

CHURCH HISTORY FOR THE MONTH OF JANUARY

Published by: Thomas John Philip Nalloor

1 January, 1937: Second Floating Dispensary of Church Missionary Society (CMS). CMS 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. So the CMS started a floating dispensary in 1934. The dispensary was actually a big Kettuvallam (country boat) with a doctor and a compounder working in it. The first floating dispensary was a big success; in the very first year they treated 15,000 patients and conducted 250 operations. So a second floating dispensary was started on 1 January 1937.

1 January, 1622: New Year starts from 1 January instead of March 25. The Roman Catholic Church adopts January 1 as the beginning of the year, rather than March 25. Till that time it was generally accepted that the New Year began on 25 March.

1 January, 1643: Baptism of Renowned Scientist Isaac Newton. English mathematician and physicist Sir Isaac Newton is baptized at St. John's Church in Colsterworth, England. Deeply interested in religion throughout his life, Newton (known especially for formulating the laws of gravitation) acknowledged Jesus as Savior of the world, but not God incarnate.

1 January, 1863: Freedom for slaves. American President Abraham Lincoln frees all slaves in Confederate states by issuing the Emancipation Proclamation. Churches throughout North American States held candlelight vigils commemorating the event

2 January, 1792: Edward Perronet, author of the Hymn "All Hail the Power of Jesus' name" (Hymn No. 90 in our Book) passes away. Edward was born at Sandrige, Kent in 1726. The Hymn was published in 1779. It is a hymn that will never die. Edward was called home on 2nd January, 1792 and was buried in Canterbury Cathedral.

2 January, 1921: Pittsburgh radio station KDKA broadcasts the first religious programme over the airwaves: a vesper service of Calvary Episcopal Church. The senior pastor, unimpressed by the landmark broadcast, didn't even participate in the service, leaving his junior associate to conduct it. The two KDKA engineers (one Jewish, the other Catholic), were asked to dress in choir robes to be less obtrusive. Today religious broadcasting is a multi-billion dollar industry.

3 January, 1521: Excommunication of Martin Luther. Pope Leo X creates a bull (Papal Order) of excommunication for Martin Luther that would have deprived him of civil rights and protection, but before its execution, Holy Roman Emperor Charles V allows Luther the opportunity to recant his beliefs at the Diet of Worms. When Luther instead affirms his beliefs, the bull is carried out .

3 January, 1840: Joseph de Veuster, who, as Roman Catholic Missionary Father Damien gave his life ministering to lepers in Hawaii, is born in Tremolo, Belgium. He was called home on 15 April 1889.

3 January, 1653: Oath of Coonan Cross - Under the influence of Portuguese Empire a synod was convened at Udayamperoor near Ernakulam in 1599 and the Malankara Church was made part of the Roman Catholic Church. People who wished for freedom from the supremacy of Roman Catholic Church tried to get one bishop from Babylon. A bishop named Ahathulla came to Malankara in 1652, but he was caught and killed by the Portuguese in Goa. The Syrian Christians were infuriated and on 3rd January, 1653 a large number of them gathered in a church in Mattancherry (Cochin). They tied ropes to the granite cross in front of the Church and by touching the ropes took the oath severing their connection with Roman Catholic Church. This incident is known as the Oath of Coonan Cross. (Coonan means Bent – The Cross slant to one side during oath taking ceremony)

4 January, 1581: James Ussher, Archbishop of Armagh, Ireland, is born. Famous for a chronology of the Bible that was repeatedly printed in the King James Bible Versions. He was so highly esteemed that Oliver Cromwell gave him a state funeral and had him buried in Westminster Abbey.

4 January, 1965: T. S. Eliot, the most influential English writer in the twentieth century and a devout Christian, who wove his religious convictions into his work, dies.

6 January, A.D. 548: Change of date of Christmas. The Jerusalem Church observes Christmas on this date (6 January) for the last time as the Western Church moves to celebrating the birth of Jesus to 25th December.

6 January , 1850: Conversion of Charles Spurgeon (b. *June 19, 1834*)
Charles Spurgeon, who would become one of the greatest preachers of all time, converts to Christianity after receiving a vision, "not a vision to my eyes, but to my heart. I saw what a Savior Christ was," he wrote, "I can never tell you how it was, but I no sooner saw Whom I was to believe than I also understood what it was to believe, and I did believe in one moment"

7 January, 1965: Daniel Case - Final Judgement from Supreme Court. The case O.S. No. 116 of 1955 filed in the District Court of Kottayam on 29 July 1955 by (Plaintiffs) 'Mr. Nina Daniel and others' against (Defendants) 'Most Rev. Juhanon Mar Thoma Metropolitan and others' are known as Daniel Case. The main prayer of the Plaintiffs was to restrict Juhanon Mar Thoma from holding the post of Metropolitan on the claims he rejected the faith of the Mar Thoma Church. After 10 years of litigation, judgement was given in favour of the Defendant Juhanon Mar Thoma by the Supreme Court of India.

7 January, 1898: Birth of Rev. Dr. C E Abraham. The Rev Dr. C. E. Abraham (7th January 1898 - 18 March 1985) was a member of Chruthottathill family in Kozhencherry. Ordained as deacon in 1920 and priest in 1930. From 1925 to 1959 he was Professor/Principal of the Serampore Theological College. In addition to that he was the General Secretary of the Mar Thoma Yuvajana Sakhyam and Evangelistic Association. Rev. Abraham also served as a visiting professor for many foreign universities around the world. He wrote many books including "Church History" and "Builders of Indian Churches". He was the editor of the First Mar Thoma Church Directory. Rev. Abraham will be remembered as one of the most learned and farsighted priests of the Mar Thoma Church.

10 January, 1739: Ordination of George Whitefield. George Whitefield, the preacher who sparked America's first great awakening, is ordained to the Anglican ministry. Whitefield took to open-air preaching after jealous ministers denied him the use of their pulpits, and he was perfectly suited to it - his booming voice, it was reported, could be heard a mile away

11 January 1888: (27 Dhanu 1064 M.E): Third meeting of the Evangelistic Association at Nedumprayar - Maramon School. One of the main decisions taken in this meeting was that all contributions to the association should be voluntary and no one should be compelled or burdened to make any payment to the Association. That practice of voluntary contribution still continues in our Church.

11 January, 2000: Alexander Mar Thoma Valiya Metropolitan passes away. He was born on 10 April, 1913, as the son of Rev. M. C. George, Maliyekkal, and Kuriannoor, became a priest on 5 January, 1945 and was consecrated as Bishop in 1953, together with Thomas Mar Athanasius and Philipose Mar Chrysostom. In 1976, after the demise of Dr. Juhanon Mar Thoma, he became our Metropolitan.

14 January, 1875: Theologian, medical missionary, organist, musical historian, and winner of the 1952 Nobel Peace Prize Albert Schweitzer is born. His Quest of the Historical Jesus (1906) is considered the foundation for that subject.

15 January, 1929: Baptist minister Martin Luther King, Jr., America's most visible civil rights leader from 1955 until his assassination in 1968, is born in Atlanta.

15 January, 1535: Henry VIII, King of England, declares himself head of the English Church (The Church of England).

16 January, 1836: Mavelikkara Padiyoola 1836. The first CMS Missionary, Rev. Thomas Norton came to Kerala in 1816 and three more Missionaries came in the following years and worked with Malankara Church authorities in cordial relationship. But soon the friction between the Missionaries and the Malankara Metropolitan started and the Church was not willing to accept the reforms brought by the Missionaries in the fields of religious education of the clergies and the accounting systems in the parishes. On 16 January, 1836 a synod was called at Mavelikkara and resolved not to accept the reforms of the Missionaries. It was decided to settle the claims on the properties between the Metropolitan and the Missionaries by arbitration. The agreement made in Mavelikkara is known as the Mavelikkara Padiyoola.

17 January A.D. 356 (traditional date): Antony of Egypt, regarded as the founder of Christian monasticism, dies at age 105. Committed to a life of solitude and absolute poverty, he took two companions with him into the desert when he knew his death was near. They were ordered to bury him without a marker so that his body would never become an object of reverence.

20 January, 1569: Miles Coverdale, publisher of the first printed English Bible and the man who completed William Tyndale's translation of the Old Testament, dies at 81.

21 January, 1980: Pastor. V. J. Jacob, Chennithala (b.1926), Author of "*Lokaththilekayaashrayam en yeshu maathram*" Song no 58 Maramon Convention 2000, passes away. He was a High School teacher for many years and in 1959 he wrote the above song, a favorite of the Kerala Christians for their public and private worship services.

22 January, 1844: Birth of Abraham Kathanar, Valiya Veettil, Kumbanad. He became deacon in 1856 at the age of 12. He was the Vicar of the Kumbanad Valiya Palli for 55 years till his death on June 1911.

22 January, 1918: Birth of Very. Rev. A. A. Paylee, Rayamangalam. He became deacon on 30 September, 1944 and priest on 3 February, 1945. Achen was Professor in Alwaye, Union Christian College and afterwards he became the Principal of the Christian College, Chengannur. He was called home on 11 May 1991.

25 January, 1954: Sara Chacko passes away. Sara Chacko (b.13 Feb 1905) was a member of the Mazhuvancherriparampathu family of Ayyanpally. Her father M. A. Chacko was the Diwan-Peshkar, of the Kingdom of Cochin. In 1945 Sara became the Principal of the Esabella Thobourn College, Lucknow. In 1947 she was the World YWCA Vice President. In 1951 she became President of the

World Council of Churches. (W.C.C.). She passed away due to heart attack while playing basket ball at the college stadium. She was buried at Lucknow.

25 January, 1959: Declaration of Vatican Council. Ninety days after his election to the papacy, Pope John XXIII announces his intention to hold an ecumenical church council. The Second Vatican Council opened October 11, 1962, and was the Catholic Church's most searching self-examination ever.

27 January, 1917 Vicar General Koor Ipe Thoma Kathanar passes away. Ipe Thoma Kathanar was one of the prominent priests of the Mar Thoma Church. He bought the Panchayathu Purayidam (present SCS Compound in Tiruvalla) for the Church in 1892 for Rs.600. It was he who started the Kettuthengu - the practice of dedicating coconut trees from each house for the collection of funds for the welfare of the Church. Koor Achen was called to eternal rest on 27 January 1917.

28 January, 1769: Birth of Thomas Middleton. Thomas Middleton, first Anglican Bishop of Calcutta, is born in England. While he oversaw a vast diocese covering all the territories of the East India Company, the Church made some great advances, including the establishment of Bishop's College, Calcutta.

31 January, 1892: Baptist preacher Charles Haddon Spurgeon, one of the greatest public speakers of his day, dies at Mentone, France.

