

[Gilbert](#)

## Pastor plans 21-day fast in response to economic crisis

by **Srianthi Perera** - Mar. 27, 2009 07:28 AM

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Pastor Roy Cheriyan of the International [Assembly of God](#) church in Mesa - which recently moved from Gilbert - is embarking on a spiritual mission to help the community overcome the stressful economic times.

Cheriyan, whose congregation is mainly comprised of people of Asian Indian origin, is fasting and praying for 21 days from Monday to April 19 in response to an insight he said he received from God.

"This is a very crucial time for our nation. There is financial stress and personal stress. The morale of the people is going down. I believe our community has to get to the Lord," said Cheriyan who will only have fruit juice and water for the 21 days.

Church members have been circulating a poster door-to-door in the Southeast Valley inviting people to the church.

Cheriyan, of South Indian origin, has been undertaking yearly 21-day fasts since 2005, when he first was given the insight to fast.

"The [Holy Spirit](#) told me to have a prayer drive in the Phoenix Metropolitan area," he said.

With a few other church members, he drove around the Valley during the last seven days of that first fast, driving about six hours each day and concluding with a [prayer](#) rally. He continued the program each year.

Bobbi Crow, a non-Asian member of the church, said she was also fasting from March 30 for 21 days, apart from "a little nourishment at sundown" to keep her sustained.

"It's to intercede for the condition of our country and the community. People have lost their jobs and are losing their homes. If people put God first, the other things will eventually be taken care of," the Apache Junction resident said.

Cheriyan founded the church 11 years ago, and for three years it shared the facility of Sunrise Assembly of God in Gilbert. Last June, the church moved into a building of its own in Mesa, built at a cost of \$500,000, with a down payment of \$270,000. The 120-seat church caters to the 120-strong membership, most of whom have just moved from India and know little about life in the West. Services are held partly in Malayalam, a South Indian dialect, and partly in English.

Crow, who has spent two months in Kerala, South India, where Malayalam is spoken, said she missed the services she attended while there and was drawn to the local congregation.

"The whole church family is very loving, caring and compassionate. I love it even when they are speaking in Malayalam; It's like a heavenly language," she said.

