

Rev. Thomas Koshy (Aatmopakari Achen)

(1857 – 1940)

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Rev. Koshy (b. 15 May, 1857) was a member of the Mukkadavil family of Kallada, Kollam district, Kerala. His father, Thomas, was an evangelist of London Missionary Society and later joined with the Church Mission Society. Rev. Koshy did his schooling in South Puthuppally, Mavelikkara and Tiruvalla. After passing his matriculation examination from the Kottayam College in 1881, he became the secretary to Bishop Speechley, who was the first bishop of the Anglican arch diocese of Travancore, Cochin.

After two years, he became the “writer” (administrator) of the Trichur mission and continued that post till 1891. Then he served as an evangelist for one year and later joined the Cambridge Nicholson Institute in Kottayam, for his Theological training.

On 24 March, 1895, he was ordained deacon of the CMS church in the All Saints Church, Trichur. On 19th October, 1896, he became a priest. He was a strong supporter of the revival movement in the Church. Rev. Koshy was a close friend of Cheru Kakkassery Achen of the Mar Thoma Church.

Together they visited many houses in Kunnamkulam, Chittoor and Pattambi. Even though he was a strong supporter of the Revival movement, he was very moderate in his thoughts and actions. Achen was the founder of the Trichur YMCA. He was the vicar of the CMS parishes in Kunnamkulam, Alleppey, Thalavady, and Pallam. On 27th January, 1929, he retired from active service of the church.

Rev. Koshy was a close friend of the Mar Thoma Church. While he was in Tiruvalla he used to conduct gospel meetings in Mar Thoma Parishes along with Punchamannil Mammen Upadeshi and Anjilithanam Varkey Ashan. Rev. Koshy was the main speaker of the 1903 Maramon Convention. People used to call him Eastern Moody (D. L. Moody (1837-1899) was a well known world evangelist).

Once while Achen was conducting an open air meeting near the Anaprampal Temple near Tiruvalla, the temple authorities became furious and stoned him and his supporters. Achen returned home with injuries and started praying. All of a sudden the temple elephant became berserk (mad) and ran amok. After conducting several rituals the cause of the elephant’s madness was discovered as the stoning of Achen. The temple authorities then apologized to Achen and requested him to pray for them and their elephant.

Rev. Koshy was a scholar and had an excellent command over the English and Malayalam. He was the founder and editor of a Christian Magazine called "Aatmopakari". For forty years he published that magazine. He was also a Hymn writer. He translated many Hymns from English to Malayalam. The following hymns in our Hymn Book (Kristheeya Keerththanangal) are written / translated by him. Hymns written by Koshy Achen are 10(9), 37(35), 190(179), 188(177), 194(183), 216(201), 220 (205), 221(206), 246(224), 297(283), 316(311). Hymns translated by Koshy Achen from English to Malayalam are 8(7), 31(29), 147(138), 149(140), 176(167), 186(175), 274(235).

Achen was also a talented artist and the Mastheads of the Malayalam News papers "Malayala Manorama" and "Nazrani Deepika" are some of his creations. He was a man who loved books. Koshy Achen's wife Achamma (daughter of Rev. P. M. Varughese of Mavelikkara) passed away on 27 January, 1919, in Tiruvalla. Achen was called home on 8 June, 1940, at the age of 83 while he was staying in Mavelikkara. He was an exemplary priest for all Christian denominations.

