

CHURCH HISTORY FOR THE MONTH OF FEBRUARY

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February 1918: Sadhu Sunder Singh Preaches at Maramon Convention. Sadhu Sunder Singh (born 3 Sep, 1889) was one of the speakers of the Maramon Convention of 1917. He spoke in Hindi and the translation was done by Mr. M.O. Oommen, Chief Conservator of Travancore. Sadhu drew crowds greater than previous conventions. So much so that before the end of the week the Pandal had to be enlarged and at the final meeting about 32,000 people gathered to hear his message.

1 February, 1887: Birth of Rev. P. K. Jacob, Polachirakkal, Mavelikkara. Jacob Achen was a student of the CMS College Kottayam. He had his theological education from the Cambridge Nicholson Institute (CNI) in Kottayam. He served the Mavelikkara Parish continuously for 55 years! He was called to his eternal home on 25 May 1972.

1 February, 1880: Dedication Service of Rt. Rev. J. M. Speechly, first Anglican Bishop of the Travancore - Cochin Diocese. In 1814, Rt. Rev. Middleton was appointed as the First Anglican Bishop of India. His Headquarters was in Calcutta. In 1835, Rt. Rev. Daniel Carrey was appointed as the Bishop of Madras, who controlled and supervised the Anglican Church activities in Travancore and Cochin. On July 25, 1879, Rev. J.M. Speechly was consecrated as the Bishop of the newly formed Travancore Cochin Diocese. He came to Kottayam on 27 January 1880 and his dedication service was held in the Cathedral Church in Kottayam on 1st February 1880. He returned to England in 1889.

2 February, 1910: (Makaram 20, 1085 M.E) Inauguration of Nicholson School, in Tiruvalla. Nicholson School was established in Tiruvalla with the help of Mrs. Nicholson and Miss. Mckibbin. The complete cost for the construction of the school buildings were donated by Miss. Mckibbin. Inauguration of the school was held on Wednesday 2 Feb 1910, by the Metropolitan Titus II. For many years Miss. Mckibbin continued her financial help for the School.

2 February, 1948: Rev. C. P. Philipose, Cherukara Naranathu, Ayroor, passes away. (b. 25 May 1868) Rev. C. P. Philipose (Ayroor Achen) was elected as the General Secretary of the Mar Thoma Evangelistic Association in 1890 and he continued in that post for more than fifty years till he stepped down because of poor health. He gave able leadership for the Maramon convention and for many years he was the translator for the Maramon Convention. He was called to his eternal home on 2nd February 1948.

4 February, 1814: Birth of Hermann Gundert. Hermann Gundert was born in Stuttgart in Germany. It was his desire to become a soldier, but the sudden death of one of his sisters made radical changes in his life. He became a Missionary for the Basel Mission and came to Illikunnu near Tellicherry, in North Kerala and translated the Bible into Malayalam. He started his translation on 25 January 1843 and finished it on 23 June 1884. He was called home to be with the Lord in the year 1893 in Germany.

4 February, 1906: Lutheran pastor and theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer is born in Breslau, Germany. He opposed the Nazis as one of Germany's Confessing Church leaders. Believing that Hitler was acting as a madman, he joined a plot to kill him, but the plot was discovered and Bonhoeffer was arrested and eventually hanged by the Nazis in 1945.

5 February, 1597: Twenty-six Japanese Christians are crucified for their faith in Nagasaki, Japan. By 1640, thousands of Japanese Christians had been martyred.

5 February, 1864: Having already established herself as a poet, 44-year-old Fanny Crosby pens her first hymn. She wrote more than 8,000 hymns. Hymn Nos. 91,171 (162), 251(229), 282(359) and 350 in our Malayalam Hymn book are written by her.

5 February, 1900: Birth of Rev. K. A. Varughese, Chiramel Karuvelil, Thalavady. While Rev. Varghese was the Vicar of the Pattoor Parish in Trivandrum, he gave leadership for the formation of the Youth League movement in our Church which later helped the formation of the Yuvajana Sakhyam. He has written many books including the biographies of Abraham Mar Thoma Metropolitan and Very. Rev. V. P. Mammen. Karuvelil Achen passed away in 1958.

7 February, 1938: After years of being closely watched by the Nazi secret police, Lutheran pastor Martin Niemoller is put on trial. He was subsequently confined in a concentration camp, but he survived and went onto provide valuable leadership at the World Council of Churches from 1948 -1968.

7 February, 1883: Birth of Mahakavi K. V. Simon. Mr. K. V. Simon was a member of Kunnumpurathu family at Edayarnmula near Chengannur. He became a teacher of the Edayarnmula Mar Thoma School at the age of 13, and after 21 years of teaching he resigned from the job and rest of his life was spent for gospel and literary work. He was one of the greatest Malayalam Christian poets. He was a master of many languages including English, Hindi, Telugu, Kannada, Greek, Latin, Hebrew and Syriac. Hymns written by him are used by all groups of Kerala Christians for their worship services. His book "Veda Viharam" (Maha Kaaviyam) based on the first book of the Bible - Genesis made him one of

the prominent poets of the Malayalam language. Hymn Nos.2, 58, 62, 69, 80, 84, 163, 413, and 414 in our Hymn Book are written by him.

8 February, 1989: Rev. K.T Thomas –“The Saint of Sihora” passes away. Rev K.T.Thomas was a member of the Karimparampil family of Anaprampal near Tiruvalla. Achen along with Rev. M. P Mathew and Rev. John Verghese established our Sihora Ashram in 1943. Then the average salary of a parish priest was Rs.15 per month and an evangelist Rs. 3 or a little more. Our Church was not in position to send out missionaries or evangelists outside Kerala on a salary basis. But these Achens fully depending on the promises of God started the Sihora mission.

8 February, 1843: Birth of Titus I Mar Thoma. Titus I Mar Thoma (son of Abraham Malpan) was widely recognized as a saintly Bishop. During his time as Metropolitan of the Church, the well known educational institutions, Mar Thoma Seminary Kottayam and S.C. Seminary Tiruvalla came into being. The Sunday School Samajam was established during his time. He was called to his eternal home on 29th October 1909.

8 February, 1975: The Consecration of Joseph Mar Irenaeus (b.June 27, 1931) and Easow Mar Timotheos (25 Nov 1932 to 11 April 1988) was held in Tiruvalla. Mar Irenaeus belongs to the Palakunnathu family in Maramon. Easow Mar Timotheos of Thazhayil Family of Elanthur (Thonniyamala) was a member of our Sihora Ashram for 21 years.

February 9, 1982: Formation of Mar Thoma Retired Clergy Conference. The retirement age for the clergy - 65 years - was introduced in our Church in 1965. The first meeting of the retired clergy was held on 9 February 1982 in the Poolatheen Hall in Tiruvalla under the leadership of Metropolitan Alexander Mar Thoma. From 1984 onwards this conference has been recognized by the Mandalam as an organisation of the Church entitled to send a representative to the Mandalam.

February 11, 1929: The Lateran Treaty is signed by Mussolini and the Holy See, recognizing Vatican City as a sovereign state. At a mere 109 acres (0.4 Sq km), it became the smallest nation in the world. (Present population 870).

11-18 February 2001: First Maramon Convention 1895 (Maramon convention) The first Maramon Convention was held on the Parappuzha Manalpuram River bank in between Maramon Mar Thoma Church and Aranmula Temple - for 10 days from Friday, 9 March to Sunday, 18 March 1895. The Pandal (Tent) was big enough to accommodate 7000 persons. Mr. David and Mr. Wordsworth were the main speakers. Mar Thoma Metropolitan Titus I inaugurated the first meeting.

14 February 1919: Formation of Sevika Sanghom. Mar Thoma Suvishesha Sevika Sanghom was formed in 1919 in a meeting held in the Maramon

Convention Pandal under the leadership of Dr. Abraham Mar Thoma Suffragan Metropolitan. On the next day a committee with two secretaries and 15 members were selected for the running of the Sanghom. Polachirakkal Puthiya Veetil Mariamma and Anjilivelil Rachelamma were the first secretaries.

14 February, 1843: Consecration of Mathews Mar Athanasius Metropolitan - Mar Thoma XIII (23 April 1818 - 15 July 1877). Mathews Mar Athanasius, Palakunnathu, Maramon was the nephew (brother's son) of the reformation leader Abraham Malpan (1796—1845). His first teacher was the famous Christian poet "Chekottu Aasan". Mathews became deacon at the age of 13 and after his education at Kottayam and Madras (1837-1840) he was sent to Mardin in Syria by his uncle Abraham Malpan. During his two year stay and study in Mardin with the Patriarch, he was consecrated as Bishop at the age of 23, on 14 February 1842 with the name Mathews Mar Athanasius. He returned to Cochin in 1843 and became the Malankara Metropolitan in 1852 through the Royal declaration of the Maharaja of Travancore.

14 February, 1934: CMS starts first Floating Dispensary in India (Medical Mission Sunday 4 February 2001) Church Missionary Society started its medical board in Travancore in 1933 to provide medical aid to the Central Travancore and Kuttanadan villages. During that time only big cities were having Government Hospitals. It was very difficult to provide medical help to the Kuttanadan villages, which were surrounded by water. Thus the CMS started a floating Dispensary on 14 February 1934. The dispensary was actually a big Kettuvallam (country boat) with a doctor, a compounder and a boatman working in it. The first floating dispensary was a big success. In the first year itself, they treated 15,000 patients and conducted 250 operations. So a second floating dispensary was started on 1st January 1937.

15 February, 1954: John Easow Mullasseril, Author of "Nalla devane! njangalh Ellaavareyum" Hymn No 199 (186) passes away. Easow was born on 12 October 1874 in Mullasseril House, of Pandanadu near Chengannur. For few years he was health inspector in Ootty, Kodaikanal, then he became the manager of the Spencer Company in Trichur. In addition to his secular work he was fully involved in the Gospel work. In 1914 based on Psalms 23 he wrote the Hymn " Nalla devane....."

17 February, 1546: Martin Luther, (b. Nov 10, 1483) leader of reformation, passes away. The reformation was a rediscovery of a lost gospel, a fresh realization that man is saved by faith alone, through grace alone. Luther died due to heart attack on 17 February 1546 while he was on a preaching tour at his birth place - Eisleben in Germany.

17 February, 1879: (Kumbham 5, 1054 M.E): Birth of Mr. Poikayil Yohannan. (Poikayil Shri Kumara Guru) Poikayil Yohannan - (Kumaran) - was born on 5 Kumbham 1054 M.E (February 17, 1879) in Eraviperoor in Tiruvalla Taluk in a

slave family. His masters gave him the name Yohannan and made him a member of the Mar Thoma Church. He studied the Bible thoroughly and became an evangelist of the Mar Thoma Syrian Church. His messages were against the social injustice and evils such as slavery, untouchability etc. The Church couldn't accommodate his teaching. He left the Mar Thoma Church and later founded the organisation PRDS - Prathyasha Raksha Daiva Sabaha.

19 February, 1969: Dr. Juhanon Mar Thoma writes in support of the Publication of the Mar Thoma Church Directory. For many of our leaders the publication of a Directory was "an impossible and unwanted" task. Some even claimed that it will invite God's curse like that of King David's time when he counted his people (2 Samuel Ch.24). But Metropolitan Juhanon Mar Thoma strongly supported the idea and the first Mar Thoma Church Directory was published in 1969.

20 February, 1916: Mosha Vatsalam passes away. The famous Christian Hymn writer Mosha Vatsalam (b 1843) was the son of Arunanandh, an Evangelist from Trivandrum. He started writing Hymns at the age of 29 and wrote more than 250 Hymns and few books connected with music. Some of his famous hymns are "*Aashwaasame enikkerre thingeedunnu*" and "*Yerrushalemin impa veede.*"

22 February, 1936: First Ordination service outside Kerala. The Mar Thoma congregation in Madras was formed in 1915. As there were no resident priests in Madras, the spiritual needs of the members were fulfilled by visiting priests and evangelists. Many requests were sent to Titus II Metropolitan for a resident Priest. Deacon C. K. Mathai, who completed his Theological studies in the Kottayam seminary, was sent to Madras to look after the spiritual needs of the congregation. Bishop Titus II even made arrangements for his intermediate studies at the Madras Christian College.

To fulfill the long cherished desire of the Madras Congregation, Titus II decided to conduct the ordination ceremony in Madras itself. Titus II ordained Deacon C. K. Mathai and another person as priests in the St. John's Church in Madras. Very Rev. V. P. Mammen, Rev. M.G. Zachariah Malpan, and Rev. V. I. Philipose and priests from sister churches were present for the Ordination ceremony.

23 February , 1455: (traditional date): Johannes Gutenberg publishes the Bible, the first book ever printed on a press with movable type.

23 February, 1892: Birth of Rev. P. T. Varghese (Haripad Achen). Rev. Varghese was a member of the Orthodox Church. He was ordained as a deacon by His Holiness Chathuruthil Mar Gregorious Thirumeni (Parumala Thirumeni) and later as priest by His Holiness Abdul Messiah Patriarch. On 23rd August 1923, Rev. Varghese joined the Mar Thoma Church. He was the founder President of the Punalur YMCA.

24 February, 1208: Francis of Assisi experiences a vision in the Church of Portunucula, Italy. Though not his first vision, it convinced him to begin a mission of preaching, repentance, singing, caring for lepers, and aiding the peasants. Most notably, he and his followers renounced wealth and followed absolute poverty.

25 February, 1925: Inauguration of Vanitha Mandiram. To give training for the women workers of the Mar Thoma Suvishesha Sevika Sanghom, Vanitha Mandiram was established in Tiruvalla in 1925. A Church Mission Society (CMS) missionary Miss. Kellaway from Australia was willing to give the training and necessary leadership. After serving the Vanitha Mandiram for 20 years she returned to Australia in September 1946.

25 February, 1905: Formation of Mar Thoma Sunday School Samajam - In a meeting held on Saturday 25 February, 1905 in the Maramon Convention Pandal under the leadership of Rev.C. P. Philipose the following decisions were made: **1.** All the Sundays Schools (52 Schools) which are run by various parishes of the church are to be included in this Samajam. **2.** The name of this association will be "Malankara Mar Thoma Suriyani Christiyani Sunday School Samajam." **3.** Headquarters of the Samajam will be in Tiruvalla. **4.** Mr. V. P. Mammen will be first secretary **5.** A committee is to be formed for the running of the Samajam.

25 February, 1925: Consecration of Bishop E. A. L. Moore - Fourth Bishop of the Anglican Diocese of Travancore and Cochin. He was consecrated in England by the Archbishop of Canterbury. He came to Kottayam on 10th August, 1925. He had a great concern for the people from the backward community. He ordained Rev. P. J. Isaac and Rev. C. I. Mathai – both were from the backward community. He served the diocese for 12 years. He was a very generous man who donated his full salary for charitable work in the diocese.

27 February, 280: Constantine, the first Roman Emperor converted to Christianity, is born. Though, some scholars question the authenticity of Constantine's conversion (which came after he saw a vision on the battlefield), the Emperor did seek to settle church controversies, and he called the Council of Nicea in A.D. 325.

27 February, 1881 (M.E. Kumbham 15, 1056): Metropolitan Suspends Vicars for solemnizing the marriage on Sunday morning. One of the Vicars of the Maramon Parish solemnized the marriage of his son a deacon on a Sunday morning with the help of another priest. All the three of them were suspended from official duties for violating the fourth Commandment (Observe the Sabbath and keep it holy).

27 February, 380: Roman Emperor Theodosius makes Christianity the official law of the land. "It is our will," he decreed, "that all the peoples we rule shall practice that religion that Peter the Apostle transmitted to the Romans".

29 February, 1528: Patrick Hamilton, a follower of Martin Luther who had returned to his country, Scotland to preach the Reformation, is burned at the stake on orders from Cardinal David Beaton. In retaliation, Protestant nobles assassinated the cardinal. This event effectively began the Scottish Reformation.

