

Vicar General Kovoov Eipe Thoma Kathanar (1842 - 1927)

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Kovoov Achen (also known as Eipe Thommy) was born on 2 Dec, 1842, to the Kovoov family of Tiruvalla. His parents were well educated, God fearing people. Thommy had his primary education in CMS School, Thokalasserry, Tiruvalla. He learned Syriac from his Uncle and became an expert of Syriac liturgy and service orders.

At the age of 16 (in 1857), Eipe Thommy was ordained as deacon in the Kottayam Old Seminary by Mathews Mar Athanasius Metropolitan. The Metropolitan was very impressed with the deacon's knowledge of Syriac as he could sing/chant the Syrian Hymns much better than in his mother tongue, Malayalam. In 1858, he married Elizuba, a member of the Marettu family, of Kalloppara. After the death of his first wife, he married Mariamma a member of the Mulamoottil family of Nedumpuram in 1894.

Eipe Thommy became a priest in 1860 and Vicar General in 1891. He bought the Panchayathu Purayidam - the SCS compound in Tiruvalla, Headquarters of the Mar Thoma Church - for Rs.600 in 1892. Realising his leadership qualities, the Maharaja of Travancore nominated him as a member of his legislative assembly.

When Thomas Mar Athanasius, the second Metropolitan after the reformation, suddenly died without consecrating a successor, Kovoov Achen and others brought the Metropolitan of the Independent Church in Thozhiyoor to consecrate Titus I.

Achen was called home on 27 January, 1917 and was buried in the St. Thomas Church cemetery, SCS compound. The VGM Hall (Vicar General Eipe Thoma Kathanar Memorial Hall) in the SCS compound stands as a memory of Achen's great life.

"In all the calamities he had to go through, and in all the difficulties he had to face, Titus I Mar Thoma had the counsel and support of the Very Rev. Ipe Thoma Kathanar, who was Vicar General of the Church. He was a man of iron will and his personality gave confidence and hope not only to the Metropolitan but also to the priests and members of the Church, when in doubt or despair about the future. His advice and help was available to Titus II Metropolitan during the first part of his period of administration."

- The Most Rev. Juhanon Mar Thoma in his book "Christianity in India and a Brief History of the Mar Thoma Syrian Church".

