

Sister Aleyamma Varghese, Pathanapuram, Sihora, (1916-2003)

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Aleyamma was born on 14 February, 1916, as the daughter of Geevarghese and Mariamma of the Maliyekkal family of the Maramon Mar Thoma Parish. Aleyamma accepted Jesus Christ as her personal saviour during the Revival movement of 1930 (M.E. 1105). In 1936, Aleyamma's family shifted residence to Pathanapuram. She was very active in all church activities right from childhood. After her School education, she joined Sevika Sanghom Vanitha Mandiram in Tiruvalla for Bible study and Mission Training. Miss Callaway was her principal.

In a convention meeting held in Pathanapuram, she dedicated her life for Mission work outside Kerala. As per the instructions of Palakkattachan (Rev. P. John Varghese, later became bishop in St. Thomas Evangelical Church) she decided to go to Sihora Ashram. Her brother, Chacko Varghese, was already a member of the Sihora Ashram. She reached Sihora on 21 October, 1951.

She started her Ashram work as a nursery teacher in a very remote village near Sihora. Classes were conducted under a big tamarind tree (there was no building). She was concerned about the health and hygiene of her students, and used to carry soap, oil, a towel and a comb with her to bathe her students in the village pond. From July, 1952, she worked in the Sihora Mission Clinic with Sister Chechamma Varkey, who was a trained nurse. They both visited villages around Sihora on horse cart (there was no other means of transportation) and attended to the medical needs of the women and children. In 1967, the clinic was converted into a hospital with 20 beds, and Dr. Sosamma Philip (Dr. Alexander Mar Thoma's sister) became the medical superintendent.

In addition to her hospital work, Sister Aleyamma was busy conducting classes for the village children. She worked for the upliftment of the women in the Sihora taluk. She was very generous, and whatever pocket money she got from her brothers and sisters for her personal needs, she happily donated to the needy.

For 52 years she faithfully served the Ashram and the villages in and around Sihora Taluk. She was a glowing light for the villagers. Many were saved through her selfless work. She was called home on Friday, 31 July, 2003, and was buried in the ashram cemetery. Her life is a challenge to all. There are millions in North Indian villages who have never heard about Jesus even once. Who will go there?

*Then I heard the Lord say "Whom shall I send? Who will be our messenger?"
I answered, "I will go! Send me!" Isaiah 6:8*

