

# 2016 Western Region MTVEA Conference – A Parish Report

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## *Mar Thoma Church of San Francisco Bay Area, Livermore, CA*

The 2016 WR-MTVEA Conference was held at the Mar Thoma Church of San Francisco Bay Area (SF MTC) at the church premises on February 13, 2016. The theme for the one conference was “Building effective leadership for witnessing”. The parishes of the Western Region were well represented with a total of 103 registered participants.

### **Morning Session**

The day’s program started with registration at 8:00 am. Since ninety five percent of the registrations were done online, the process was speedy and efficient.

The delegates were treated to a traditional Indian breakfast, and were ushered to the sanctuary for the Morning Session of the conference.



The morning session started with an Opening Hymn by the SF MTC choir followed by the Opening Worship led by the vicars of the attending parishes. This was followed by a Welcome note by the conference secretary, Deepak Cherian from the SF MTC. The delegates were introduced by their parish name and were given an overview of the conference schedule.



The conference was officially inaugurated through the Inaugural Address by the president of the WR-MTVEA, Rev. V.G. Varghese (who is currently serving as the vicar of the Colorado MTC and Phoenix MTC).



The morning session included Bible Reading by T.K. Mathai from the Phoenix MTC and a singing session led by the SF MTC choir. The worship songs by the choir helped uplift the conference spirit.

### Theme exposition



The theme talk was given by Rev. Aji Thomas, (the vicar of the Seattle MTC). Achen based his talk on Nehemiah ch 1, 2 and John ch 21. The illustrative and thoughtful discourse exemplified the qualities of a leader. A leader needs to have an effective listening capacity, needs to empathize with the pain of others, should have good networking skills and be a team player. As a team player, a leader should be capable of strengthening the team, forming the team, performing to potential and transforming situations using the existing resources.

After the theme talk, there was an open discussion on the talk moderated by Rev. John Oommen (the vicar of the Los Angeles MTC and St. Andrews MTC). This session was a lively one with active participation from the delegates. Rev Aji Thomas provided answers to the questions raised in this session.



The final program for the Morning Session was the Witnessing and Testimony session led by the vice president of the WR-MTVEA, Kurien Varghese, from the SF MTC. Several delegates shared their testimony during this session and made this a blessed time.

At the conclusion of the Morning session, Offertory was taken. The total collection was \$430. Lunch was served at 1:00 pm.



The delegates enjoyed a Kerala style lunch and after some social time, returned to the church sanctuary for the afternoon session at 2:00pm.

## Afternoon Session



The afternoon session started with a Singing Session led by Horeb MTC with Rev. Larry Varghese (the vicar of the Horeb MTC) at the guitar. This team taught us some new songs and moved us into an energetic session.

The second program for afternoon was the Bible Study by Rev. V.G. Varghese. Achen's speech was a thought provoking one, about the divine grace. This was followed by, a prayer by Mrs. Aleyamma Mathew, secretary of the St. Andrews MTC Edavaka Mission.

This was followed by a lively session of "Bible Jeopardy!" moderated by Deepak Cherian from SF MTC. The participants formed teams by parish and tried their skills at answering quiz questions from the Bible and Kristheeya Keerthanangal. Phoenix MTC was declared the winner of this program.



This year, being the final term of the WR-MTVEA president, Rev. V.G. Varghese, the WR-MTVEA arranged a farewell meeting for Achen and family. The office bearers of the WR-MTVEA presented a plaque to Achen for the services rendered.

After a Tea break at 3:55pm, the delegates returned to a praise and singing session led by Phoenix MTC. The Intercessory Prayer Session, led by Joshi John of the Horeb MTC followed right after this. It was a time to reflect on the leading of the Almighty God and seek His guidance for the activities of the WR-MTVEA.



The final session of the conference was the Devotion Session led by John Chandy, the vice president of the Silicon Valley MTC. In his talk, John Chandy gave a fresh perspective on the Lord's prayer and pointed out the importance of forgiving others.



The secretary of the WR-MTVEA, Rajesh Mathew presented the Annual Report of the WR-MTVEA. Rajesh also delivered the Vote of Thanks. The conference concluded with a word of prayer by Prof. M.M. Ninan of Silicon Valley MTC and final Benediction by Rev. V.G. Varghese. The delegates were finally sent off with a dinner at 7:00 pm.

## Acknowledgements

Even though this was a one-day conference, a lot of effort was required to make this event successful. I would like to acknowledge the work done by individuals as below:

### **Program Planning and Scheduling:**

I wish to thank Rev. Biju P. Simon, Kurien Varghese, Kurien Idicula and Mathew Thomas who helped with the overall planning and arranging the leaders of each program session. Thanks also goes to Thomas Tharakan for printing the song book with the program schedule.

**Registration:** I acknowledge the efforts of Biju Abraham, Varghese Chandy, Sujit Isaac and Kurien Idicula for making this a smooth experience for the delegates. Special thanks goes

to Biju Abraham for printing the color-coded name labels.

**A/V system:** Thanks are due to Biju Abraham and Kurien Idicula who were at the Sound System and Projector. I also thank Biju and Suju Abraham who helped with the co-ordination and presentation of the Jeopardy program.

**Choir:** I am thankful to the SF MTC choir members for their services. Thanks to the team: Anu Philip, Bejoy Oommen, Juley George, Mathew Jacob (Jebu), Smitha Mathews, Suju Abraham and their leader Stanley Samuel. Special thanks goes to Blessji for the keyboard accompaniment during the singing session.

**Children's program:** I am thankful to Mrs Anju Rijo and Mrs. Nisha Alex for running the children's program for the children of the participants and keeping them engaged with activities for the entire duration of the conference.



**Meals co-ordination:** I especially thank Mathew Jacob (Binu) for his efforts in the overall arrangement of the food for the conference. The delegates were appreciative of the traditional food served at the

conference. We also thank Abby Cherian for the help with the delivery of the lunch.

**Finance:** I acknowledge the work done by Sujit Isaac and our parish trustees Shoby Cherian and Naveen George for the reconciliation of the conference accounts and making the payments in time.

