

P. V. Thommy Upadesi - Malayalam Hymn Writer

(1881-1919)

Published by Adv. John Joseph Nalloor

Thommy Upadeshi was born in a very poor family of the Kunnamkulam Mar Thoma Parish in 1881. After his basic education, he became a teacher. But after few years of teaching, he became a full-time evangelist in the Mar Thoma Church.

Rev. C.M. Joseph, Vicar of the Kunnamkulam Parish encouraged him in his gospel work and Titus II Metropolitan appointed him as evangelist for Trichur and Perumbavoor.

Even though Thommy Upadeshi did not have any formal theological training, he was considered a walking encyclopedia of the Bible. He became an exponent of the Bible by reading it many times. In due course of time, he also learnt Tamil.

He was never financially well-off, and whatever he got he shared with the poor people for their upliftment.

He was a blessed hymn writer. In 1905, he published the hymn book “Vishudha Geethangal”, comprising 136 hymns. His language was simple and even the illiterate people could enjoy his writings.

The following hymns in the Mar Thoma Church Hymn book are written by him: 3 (3), 11(10), 12(11), 30(28), 56(56), 61(61), 67(67), 70(70), 71(71), 73(73), 96(96), 130(111), 135(126), 145(136), 243(221), 247(225), 286(286), 295(281), 345(345), 351(351), 366(242), 368(251).

In 1919, there was an outbreak of cholera in Kunnamkulam and many people lost their lives. Thommy Upadeshi volunteered to treat the patients and was eventually infected with cholera himself. He passed away on Wednesday, 10 July, 1919, at the age of 38.

Even though he died at a young age, his hymns still live in the hearts of Malayalee Christians irrespective of their group differences. His hymn (No 67) “*Ennodullha nin Sarva nanmakalhhkayi njaan/Enthu cheyyendu ninakkeshu para-ippolh*”, is a great and popular hymn which can be sung at any occasion - be it a marriage, birthday, worship time, send-off meeting, house warming or a funeral.

Another Hymn “*Enthathi-shayame! Daivaththin sneham Ethrra-manoharame! athu...*” is loved and even sung by non-Christians.

