

CHURCH HISTORY FOR THE MONTH OF AUGUST

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August 1890: First paid evangelist is appointed by the Evangelistic Association. The first paid evangelist of the Malabar Mar Thoma Syrian Christian Evangelistic Association was Chakkalayil Cherian Upadesi. His salary was 8 rupees per month. By 1894 there were 4 paid evangelists and by 1903 their number increased to 17. Now there are more than 230 paid evangelists working in 46 mission fields.

2 August, 1100: William the Conqueror's son and successor Rufus, a wicked king who delighted in torture, seizing church property, and blasphemy, is mysteriously killed while hunting, by an arrow that flew out of nowhere. No one mourned, and England took his eternal damnation for granted.

3 August, 1981: Rev. K. G. Oommen (b 27 Nov 1901) passes away. Born as the son of Gheeverughese and Mariamma of Kattunilathu family of Niranam, he became a priest in 1940. He was in charge of our Boys Home in Punalur for many years. He gave able leadership for the establishment of our mission fields in Tamil Nadu. He was also a convention speaker.

3 August, 1492: Christopher Columbus sets sail from Spain for the "Indies." Though the explorer was in part driven by a quest for gold and glory, he also saw himself as a missionary. He thought, if there were a shortcut to the East by sea, missionaries could be sent there faster, thus enabling Christians to meet the provision for world evangelization before the Lord could return.

6 August, 258: Emperor Valerian executes Bishop of Rome Sixtus II for preaching a sermon in a cemetery. The emperor originally tolerated Christians, but switched to persecuting them because he believed they were responsible for the plagues, earthquakes, and other disasters that disturbed his reign.

7 August, 1893: Birth of Juhanon Mar Thoma Metropolitan. Dr Juhanon Mar Thoma was the metropolitan of our Church from 1947 to 1976. He provided the Church with the emblem having the motto: "Lighted to Lighten". This has been appreciated by many leaders of Christian churches.

8 August, 1980: Titusji - Christian Freedom fighter (born 18 Feb 1905) passes away. Titusji (Titus, Theverthundiyl, member of Maramon Mar Thoma Parish) and his wife Annamma were members of Gandhiji's Sabarmati Ashram. Gulzarilal Nanda (one of the former prime ministers of India) and Titusji were the secretaries of Sabarmati Ashram. He was a close friend of Gandhiji and Gandhiji even visited his house in Maramon during his visit to Travancore. Titusji was the only Christian who took part in the Dandi March (to break the salt law) in 1930. On one of his visit to Kottayam, Titusji burnt British clothes and hats and gave a fiery speech to thousands of Keralites. After Independence, Titusji went to

Bhopal and he could help hundreds of youngsters to find job in Madhya Pradesh. He was a dynamic figure in the social and church life of Bhopal for many years.

8 August, 1471: Thomas a Kempis, Dutch mystic and devotional author of *The Imitation of Christ*, dies at the age of 91. In his classic, Thomas wrote, "We must imitate Christ's life and His ways if we are to be truly enlightened and set free from the darkness of our own hearts. Let it be the most important thing we do, then, to reflect on the life of Jesus Christ."

9 August, 1883: Robert Moffat, pioneer missionary to southern Africa and an inspiration (and father-in-law) to David Livingstone, dies.

10 August 1886: Death of Joseph. M. Scriven. Joseph M Scriven., Irish Plymouth Brethren hymn writer, died on 10 August 1886. He spent most of his life performing menial work for the destitute. His best known hymn is the uplifting "What a Friend We Have in Jesus"- "Enthu nallor sakhi Yeshu "(.Hymn no 173 (164) in our book).

10 August, 1893: Thomas Mar Athanasius Metropolitan passes away. He was our Metropolitan from 1877 to 1893. It was during his time that we lost all our physical properties except a few church buildings, through the case known as the "Seminary Suit". The Evangelistic Association was established in 1888. Though the episcopate of Thomas Mar Athanasius was a period of trial and suffering for the church it was also one of great spiritual promises for the future.

10 August, A.D 70: Roman troops, sent by Roman Emperor Vespasian to put down a Jewish rebellion, break through the walls of Jerusalem and destroy the temple. "Some of the disciples were talking about the Temple, how beautiful it looked with its fine stones....Jesus said, "All this you see – the time will come when not a single stone here will be left in its place; every one will be thrown down" (Luke 21:5-6). Jerusalem and the Temple was destroyed by the Roman Commander Titus; with 70,000 soldiers from the Fifth, Tenth and Fifteenth Legions. It is said that the event occurred on the same day of the year as the earlier destruction of Solomon's temple by Babylonians.

13 August, 1859: Laying of the foundation stone for the Cambridge Nicholson Institute (CNI) in Kottayam. This institute was established by the CMS missionaries for the Theological education of the Clergy. Many of our priests are graduates from this institution. The Mar Thoma Theological College in Kottayam was established in 1926.

13 August, 1908: Ira D. Sankey, best known as the music leader in D. L. Moody's evangelistic crusades, dies.

14 August, 1937: Birth of P. D. John, author of "Prreatthanakk- uththaram nalkunnone" (Hymn no. 375). Born as the son of David and Annamma of Plakkal house in Kangazha, he was a communist party worker. In 1952, he attended a gospel meeting of Evangelist Unni Upadeshi, and during that meeting he became

“a new creation”. For the next 14 years he assisted Unni Upadeshi in his Gospel work, and after his theological education he joined our Yuvajana Sakhyam Office as the Music assistant. He has written more than 150 Hymns. About 100 of his hymns are published in our Maramon Convention Song books.

15 August: Being Independence Day, we remember, with gratitude, all who labored for our freedom from the foreigners.

16 August, 1863: Abraham Lincoln signs the Emancipation (The Act setting free from slavery) Proclamation.

17 August, 1761: William Carey, who would become a tremendously successful Baptist missionary to India, is born in Northampton shire, England.

18 August, 1688: John Bunyan, author of *Pilgrim's Progress* preaches his last sermon, in London.

20 August, 1939: Birth of Rev. Abraham Lincoln. Born as a member of the Vadakkethu family of Kuriannoor, he was a gifted hymn writer and singer. He was the General Secretary of the Yuvajana Sakhyam, Asst. Secretary of the Sunday School Samajam and Director of the Dept. of Sacred Music and Communication. He was called home on 19 April, 2004 while he was serving as the director of the Spirituality Centre in Adoor. He was buried on 22 April, 2004, in Kuriannoor at the St. Thomas Church Cemetery.

20 August, 1912: William Booth, founder and first General of the Salvation Army, dies.

23 August, 1948: The "fellowship of churches which accept our Lord Jesus Christ as God and Savior"- the World Council of Churches- is formally constituted in Amsterdam.

26 August, 1901: The American Standard Version of the Bible is first published by Thomas Nelson and Sons. The A.S.V. spun off from the 1881 English Revised Version, the first nondenominational English revision since publication of the King James Version in 1611.

27 August, 1727: Count Nicolaus von Zinzendorf's Moravian community at Herrnhut, Germany, begins a round-the-clock "prayer chain." Reportedly, at least one person in the community was praying every minute of the day—for more than a century.

27 August, 1910: Agnes Gonxha Bojaxhiu is born to an Albanian couple in Yugoslavia. At age 18, Agnes entered an Irish convent. She later became known worldwide as Mother Teresa

28 August, A.D 430: St. Augustine passes away. Augustine was born on 13 November, 354, in Tagaste, Numidia, in Roman North Africa, of a mixed

marriage. His father was a pagan, but his mother, Monica, was a Christian. It was because of her prayers that Augustine became a church leader and later a saint. Nobody before Martin Luther (reformation Leader) has influenced the Church as much as Augustine.

28 August, 1440 (Chinghom 12, 616 M.E): Beginning of the Maramon Mar Thoma Parish. Members of the Niranam Parish who were staying in Maramon found it extremely difficult to attend the Church services in Niranam regularly. Those days country boats (Kettuvallams) were the only mode of transport (There were no road facilities). So one grandmother, her children (we do not know their names), and the members of the Kulathakkal Family who stayed in the Maliyekkal Purayidam, gave leadership for the establishment of the Maramon Mar Thoma Parish

28 August, 1828: Leo Tolstoy, Russian novelist and social reformer, is born. Though the Russian Orthodox Church excommunicated him in 1901, his later works emphasized Christian love and the teachings of Jesus.

28 August, 1840: Ira D. Sankey, who for 25 years led the music when D.L. Moody preached, is born in Pennsylvania. He was called home on Aug 13, 1908.

29 August, A.D 29: Herod kills John the Baptist. Since the fifth century, this has been the traditional date for the beheading of John the Baptist.

31 August, 1688: John Bunyan dies. English Puritan writer and preacher John Bunyan, author of "Pilgrim's Progress" dies at the age of 69. Though one of England's most famous authors even in his own day, he maintained his pastoral duties to his death, which was caused by a cold he caught while riding through the rain to reconcile a father and son.

31 August, 1937 (Chinghom 15, 1012 M.E): Abraham Malpan celebrated the First Holy Communion in Malayalam (it was in Syriac language till then), in the Maramon Mar Thoma Parish. Malpan had translated the liturgy into Malayalam, as the Syriac language was unknown to most of the congregation and sometimes even to the celebrants.

31 August, 1535: Pope Paul II excommunicates English King Henry VIII, who had been declared by an earlier pope as "Most Christian King" and "Defender of the Faith". This later led to the creation of the Church of England (Anglican Church).

