cosmetics as well as contentual impact on

<sup>8</sup> Hoover, *Religion in the Media Age*, 28.

<sup>9</sup> Hoover, *Religion in the Media Age*, 62.

<sup>10</sup> Hoover, *Religion in the Media Age*, 27.

<sup>11</sup> Hoover, *Religion in the Media Age*, 29.

<sup>12</sup> Emile Durkheim, *The Division of Labour in the Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1912/2001). Cited in Bellah, Robert N., *Emilie Durkheim: On Morality and Society* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1973), xxvi.

<sup>13</sup> Hoover, *Religion in the Media Age*, 284.

religion's face. It gave a new outlook and manifestation in a mediated sophisticated world. He claims that communication is largely shifted to a mass media 'grammering.' Hoover observed media as a ubiquitous and irreducible category for an authentic religious communication. And Hoover claims that media is steering and seems to win,<sup>14</sup> not the mediated religion. In reality, it is the mediated religion that seems to win than the media.<sup>15</sup> Nevertheless, it can only be viewed as 'dislocation of power' rather than 'destabilisation.'

### Media, Religion and the Symbolic Space



The content of the mediated religion begins to reflect the essential ethos of the market and economy as a result of mediation. Hoover claims that only prosperity can be the popular mediated spiritual market. The 'matter' became the point of contact and point of departure for both the *soma* and *psycho* in a media landscape. The mediated landscape has translated the spirit of religion to material benefits and personal security and interpreted as health and wealth. Personal choices are made based on the media peer pressure and media assumed the centre place in the process of meaning-making. Thus, being and becoming happens not in the empirical realm but in largely in a virtual realm. This virtual realm creates a symbolic world and reality is permeated through symbolic order.

<sup>14</sup> Hoover, *Religion in the Media Age*, 14, 286.

<sup>15</sup> Political Islam, Hindu Nationalism, Pentecostalism are few examples. Media involvement of the Roman Catholic Church becomes a media icon. See Bright Meyer and Annelies Moors eds., *Religion, Media and the Public Sphere* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), 1, 3, 8.

The symbolic world narrated through religion and media offers a landscape which provides believer/audience a symbolic identity which in turn becomes a reality. The body, music, objects, rituals, and experiences are re-presented in and through the lenses and broadcasted through satellites, transmitted through the optic cables and displayed in a virtual plane before the human retina. The fluidity of media is vivid in this process; yet assumed some level of grounding with the real world. Therefore, this 'symbolic inventory' makes meaning to the experiences rather the empirical grounding gives meaning to being.<sup>16</sup>

Moreover, the media sentimentalism propagates a forged global culture, primarily viewed as an agenda of globalisation against standardisation.<sup>17</sup> The history, traditions, doctrines, shared memory, and imagined community are not re-membered in the media process. Today, for the modern 'audience' the above said categories are not categories for defining religion and spirituality. Therefore, Hoover propagation of religious mediation is potentially lean-to disenchantment. Hoover continues to argue that this capability [inertia] of media helps the process of cultural expansion and value patterns of religion. For which, religion has to undergo a translation process into the media binaries. It may cause to compromise the mystical and mythical realms of religion with the ethical dimensions media.

### Media Landscape: Religion and the Question of Sacred and Profane

Hoover depicts seven different scholarly ways of looking at religion,<sup>18</sup> in which dualism is the

<sup>16</sup> See E. Frances King, *Material Religion and Popular Culture* (New York: Routledge, 2010), 135.

<sup>17</sup> K. Flanagan, *Religion, Identity and Change: Perspectives on the Global Transformations* (Aldershot and Burlington: Ashgate Publishing, 2004), xi.

<sup>18</sup> Hoover classifies seven different ways of looking at media; they are archetypes, representational realism, instrumentalism, totalism/universalism,

only 'given' category and others are functional categories. However, primarily being a cultural anthropologist and a media scholar he treated the central category to the periphery of this discussion. Scholars have difference of opinions in this issue. Being a sociologist of religion, Daniele Hervieu – Lege believes that “sacred is an impossible concept.”<sup>19</sup> As a historian of religion Eliade took a strong position that resists the 'oriental notion' of sacred; defining the other as profane and propagating a universal idea of religion by denying the truth of diversity.<sup>20</sup> However, modern theologians like Gordon Lynch strongly argues that sacred is a basic human instinct that unites the individuals and the society.<sup>21</sup> Sacred and profane are not always a matter of choice but a way of experiencing life. Emily Durkheim, Rudolf Otto, Mircea Eliade are strong exponents this view. Theologians like Jeffrey H. Manhan's point of view alarms that Hoover's position inseparably scramble the sacred with the profane.<sup>22</sup> Therefore Lynch argues that media cannot think of a religion without assuming the sacred, yet it is advised to approach the 'sacredness' should be viewed 'beyond the canonical framework of institutionalised religion.'<sup>23</sup> Therefore, even from a functionalist point of view, sacredness is an irreducible necessity for religion. Hoover is not keen on this aspect. It invites a contradiction in the process of transmission of 'symbolic inventories' which helps human to make

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transformationism, dualism and essentialism. See Hoover, *Religion in the Media Age*, 66-70.

<sup>19</sup> Daniel Hervieu-Leger, *Religion as a Chain of Memory* (Cambridge: Polity, 2000), 42.

<sup>20</sup> Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and Profane: The Nature of Religion*. Willard R. Trask trans. (New York: Harvest Book, 1956).

<sup>21</sup> Cited in Gordon Lynch, "What is this 'Religion' in the Study of Religion and Popular Culture," in *Between Sacred and Profane*, ed. Gordon Lynch (London: I.B. Tauris, 2007), 138-9.

<sup>22</sup> Jeffrey H. Manhan, "Reflections on the Past and Future of the Study of Religion and Popular Culture," in *Between Sacred and Profane*, ed. Gordon Lynch, 52.

<sup>23</sup> Giddens, (1986). Cited in Gordon Lynch, "What is this 'Religion' in the Study of Religion and Popular Culture," in *Between Sacred and Profane*, ed. Gordon Lynch, 139.

meaning with Hoover's claims of global features of media and Lynch views on local features of sacredness.

### **Mediated Values: Absence of Normative Ethics**

Hoover portrays potentially progressive possibilities and positive dimensions of media in propagating values. He narrates few empirical examples from different people having different religious orientation. He argues that religion, media, and ethics have implicitly connected each other and the difference between public and private is more blurred concerned to values. As far as media is only concerned with values and not with ethics, Hoover kept a distance from ethics. Hence, he does not make any claim that media has the authority of moral mandate. But he contradicts with the view that media is a cultural product; in fact, media is a 'culture producer.' Moreover, he admits that media has only barren ethical landscape.<sup>24</sup> Even though media adopts religious values largely in entertainment and film industry it doesn't have any obligation to the ethos of religion.



Hoover affirms that 'mediation' is a necessity in self-making process. It may always go on par with the social moral majority. Scholars like Eric Shegog and Jim McDonnell discuss the question of 'moral majority'.<sup>25</sup> They wrote that mediated ethics of multicultural and self-contradicting

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<sup>24</sup> Hoover, *Religion in the Media Age*, 13.

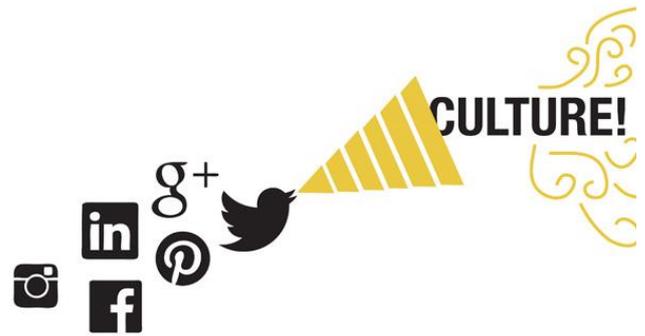
<sup>25</sup> Eirc Shegog, "Religious Communication in the Context of Soap Values," in *Religion and the Media*, ed. Chris Arthur (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1993), 88.

contexts is destructing and religion is found as a 'sleeping giant'.<sup>26</sup> Though the mediated religion expresses a predominant conservative, reactionary religious values<sup>27</sup> but it is turning to be a 'hypocritical piety'.<sup>28</sup> It may not cause to occur ethical 'hybridity' but leads random cultural conglomeration, often result in the formation of subcultures with moral impoverishment. Hoover justify this phenomenon with the idea of popular culture.

### **'Popular Culture': Media Eclipse on Religion**

Scholars have no doubt that media is employed to influence culture;<sup>29</sup> it does so in large scale, especially after the baby boom. Manhan argues that mediated culture has creative potentials of communication.<sup>30</sup> It affirms Hoover's notion that, it is the media market recognised the purchasing power of the young and baptised everything for the sake of 'popular'; "of the people."<sup>31</sup> Hoover called it as re-structuring of

religion.<sup>32</sup> It re-mixed cultures and claimed the participation of 'everybody'.<sup>33</sup> Yet, in reality, it



was mainly media that baptised many things not for the sake of culture but for the market. Hoover acknowledges that media had the revelation that babies of popular culture are also after the spirituality. This realisation inspired the market media to materialise 'popular media religion.' Hoover was not critical rather took a utilitarian approach towards this mediated 'forgery of identity'<sup>34</sup> though he received unpredicted responses to popular culture from people belonging to different strands of religiosity. In particular, there was a religious gap has formed during this period. Thus, popular culture gave an impression that religion was going to absorbed into all-encompassing media black hole; yet later realised it just as media eclipse phenomenon.

Media can reduce the material dimensions of religion to a virtual plane.<sup>35</sup> Profit motivated market media has largely utilised this 'virtual surface' to endorse feelings to than doctrines.

<sup>26</sup> Eirc Shegog, "Religious Communication in the Context of Soap Values," and Jim McDonnell, "Religion, Education and the Communication of Values," in *Religion and the Media*, ed. Chris Arthur, 79-99.

<sup>27</sup> Peter Conard, *Television: The Medium and its Manners* (Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1982), 144-5. Cited in Neil Simpson, "Popular Religion on TV," in *Religion and Media*, ed. Chris Arthur, 104.

<sup>28</sup> See James M. Wall, 'A Show in which Prayer is all in the Family,' *Christian Century*, Vol. 108 (1991), p.5. Cited in Neil Simpson, "Popular Religion on TV," in *Religion and Media*, ed. Chris Arthur, 105.

<sup>29</sup> Lynn Schofield Clark, "Religion and authority in a remix culture: How a late-night TV host became an authority on religion," in *Religion, Media, and Culture: A Reader*, et.al. Gordon Lynch (London: Routledge, 2012), 117.

<sup>30</sup> Jeffrey H. Manhan, "Reflections on the Past and Future of the Study of Religion and Popular Culture," in *Between Sacred and Profane*, ed. Gordon Lynch (London: I.B. Tauris, 2007), 53.

<sup>31</sup> Clark, "Religion and authority in a remix culture," 118.

<sup>32</sup> Hoover discuss this idea in the light of a renowned sociologist Robert Wuthnow as 're-structuring of religion.' See Stewart M. Hoover, "Religion, Media and Identity: Theory and Method in Audience Research on Religion and Media," in *Mediating Religion*, eds. Sophia Marriage and Jolyson Mitchells (London: T&T Clark, 2003), 12.

<sup>33</sup> It also called as re-mix culture or participatory culture. Jenkins 2006; Lessing 2008; Manovitch 2001; cited in Clark, "Religion and authority in a remix culture," 119; See also Sophia Marriage and Jolyson Mitchell eds., *Mediating Religion*, (London: T&T Clark, 2003), 1.

<sup>34</sup> K. Flanagan, *Religion, Identity, and Change: Perspective on Global Transformations* (Aldershot and Burlington: Ashgate Publishing, 2004), xi.

<sup>35</sup> See E. Frances King, *Material Religion and Popular Culture* (New York: Routledge, 2010).

Manhan views that “powerful institutions can produce and distribute popular culture.<sup>36</sup> Perhaps Hoover agrees on the McDonnell view that media create an imaginative supernatural fantasy world governed by their own laws giving priority to ‘individual interests.’ There is a parallelism between this popular culture and popular religion.<sup>37</sup> In effect, what medium mediates is nothing but the bright shades religious values by protecting the interests of the media. Interestingly, Hoover recognises this conflict of popular media culture with normative of religion.<sup>38</sup> Therefore, media landscape can carry the popular culture with religious values but not religious ethical normative, which has symbolic and dogmatic significance in the historical process of meaning-making.

### **Media, Public, and Religious Cultures**

The sacred space has been changed as per the norms of the modern and postmodern media cultural standards. The non-religious position of media has influenced the religion and ascribed to many non-religious cultural paradigms. Mediated world ethos questioned the authenticity of ethical normative of religion and legitimacy. As an ‘institution’ religion has come across a good deal of disputes with media world.<sup>39</sup>

# Religion

Religion has re-entered into the public life

<sup>36</sup> Bruce David Forbes, Jeffrey H. Manhan eds., *Religion and Popular Culture in America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 293.

<sup>37</sup> See Jim McDonnell, “Religion, Education and the Communication of Values,” in *Religion and the Media*, Chris Arthur, (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1993), 93. See Hoover, *Religion in the Media Age*, 16.

<sup>38</sup> Hoover, *Religion in the Media Age*, 28.

<sup>39</sup> Hoover, *Religion in the Media Age*, 234.

sometimes disgracefully in the larger framework of terrorism and war. Hoover discusses that religious identities were celebrated through media and violence in religion has been questioned. The national events made global through the medium. It was a conscious attempt to define and made known the ‘religious Other’ and the ‘secular us.’ Media became a powerful critique to religion and depicted ‘the reality’ in a virtual frame. Thus, media has earned the power to condemn the fathomable. Media has wisely used memorial vocabulary and the commemoration and mourning as a tool for disenchantment of religion. Media presumed the priesthood and changed its lingua franca to ritual language to explain things. Catherine Bell opines that new patterns of ritualization by media is nothing but an expression of mediated modernity. Journalists took the role ‘messiah.’ Media decided what is to be remembered.<sup>40</sup> They made everyone to experience the traumatic vision.<sup>41</sup>

### **Secular Media and Mediated Common Culture**

The secular media has been propagating, violence, potential irreligiosity, and opinion polls. The centrality of self is mediated and disenchantment of religion was highlighted. They have created an age of ‘magical media’.<sup>42</sup> There are tremendous changes in the mass media and it has been reflecting everywhere including religion. Media became powerful when it comes to the question of cultural values. The media has determinative yet the question remains unanswered, who determined? for whom it is being determined? under what condition it is being determined? and what

<sup>40</sup> John R. Gillis, “Memory and Identity: the history of relationship,” in John R. Gillis, ed., *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994); cited in Hoover, *Religion in the Media Age*, 246.

<sup>41</sup> See Edward Linenthal, *The Unfinished Bombing: Oklahoma City in the American Memory* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 234-5.

<sup>42</sup> Hoover, *Religion in the Media Age*, 208.

would be the consequences?<sup>43</sup> There was a complex implication for religion in the media age. The time allotted for media programme in the secular media is called “ghettoized” slots.<sup>44</sup> There is no doubt that media has significantly been viewed by steadfast viewers, but critical viewing is questionable. The religious audience became just viewers most often seeking for entertainment values.

### **Mediated Politics: New Religion**

Hoover views that, secularism could not stop religion completely from politics. Power is determined by the religious alignment of the candidate. Preservation of national ethos is still a major concern for the mass. Therefore, mass media influence is not successful to make a drastic influence on people to think devoid of culture and religious values. Thompson comments that “heart is a wonderful organ, but so is brain.”<sup>45</sup> Yet, heart has a place when it comes to the point of discernment. Media also used to project their religious worldview. Media has been used to share their commonalities to the major religious ethos, the influence of religion in their lives etc.<sup>46</sup>

### **Actualisation of Life: Reality of the Virtual world**

Hoover indicates that it would not be possible to work out contemporary spiritual quest and actualisation of self.<sup>47</sup> Media became the landscape for the modern life to a large extent. Modern spirituality has largely propagated through media and technology and provided individual access to it. As Jean Paul Sartre says,

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<sup>43</sup> Hoover, *Religion in the Media Age*, 290.

<sup>44</sup> Stewart M. Hoover, “The religious Television Audience: A Matter of Significance or Size?” *Review of Religious Research*, Vol. 29, No. 2 (1987).

<sup>45</sup> J. B. Thompson, *The Media and Modernity* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1995), 230.

<sup>46</sup> Hoover, *Religion in the Media Age*, 260.

<sup>47</sup> Stewart M. Hoover, “Religion, Media and Identity: Theory and Method in Audience Research on Religion and Media,” in *Mediating Religion*, Sophia Marriage and Jolyson Mitchell eds. (London: T&T Clark, 2003), 13.

humanity became universal singular.<sup>48</sup> It became a ‘single window’ approach. Corporate dimensions of self-actualisation made possible mainly through a media platform.

Hoover examines Ward Clark Roof’s categories of born again and mainstream believers, metaphysical believers, dogmatists, and secularist. They can also be called as ultra-spiritual or traditional believers. Hoover also ascertain that group identity and social location are two significant factors for an authentic and inner life and personhood.<sup>49</sup> Therefore, media apparently influence and involve effectively as an agency in the process of integration of symbols as well as the construction of self. David Hall says that there is a ‘deeper hunger’<sup>50</sup> for self-transformation for which self-consciousness and self-reflexivity are involved in a process of search and questioning. Media is thus sensible in carrying symbolic elements which are necessary in the process of self-making.

### **Media and Family Health**

Hoover makes an empirical approach to media and family health and examines it using Roof’s categories of believers. He noticed metaphysical believers and seekers are not reluctant to symbolic and spiritual resources propagated through the media world. They have also attentive in the territorial boundaries of media and religion. Liberal on the other hand intensely conscious on cultural war and religious politics.<sup>51</sup> It is important to preserve the family health and equip children to discern the media content. Hoover does not advocate an external compression or censorship on media choices. It

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<sup>48</sup> Lynn Schofield Clark, and Diane F. Alters, with Joseph G. Champ and Lee Hood, *Media, Home and Family* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 27.

<sup>49</sup> Hoover, *Religion in the Media Age*, 146.

<sup>50</sup> David Hall ed., *Lived Religion in America: Toward a Theory of Practice* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977); cited in Ward Clark Roof, *Spiritual Marketplace: Baby Boomer and the Remaking of American Religion* (Princeton: Princeton Press, 1999), 9.

<sup>51</sup> Hoover, *Religion in the Media Age*, 181.

can create paradox situation during the formation of spirituality in childhood.

For some, spirituality is not considered as a belief in a religious system, rather belief in oneself.<sup>52</sup> However, a family is a collective identity in which certain things cannot be entertained. For instance, glorification of violence, abnormal sex etc. Parenting is concerned of certain values and ethos irrespective of communities. Media hijacked domestication of worldview training and therefore as David Bromley rightly points out family problems becomes a media parenting problem.<sup>53</sup>

Hoover sites various auto resistance from the society against media violence. Yet the 'unproblematic integration' of religious symbols and cultures has been overviewed by the autonomous reception of the audience.<sup>54</sup> Claussen argues that media producers tactically present nudity as religious icons and discuss "sexuality in religion and religion in sexual context."<sup>55</sup> Hoover views that conscious subtle judgements are required in the process of 'plausible narratives of the self.' This subtle role is essential in the media age. Hoover articulates that religious framework plays a role in the judgment and 'co-viewing' in the family has a significant role. Therefore, 'autonomy of reception' can be viewed as a myth.

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<sup>52</sup> See Hoover, *Religion in the Media Age*, 184.

<sup>53</sup> David G. Bromley, "The Satanic Cult Scare," *Society* 28 (1991): 65. Cited in Herman R. Foushee Jr., "Cult Sex: The Mass Media Reporting of Sexual Issues Surrounding New Religious Movements," in *Sex, Religion, Media*, ed. Dane S. Claussen (Rowman & Littlefield: USA, 2002), 156.

<sup>54</sup> Stewart M. Hoover, "Religion, Media and Identity: Theory and Method in Audience Research on Religion and Media," in *Mediating Religion*, eds. Sophia Marriage and Jolyson Mitchell (London: T&T Clark, 2003), 16.

<sup>55</sup> Dane S. Claussen ed., *Sex, Religion, Media* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2002). 271f.



Consciousness and reflection should be an ongoing process. Hence though secular media can be irreligious but it cannot be devoid of spirituality in terms of ethics and behaviour. Children and adults have natural affection and a tendency to 'copy strategies to behaviour' as part of the mediated cultural milieu.<sup>56</sup> Hence, secular media need not have a constructive affiliation with religion yet they contribute each other. In reality, media, culture, religion and spirituality are intertwined.<sup>57</sup> The Hooverian instructions of conscious reflection is also largely mediated not by parents but by media itself. Hoover discusses dubious contemporary parenting position; yet not opens a wide discussion on 'parenting of media' today. Especially the younger generation, listen, obey, and imitate media than their parents. Hoover does not deal the issues of imitation regarding parenting and media's parenting. Imitation also plays a crucial role in faith formation. The amusement and entertainment aspect of modern media marginalise the religious and spiritual material. parents have different opinions regarding children and media. Some draw clear line of control, some leave everything to children, some hesitate, some dictated and some educate their children how to use their discernment in choosing the media content. According to McDonnell the overflow of good and bad make it difficult to human discern.<sup>58</sup> Hoover analysis on

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<sup>56</sup> Art Silver Blatt, Jane Ferry, Barbara Finan, *Approaches to Media Literacy: A Hand Book* (London: Routledge, 2015), 112.

<sup>57</sup> Hoover, *Religion in the Media Age*, 199.

<sup>58</sup> McDonnell, "Religion, Education and the Communication of Values," 97.

this aspect sheds light on the future prospects of the media as well as the religious world.<sup>59</sup> The absence and media ignorance of human parenting is unresolved issues Hoover addresses; he tries to resolve it by the physical presence of parents during viewing. Yet, this method can never claim it as a completely successful idea.

### **Information, Formation, and Transformation: A Media Paradigm**

Media has the sacred and profane stance. Primarily audience look at media as a medium to get informed vis a vis politics, sports, economics etc. However, the legitimacy of the information may not be validated by each audience always; it can mislead the audience. Yet, the virtual world is powerful enough to manipulate the common-sense factor. Mass pulling may hide or blur certain aspects of the truth, or create new virtual ‘truths.’ It is expected that the media world should bound to truth rather than business. Media can orient a person who is in the search of information and truth.



The worldview of the humanity is coloured by the media world. The larger canvas of human existence is painted in par with the media motives. Spirituality and religiosity are communicated always communicated through a medium. The human tendency to sensual pleasure, hunger for information, gossips, infatuations, are well manipulated by the modern media world. The ‘modern Eden’ of information polluted the humanity with fake information which is not true and formed a

<sup>59</sup> Hoover, *Religion in the Media Age*, 208, 213, 229.

community that is not keen on truth and transformed them to the ethos of the virtual world. It became impossible to imagine the revelation of God and liberation of people without a ‘modern media.’ Human network is now interlinked with media network, yet the question of ‘orthodoxy’ (right teaching) remains unresolved in the Hooverian media landscape.

### **Sensible Virtual Participation and Question of Transition: The New Spirituality**



Hoover establishes that virtuality lacks ‘interconnectedness’ though it shares same epistemology and participate in contributing. Electronic church becomes a space of convenient belonging.<sup>60</sup> Moreover, Hoover presumed that this audience are primarily consists of “older, lower income, less educated, and more religious.”<sup>61</sup> It has largely changed in the last decade and it becomes visible if we examine the time ghetto of secular media.

Hoover terms the mass media as “environment, vast wasteland, the fourth estate, the cultural environment, family hearth, technologies of freedom, technologies of domination or hegemony, or video altar.”<sup>62</sup> It establishes that media do not possess power but can exercise power in micro as well as macro level and

<sup>60</sup> Hoover, “The religious Television Audience: A Matter of Significance or Size?,” 143.

<sup>61</sup> Hoover, “The religious Television Audience: A Matter of Significance or Size?,” 144.

<sup>62</sup> Hoover, *Religion in the Media Age*, 45.

construct reality through interaction.<sup>63</sup> The paradigm shift at this point is the transition of mass media to micro media. The de-massification has been happening due to the specialised 'niche markets' of production and audience. The profit intentions behind the medium trade things by-date.<sup>64</sup> Therefore, the production is concerned more to inter-activeness than self-actualisation. On the other hand, capital and audience are really problems for religious media. It is observed that the film industry largely ascribed to religious and cultural values to their production and presented them in the media market to attract the 'religious' audience as well. At the same time, literary medium tried to stay away from the complex religious symbolic world. The modern literary world might find it difficult to present the implicit religious ideologies through words of imaginations. Manhan argues that there is a change of focus from dogmas to culture in religious studies.<sup>65</sup>

## Conclusion



There are certain points of agreements and disagreements on Hoover's claim on media landscape. Firstly, the primary landscape of Hooverian media theory constrained to the

<sup>63</sup> See Pierre Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power* tr. G. Raymond and M. Adamson (Cambridge: Polity, 1991), 166; cited in Nick Couldry, *The Place of Media Power* (London: Routledge, 2000), 4.

<sup>64</sup> Hoover, *Religion in the Media Age*, 46.

<sup>65</sup> Bruce David Forbes, Jeffrey H. Manhan eds., *Religion and Popular Culture in America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 288.

American Christian context. Yet, this should be widened and tested against the religious and culturally diverse land of other major religions as well for broadened understanding. Secondly, Hoover is of the opinion that the religious viewers are politically conservative; it proves the fact that the media even use the data not to highlight the religious impact on media rather to project the political effect.<sup>66</sup> Thirdly, Hoover shows no exclusive ways rather shows models and ways in which sacred and profane identities are scrambled in a media landscape. Mediated religion shows many intelligent psychopaths in the media landscape; it leads to virtual spiritual satisfaction which is far away from the life realities. Media motives are not keen on the authority of teaching as long as it holds some aesthetics sense. Hoover's media landscape project more aesthetic dimension than ethical dimensions. Fourthly, though co-viewing is an ideal proposal for a sensible media parenting, the accessibility of private space and media and absence of free time to spare with the children are two major reality challenges that really compromise Hoover's proposal. Autonomy of the viewer has not always attributed the power of knowledge. Therefore, the legitimacy of the symbols is determined by the individuals, not by any authority. This leads to sheer individualistic attitude towards the other social life dimensions and a complete freedom with no social responsibility would be the end result.

Finally, Hoover proves the fact that media landscape is a reality. Sacred and profane penetrate in and through the media. It shadows each other. An umbra, penumbra and full media eclipse is a modern phenomenon on religion. Ideologies, sciences, and new world orders also have had the same impact of shadowing on religion. Yes, religion has influenced and effected by this shadowing but not carried away to the black holes' yet. Hoover analysis shows that it is just a media eclipse on religion and succeeded to prove that religion also eclipses on media. Media has also had a good effect on

<sup>66</sup> Hoover, "The religious Television Audience: A Matter of Significance or Size?," 148.

religion and in the process of mediating religion. The convergence of media and religion opens a new path to be walked ahead. The influence of one need not be considered as a threat to the other, rather it opens a new avenue of mutual sharing, knowing and co-existence. It is historical, cultural, and therefore evolving. This penetration of profane into the human mind through media and Hoover is successful to prove how is media also illuminated during the process of eclipsing on religion.

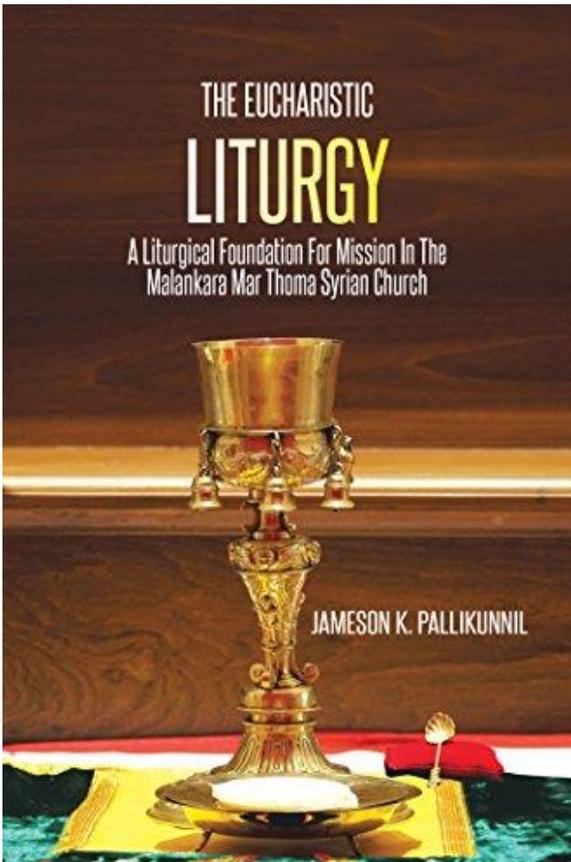
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## Book Release News

*By Revd Dr. Jameson K. Pallikunnil*

"Thanking God Almighty, I am glad to inform you that the AuthorHouse publishers, UK has published my second book, Mission and Liturgy: Contest, Convergence and Congruence. It came to limelight last week. My first book is "The Eucharistic Liturgy: A Liturgical Foundation for Mission in the Malankara Mar Thoma



Syrian Church." By the grace of God, this book got the Maliyekkal M C. George Achen memorial prize of our church last year.

Both of these books are dealing with our Church's historic liturgy, its rich theological understanding, and its commitment to mission in its emerging cultural contexts. It is available in Barnes & Nobles, AuthorHouse, Amazon, Ebay, and other international online sites. It's a humble attempt to introduce our Church, especially

its historic liturgy and mission endeavours to our diaspora and other wider communities. Hence, may I humbly request you to introduce these books to our members, especially youth and children and other well-wishers in your region.

Kindly find the book in the following links:

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## Book Review - MUSINGS AND MARKINGS (Poetic Reflections and Essays)

Book Review  
Published by: ISPCK, Delhi  
March, 2018

By Revd Dr. M. J. Joseph, Kottayam

*“Lakshmir lakshanahinee  
Kulaheenee Saraswathii  
Apatree Labhatee harrii  
Megha Varshantu parvatee”*

If Lakshmidēvi showers all blessings on a person without any quality, it is of no use. So are the blessings of Saraswathy on an undignified human being. An excellent wife given to an undeserving being is also useless. All these will be like the rain falling on top of a mountain. It is of no use.

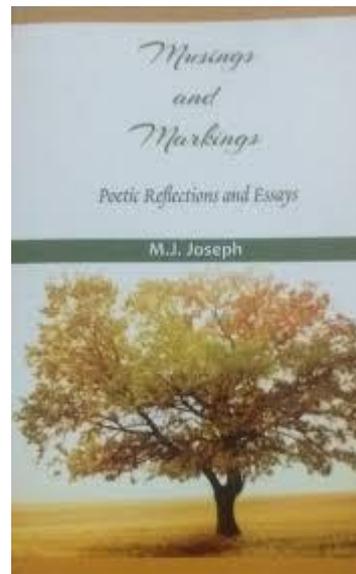
My long association with Revd Dr. M. J. Joseph has taught me one thing – he is a rare genius who really is blessed by Saraswathy and Lakshmi. All the divine gifts from above have been abundantly used by him in articulating his theological and philosophical interpretations of life. His books celebrate the joy of life and all life supporting phenomena.

“Musings and Markings” is a beautiful collection of poems and essays in four sections. Twenty two chapters in the beginning part deal with a variety of subjects like ECC, Peoples Reporter, Diaspora Focus, Jesus the Radical, The Om of the Universe and so on. “Poetry at the bottom is a Criticism of Life”, says Matthew Arnold. Here we find the real critic in Dr. M. J. We are taken to hitherto unknown dimensions of numerous subjects, which the poet handles with elegance and dexterity.

Section ‘A’ deals with a variety of topics in wider ecumenism, of which the author is a renowned champion. Section ‘B’ covers Biblical reflections. The last part is about “Friendship with our Neighbours”. Only a person with immense

depth of knowledge and understanding can delve deep into such a spectrum of epistemology. Dr. M. J. has a pen perfected by craft and his siddhi blossoms through constant sadhana, as exemplified in these beautiful renderings.

A poet receives impressions from the cosmic intelligence, when his intellectual wave length equals that of the universal knowledge. Poets become prophets at this juncture. Rev. M. J. Joseph, no doubt, excels in imparting his prophetic insights through the captivating pages of this volume. It provides us an exciting reading experience and it is my pleasure and privilege to recommend it to all beloved readers. Come and feel the difference. In poetic musings, the fountain of inspiration is at large. The book is a welcome addition to Eco- Theology. Preface cum Reflections by Fr. Dr. Mathew Chandrankunnel, CMI, Director ECC and Prof. Dr. Zac Varghese (London) add luster to the book.



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Prof. Dr. Abraham Karickam

URI, Asia Secretary General.

## Obituary Tributes - Very Revd A. C. Kurien



The Very Revd A. C. Kurien, who has been with us in the early period of FOCUS launching, passed away on 22<sup>nd</sup> May, 2018 and the funeral took place on 28<sup>th</sup> May, 2018 at Varicad Mar Thoma Church, Near Paipad, and Tiruvalla. He was 80 years of age, and survived by his wife Mrs. Susamma Kurien, three children. Achen hails from Arappurayil family, Pattamala, Kottaraka.

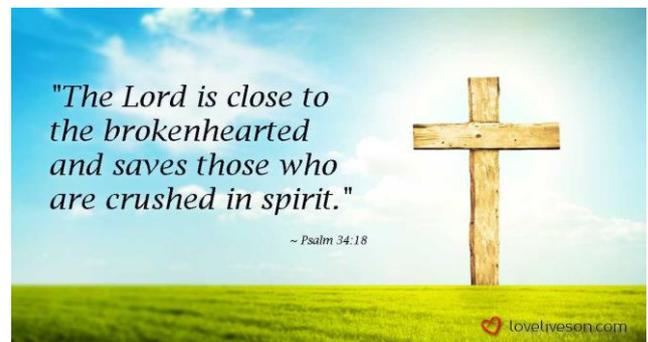
Kurien achen entered the ministry of the Church on May 8, 1964 and became vicar general on 30<sup>th</sup> November, 1998. He retired from the active service of the Church on 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2003. He was the vicar of over 30 parishes including: Andamans, Kuwait, Kozhencherry, Tiruvalla and Kizhakenmuthoor. He held several offices in the Church such as Sabha Secretary, Senior Vicar General, Associate Director of J. M. Study Centre, Trivandrum, member Episcopal nomination board, member C.S.I - C.N.I-Mar Thoma joint Council, member ECC Council (Bangalore) and several other administrative bodies of the Mar Thoma Church. He was indeed a clergyman who had contributed much to the overall ministry of the Mar Thoma Church and its ecumenical mission.

After his retirement, achen was deeply involved as a volunteer in the Pain and Palliative Care ministry of the Pushpagiri hospital, Tiruvalla. His ministry has been widely appreciated by people across denominational and religious barriers.

Kurien achen has left his foot prints on the sands of time in his own way. He is to be remembered as a parish priest of the Church who had maintained personal friendship and relationship with hundreds of people around the Mar Thoma globe. I am sure, he would quote with Fr. Murray Rogers with a slight variation, "If friends are my assets, I am the richest man in he Mar Thoma Church." He used to greet his fellow priests on their birthdays whenever possible. Achen has demonstrated leadership qualities during the period of his ministry in the Church. It is to be recalled that he was indeed proud of his own Church and has shown visible signs of his allegiance with administrative acumen.

The members of the Mar Thoma Community in the UK and Europe may fondly remember Achen's visit there number of times. "Life levels all men; death reveals the eminent" (Bernard Shaw). Yes, "the remembrance of the righteous is a blessing". Vicar General A. C. Kurien achen has "passed over us". "Blessed are the dead . . . they will rest from their labours, for their deeds follow them" Rev.14:13).

Rev. Dr. M. J. Joseph, Kottayam



## Zonal Inauguration News

The historic moment for the Mar Thoma Community in its 60 years of journey in the region came when The Mar Thoma Metropolitan officially inaugurated the UK & EU Zone on 9<sup>th</sup> June 2018. The event was organised by a committee which included representatives from each parish and Mr. Agy George as convenor. It was at Coton Green Church in Tamworth, where around 1000 marthomites from all parishes gathered to witness this auspicious occasion.

The event was graced by our Metropolitan The Most Rev. Dr. Joseph Mar Thoma presided by Diocesan Bishop Rt. Rev. Dr. Isaac Mar Philoxenos Episcopa. Various dignitaries from sister Christian denominations offered their felicitations among them were Rt. Revd. Dr. Michael Ipgrave (Bishop of Lichfield representing Archbishop of Canterbury), Bishop John Fenwick of The Free Church of England, Bishop David Hicks (Chancellor of the Reformed Episcopal Seminary in Philadelphia). Mrs. Christine Elliot (Director of International Programmes CTBI), Mr. Sunando Chakraborty (Consul and Head of Chancery at Consulate General of India, Birmingham).

During the day 88<sup>th</sup> Birthday and Diamond Jubilee of priestly ordination of Mar Thoma Metropolitan, Episcopal Silver Jubilee of Diocesan Bishop, Rt. Rev. Dr. Isaac Mar Philoxenos Episcopa and Centenary celebration of Sannadha Suvishesha Sangham were conducted.

## Birthday and Diamond Jubilee of priestly ordination of Mar Thoma Metropolitan

It was a historic moment for Nazareth Mar Thoma Church Members when they celebrated with the Most Rev. Dr. Joseph Mar Thoma Metropolitan in St Maelruain's Tallaght on June 13, 2018. This was the first time that the Metropolitan had visited them. During the day, the 88<sup>th</sup> birthday and Diamond Jubilee of priestly ordination of Mar Thoma Metropolitan was celebrated. Thirumeni was welcomed by the Archbishop of Dublin (Church of Ireland), the Most Reverend Michael Jackson, who brought greetings and congratulations from the Dioceses of Dublin and Glendalough and the Church of Ireland.

Various dignitaries from sister Christian denominations offered their felicitations during the celebratory meeting. Among them were Rev. Thomas Mar Thimotheos, the Metropolitan of Kottayam Diocese of the Malankara Jacobite Syrian Christian Church, Rev. Anthony Cheeramvelil and Rev. Clement Padathiparambil from the Syro-Malabar church, Rev. Jino Joseph from Jacobite Syrian Orthodox Church, Rev. Eldo Varghese from the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church. The event was held in St Maelruain's under the guidance and generosity of the rector, Canon William Deverell. The welcome address was given by the parish secretary, Mr. Joji Abraham. Thirumeni also lead the dedication service of four first holy communicants in the parish.

Interim vicar of Nazareth Mar Thoma church, Rev. Shibu Kurien and Rev. Sijo John and Rev. Abraham Zachariah also attended the event. Rev. Shibu Kurien gave the introductory message. Vice president of the parish, Mr. Simon E A. opened the meeting with prayer

# Photo Gallery

## Zonal Inauguration







## Metropolitan and Archbishop





**Metropolitan and Archbishop of  
York**



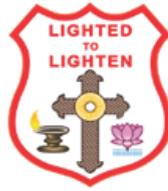




Nazareth MTC Dublin





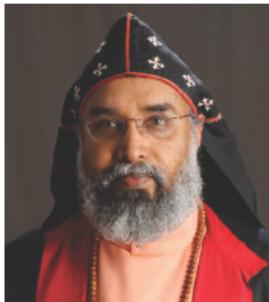


## 36<sup>th</sup> Mar Thoma Family Conference, UK & Europe



### Spiritual Journey in a Digital World

*"Let My People Go,  
That They Might Worship Me !"*  
Exodus 9:1



#### Leaders

Rt. Rev. Dr. Isaac Mar  
Philoxenos Episcopa

Rev. Dr. Mothy Varkey  
Rev. Larry Varghese



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