

Kaithayil Geevarghese Malpan - Reformation Leader

(1788 - 1855)

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Geevarghese Malpan (Professor) was born in 1788, to the Kaithayil family of Puthuppally near Kottayam. After his primary education, he learned Syriac from his uncle, Padinjaraekkoottu Korah Kathanar of Puthuppally. Interestingly, Abraham Malpan was also a student of Korah Kathanar, who was one of the eminent Syriac scholars of that time.

Geevarghese and his brother Koshy Kathanar became priests. Both of them decided to remain celibates. While staying in the vestry of the Puthuppally Church, both of them rendered commendable service to the parishioners. They were keen in house visits, and in conducting special meetings for the youth.

Palakunnathu Abraham Malpan and Kaithayil Geevarghese Malpan became professors in the Old Seminary (Theological College of the Church) in Kottayam. They were concerned about the need for reformation in the church. Their study of the Word of God and association with CMS (Church Missionary Society) missionaries helped them realize fully the meaning of the gospel and the freedom of the children of God.

In 1836, Abraham Malpan and Geevarghese Malpan, along with 10 other priests, submitted a memorandum to the then British Resident requesting him to make certain necessary changes in the Church. This is known as the 'Trumpet Call of Reformation' in the Church. However, their memorandum did not have the desired effect. Therefore Abraham Malpan and Kaithayil Geevarghese Malpan decided to take steps towards reformation while remaining within the Church. Kaithayil Geevarghese Malpan celebrated Holy Communion in Malayalam on 1 September, 1837, in the Kolladu Church. Afterwards Abraham Malpan conducted communion services in Malayalam in the Maramon Mar Thoma Church.

Geevarghese Malpan and his brother Koshy Kathanar had to face severe opposition from their Parishes in Kollad, Vakathanam, and Puthuppally. Some of their co-priests were against them and their reformation ideas. Koshy Kathanar was even beaten up by his rivals for altering the worship order. Later Geevarghese Malpan shifted his arena to Kunnamkulam area. He was called to his eternal home on May, 1855, and was buried in the Kottayam Seminary Chapel.

His able leadership for the reformation movement will be ever remembered by the faithful members of the Mar Thoma Church.

