

Rev. K. M. Varughese Kathanaar, Cherukakkassery, Kunnamkulam

(Translator of the first Maramon Convention in 1895)

(1867-1897)

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Varghese Achen was born on 25 Midhunam, 1043 M.E. (7 July, 1867) as the son of Maathu and Maathiri of Kakkassery family of Kunnamkulam. When he was 7 years old, he got severe small pox which left its marks all over his face. While studying in high school, at the age of 12 he married 8 year old Kunjai who unfortunately died within a short time. During his intermediate course from Maharajas College in Ernakulam, his parents' compelled him to get married again. So he got married to Thandamma, daughter of Thekkara Varghese.

From childhood he had a great desire to do Gospel work. He used to visit houses in his village with the Gospel from 7am to 12 noon. He used to help his father and brothers in their family business.

Varghese was the president of an association called "Village development Association" which worked for the welfare of the villagers. Prohibition (of alcohol) was the main agenda of this association. Varghese used to present gold rings to those who promised to quit drinking. Varghese was a close friend of hymn writer Rev. T. Koshy of the CMS Church (Church Mission Society).

In December, 1894, Titus I Mar Thoma visited Christos Mar Thoma Church in Kunnamkulam. Varghese was one of the speakers of a meeting held in connection with the Episcopal visit. Metropolitan was impressed by the leadership qualities of Varghese.

Many members from the Kunnamkulam Parish even requested Metropolitan to ordain Varghese. But Varghese was a married (remarried) man. During those days, married men were not ordained. In the Samasthalochana Samithi (Mandalam) meeting in the 1895, in Puthencavu, the Church gave an exception for Varghese and was ordained by Titus I Metropolitan as deacon in the Paliyekkara church in Tiruvalla.

In 1895, two evangelists, Words Worth and David from Ceylon (Sri Lanka) came to Kerala. The first Maramon convention was arranged in an island (Nishepamali Thuruthu) in river Pumba near the famous Aranmula temple. A pandal that could accommodate about 7000 people was constructed. Meetings were held from Friday 9 March, 1895, to Sunday, 18 March, 1895. Bishop Titus I gave the leadership for the meetings. David and Words Worth spoke in English and Deacon Kakkassery Varghese translated the message into Malayalam.

The orthodox group in the Church was not willing to accept Deacon Varghese, as he was a remarried man. Varghese was ordained as priest on 21 Makaram, 1071 (2 February, 1896) in the Nedumpuram Mar Thoma Church by Metropolitan Titus I. He never conducted Holy Communion because he personally believed that a remarried priest should not do so.

In 1897, the cholera epidemic spread all over Kunnakulam area. Achen visited patients and rendered all possible help to the needy. Many, including Achen's mother, died of cholera. Finally even Achen became sick and died on Thursday, 24 June, 1897, at the age of 29.

