PREFACE

For the last three and a half years I was working on this thesis. And today I feel gratified, for, the pain and struggle that I undertook, is rewarded in the form of this thesis. This volume is a tribute to the seekers of truth in its pristine form and to the lovers of humanity who spent their life for the people without counting the cost.

Though this study covers a period from 1968-2000, since St. Thomas Christians/members of Syro-Malabar Church hold that they had their origin from the preaching of St. Thomas in India in the first century I have to make a short analysis of their history here. The Church of St. Thomas has the alleged first century roots in M.P. This is a historical hypothesis yet to be studied. Though missionaries from the Syro-Malabar Church reached M.P in 1955, the official beginning took place only in 1968. So, here my effort is to study and collate the history of the present St. Thomas Church/Syro-Malabar Church, which is functioning in Madhya Pradesh, from 1968.

In the present study, I have devoted the first chapter for the analysis of historical the origin of the community. Here I have depended on various studies that are already made by the different scholars. I have tried to fill the lacuna in certain aspects which I felt could be more reasonable and logical. For example, most of the authors do not give much weightage to the north Indian apostolate of St. Thomas; even there are scholars who tried to locate Gondophores as a South Indian King. All these must have
had its origin in the belief that St. Thomas preached only in south India. I have tried to bring a logical bridging of the gap of this kind of partisan reading of the history of this Church.

In the second chapter I have analysed the situation of M.P before the official arrival of Syro-Malabar Church in M.P; that covers the period between 1968-2000. When I studied the sociological situation under this, I have gone elaborately to look into the roots of M.P Christianity. Even though, the existence of the Church of St. Thomas in Madhya Pradesh in the first century, is a hypothetical one I have devoted a few pages for the same. Even when the archaeological evidence may speak in favour of the existence of a church, we will not be able to assert the fact unless we are able to decipher the inscription found in the Udayeshwar temple, at Udaipur. Another fact that I have tried to highlight in this chapter is, the rejection/pushing of the Syro-Malabar Church to the fringes by the Latin Church on the one side, even when the creation of Syro-Malabar exarchates was considered as an act of generosity from the side of her Prelates. Even today, Syro-Malabar Church is not made free to open the missions in her own initiative. This is a hard reality which a student can read in the history of this Church.

In the third chapter the study focuses on the establishment of Syro-Malabar Exarchates. The areas, the leaders and the pioneer missionaries behind this historical development etc., are dealt here. In this chapter I have given a rather deeper analysis of the districts where the Syro-Malabar exarchates were established.
In the last and fourth chapter I have analysed the growth and development of the individual exarchates and eparchies of the Syro-Malabar Church in Madhya Pradesh. Except the last topic in the last chapter, I have not gone to the details. Even in this, namely, "major activities, special thrusts and personnel," I have tried to be as brief as I could. So, some of the details are left out. Though my plan is to limit the study to the period between 1968-2000, in a very few cases, when I wrote the history of the individual mission stations I have gone beyond the period. This happened so, because the particular mission station has her journey in the history in that way. If we read the history of such stations only of the period under study, then the history may remain incomplete.

For the third and fourth chapter I have made use of information collected from the souvenirs and directories of the individual eparchies, and the information collected from individual discussions with the pioneer missionaries of the individual eparchies. During this study, I have visited all the dioceses/eparchies which are studied, but not all the mission stations under these eparchies. And I hope that you can rely on the information that is given here with certitude. In certain cases the information given in the official directory itself, was wrong and the authorities in the eparchy had corrected them and given to me. Because of the vastness of the topic history of individual mission stations are dealt only in brief.

The material used for collating the history of this Church in M.P can be considered as primary source. Because whenever there was some doubt regarding any station, about the pioneers, or the year of starting etc., it
was verified from their local chronicles via phone; still I have not named 
those chronicles in the bibliography just to avoid the enormousness of the 
source materials. I have divided the bibliography into primary and 
secondary sources with two sub sections in each. In the primary source 
the letters and Roman documents are arranged chronologically. 
Directories are also arranged chronologically. If the name of the editor or 
in charge is not found in the directories, the organisation is taken as the 
author. In the secondary sources, books and articles are given separately 
according to the alphabetical order. When more than one book by the 
same author is referred I have avoided repeating the name of the author in 
the bibliography. But if it is carried on to a fresh page there it is given in 
the beginning.

I have devoted a section at the end to explain the Christian terminologies 
that I have used in the thesis. During my study the official Roman 
documents which were available to me, I have photocopied and 
translations are also made, they are also given in the appendices.

When I look back into the history of my research there are very many 
people whom I have to remember with gratitude. First and foremost I 
wish to put on record my sincere thanks to Dr D.C Sharma, my guide and 
head of the department of history at Vishwavidyalaya, Sagar. But for his 
encouragement and acceptance of me as a student, and that too on a topic 
most unusual, this study would not have become a reality. His upright 
way of dealing with the students, and his adherence to the principles 
would always make him a guiding star.
There are many other people who had been supporting me with their views, encouragements, and suggestions; all the more with necessary information concerning different mission stations. Noted Church historians Rev Dr Mathias Mundadan, Rev Dr Francis Thonnippara, Rt. Rev. Dr. A.D. Mattam Bishop Emeritus of Satna, Rev. Fr John Neelankavil-librarian, and the Staff – DVK library Bangalore, Rev Frs Justin MST, Francis Kandathil MST, Kurian Macheril CMI, Augustine Vallooran VC, Paul Edasseril VC, Mar Simon Stock CMI, Mar Sebastian Vadakkel MST, and Mar Mathew Vaniazhakkel VC – bishops of the eparchies under study and the different office bearers of the eparchial curias. All of them deserve special thanks for their co-operation.

I also thank the CMI General Curia members for their openness and availability. They had spent much time for me especially Fr Thomas Pulikan and Mr Jos the employee at the archives, at Cochin. I also thank all the authorities of different congregations who had co-operated with me at different times in my research. I thank the Provincial/regional Superiors of CMI, VC, and MST and all the women religious congregations who had taken special interest to further the necessary information and documents and also helped me in many ways during this study.

I also put on record the services rendered to me by the office staff under the guidance of deputy Registrar- Administration, staff of the Ph.D. wing, staff of the library, staff of the accounts department, and the staff of the
department of history for their co-operation and support that they have rendered to me during the period of my research.

I wish to thank Rev Fr Prosper CMI in a very special way for his hard work, that he contributed so much time for the Latin translation of the official documents up on my request. I also thank the staff from the Computer Shoppe Civil Lines, Sagar, and the Kamalesh photo copiers Thahsili, Sagar for their technical assistance in presenting this thesis in a more attractive manner.

Thanking all well-wishers and friends who supported me to complete this study in a meaningful way, I submit this study. Let this be a torch to the humanity that seeks truth and knowledge.

Vishwavidyalaya
Sagar. 

Abraham. K.V.