

## The Origin of Our Family

The ancient history of Kallur, Kollamana, Pazhangeril, Madathil, Manethumali and Kanekattu family is hidden behind the curtain of time and lies in ancient memories. But this family existed even before the 15th century. If we look at our family tree, we see that our family branched off in the 13th generation. Our family members of the 12th generation were members of the Niranam church. The generation before that is thought to have been known by a single family name. It can be seen that our ancestors who lived in the 13th generation did not attach much importance to being known in the name of a family. At that time, the families were given names suitable for each place according to the location of the places. The late Shri Kollamana Avarachan (K.M. Abraham) had gathered that the Kollamana family branched off from the Kallur family. But Shri Kallur M. Varghese was of the view that the Kallur family had originated from the Kollamana family. However, it is not our intention. Our family members of today have been convinced that our family which was of the 12th generation, branched out in the 13th generation, should stand together today. It is the desire of our family members that these six branches of our family will continue to be known by their family name. Shri K.M. Abraham (Avarachan) of Kollamana family wanted to know more about the origin of our family. Shri Avarachan clearly knew the names of his forefathers from the 13th generation and their kinship. And, that father understood that our root family was 'Kallur'. But we have no evidence regarding the origin of our family. Interested researchers who can find it out are invited.

So, the family existed in Niranam in the 17th generation was 'Kalloor', our root family. For the time being, this book covers that part as legend and the evidenced part as history. In the historical part, we still need to gain knowledge about some stages. The main sources of information about our family history are the legends and memories passed on by our ancestors orally to future generations. Also, there are documents proving the traditional connection between our ancestors as Niranam and Niranam church. The information you get from these is too arbitrary to know everything that is needed to know. When considering the difficulty of writing pre-history based on these, it is

emphasized on this occasion that it is necessary for family members to keep records about them in a way that will be useful for writing family history in the future. The researches made in 1934 by Shri K.P. Philipose (Baby) of Kollamana family, Kallur family member Mr. Varghese. M., we have been able to locate our family houses. In 1942, Shri K.M. Abraham (Avarachan), member of Kollamana family did a research on family origin. As a result of it, our ancestors could be identified. Mr. Idiculla Philip, a member of Pazhangeril family was interested in knowing about the family. So, it was easy to know about the origin of the Pazhangeril family and information from the 14th generation to the present generation. The father, even at the age of 80, knew even the names of the babies of the new generation. Since Shri P.P. Idiculla of Madathil family knew about the forefathers of the Madathil family and the Kollamana family, we could understand our ancient history and events. In 1989, when the initial work of writing the Kollamana family history was started by Shri K.M. Koshy, Shri P.P. Idiculla had written and handed over the history of Madathil family. In 1996, under the leadership of Shri K.M. Punnoose, Shri M. Varghese and Shri. P.P. Idiculla, we started to celebrate the Family Day every year. Thus, we were able to connect our family branches. This facilitated the first meeting of our Kudumba Yogam in 1998 under the leadership of President Shri M. Varghese Kallur, Working President Shri P.P. Idiculla, Vice President Shri. K.M. Punnoose, Secretary Dr. Thomas Philip and Shri. K.C. Abraham.

If we look at our early history, as mentioned earlier, before becoming Christians, our ancestors belonged to the Namboodiri caste. During the time of religious conversion in Kerala, they were converted to Christianity and they stayed at Kuravilangadu. Due to the persecution of the Hindus, they came to Niranam and settled down. Another group came and settled in Niranam, Thiruvalla. The 'Kallur' family is our root family. Most of our ancestors were involved in business and agriculture in the olden days. Our forefathers had lots of landed property in places like Thiruvalla, Kavumbhagam, Kallungal and Kuttappuzha.

Looking back to our previous history, as mentioned earlier, our forefathers were perfect devotees of God, many of them had spent enormous money for the construction of churches and conducting church cases. Our forefathers had to endure persecution from the Hindus in the early days. But we have become stronger without our faith having faded.

Our forefathers, who were believers of the Malankara Church, endured a lot of suffering and hardships for the survival of our Church founded by Thomas Apostle. Our forefathers were diligent in preserving the Eastern character of the Malankara Syrian Church during the reformatory efforts in the Church, when the believers were divided into two parties.

During the time when many of our churches were controlled by reformation groups, though we had to suffer a lot to restore the churches, it is commendable that our leaders were able to bring all the churches under the rule of the Malankara Syrian Church. It took great pains to wrest the Thiruvalla Paliekkara church from the hands of Kovoarachan, who was prominent among the opposing parties. For this purpose, Patriarch Bava came to Malankara in all the pomp. All the necessary arrangements were made for it by the Kattaprabhu church members Kodiyattu Yakob Kathanar, Kollamana Potha Painummoottil Geevarghese Kathanar and Chalakkuzhi Mathan who were the main members of our side. When talking about Thiruvalla Paliekkara Church, it is necessary to know about its installation. The parishioners of Thiruvalla had used to gather at Niranthu Church. Subsequently, a Kurishupally (chapel) was installed in Kollavarsham (Malayalam Era) 99 at Thiruvalla Paliekkara. The Kurishupally of Thiruvalla was set to fire by a set of people including Pottees. This incident was put to trial in the court, and as the crime was proved, Munro ordered a fine of 60,000 kaliyan on the Pottees, Pattans etc., and out of his grace, he made them pay it to the church. One half of this was given to the Seminary and the other half utilized for the construction of Thiruvalla church. It is thus stated in the history by Ittoop. The Paliekkara church, as is seen now, was constructed in this manner. In the preliminary periods, in addition to the priests of Thiruvalla, many from Niranam also had come to consecrate rites in Paliekkara church. It was a Parish with 1000 families in Kollavarsham 1036. Due to the conquest of

Paliekkara Church by Kovooreachan, who was one among the prominent reformists, and by his men, the believers of the Malankara Syrian Church had to stay away from the church services. On account of this, honourable Kodiyattu Idiculla and others had applied for Kattappuram Church in Kambolam and thus Kattappuram Church was established in Kollavarsham 1040.

Besides, in 1853 there was a government order according to which all those who were not followers of Mathews Mar Athanathos of Maramon Palakkunnathu should leave the church, and accordingly our followers had to leave the church since its possession passed to the opposing parties. After that, again, there was another government order saying that the government would not interfere in the affairs of the Church. This time the people of our side forcefully entered the Paliekkara Church which rightfully belonged to us. Kovoore Ninan, Punnoose, Thottangal Kurien, Thekkethil Itti and others closed the doors on our men and did not allow them to enter the church and there was altercation between the people. Since it was Hosanna Sunday, there was a large crowd in the church. Kollamana Potha was sitting inside the church with an umbrella. At this time, the umbrella was grabbed by Kovoore Punnoose. Potha was knocked down, and he died in no time. This turned out to be a murder case. Punnoochan, Ninachan, Iype, Thomma Kathanar etc. were handcuffed by the police. It was ordered to take them on foot to Kollam in hand-cuffs.

The dead body was sent to Mavelikkara for post-mortem. Nobody ventured to help the accused. But, at this time Eappachan and Pothachan of Kandathil family helped the accused using much money and influence.

The founder of Kollamana family was Mathu Kollamana who lived in the 13th century. The details of Shri Mathuchan's birth, marriage and death are not known. He was a member of Niranam Church. Shri Mathu Kollamana had six children. We see that the Kollamana family is expanding. The eldest son was Abraham Mathachan, the second son Kollamana Potha and the third son Mathu. The eldest daughter was married into the Chethippurackal family. The younger daughter was married into the Eruthungal family in Kottayam. The fourth son is Pazhangeril Potha. Abraham Mathuchan, the eldest son of the founder of the family, Sri. Mathu Kollamana, married Kunhandamma of

Karukayil family. The eldest son of this couple was Kochidukkalechan, the founder of the Madathil family. Kochidukkalechan had six children.

The Madathil branch can be seen expanding. Shri Abraham Mathuchan, Shri Potha and Shri Mathu owned a lot of lands. They were rich and gave a lot of money for church works. They were the main contributors, who helped for the sustenance of the Malankara Orthodox Church. They were much diligent in preserving the Eastern character of the Church by opposing the forces of reformation. As a lot of money was needed for Church cases, and for other purposes, their landed properties were sold and the money was used for the Church.

### **KOLLAVANA - KOLLAMANA**

There are two legends about the origin of our family name Kollavana and Kollamana. In ancient times, the family was given a name that was appropriate to the place and meaningful. A forest area on which the Kolla shrub grew abundantly was cleared and houses built by our ancestors who migrated from Niran and got the family name “Kollavana”. The word Kolla has other meanings like chira, mada, small canal, choli etc. Kollavana probably got its name because it was a forest near a small canal.

Another major occupation was the wholesale trade of red chillies carried out by the ancestors who came from Niranam and settled in Thiruvalla. At that time, red chilli was called Kollachilli. Hence, the family got the name ‘Kollamana.’

Now, it will be interesting to know how the place names near Kollamana got those names. Keezhcheri means Konkara. The place south of Kollavana was known as Keecheri. That is a slum area where there was a lot of sand in the soil. The place reclaimed using blocks of mud (Katta) was called Kattappuram. The place where there were full of kulanji plants was known as Kulanjippurayidam. Chalakkuzhi was a low place or pond.

It is heard that after the death of Kollavana Potha turned into a murder case, the opposing parties jokingly called “Kollavane” (kill him). Hence, it is assumed that after the 14th generation, Vana became Mana. It is assumed that

our family has got the name Kalloor on account of the land which is as hard as stone (Kallu) in Niranam which could mean a place of stones (Kallulla Ooru). Since the family house was built on the land which was a dense forest (Kodiya Kadu), the name Kodiyattu originated. The houses that were built on land reclaimed from wet lands were given the name Maliyil. Thus, it got the family name Manethumali. Our ancestors built houses after clearing the forests where the cana plant grew abundantly, and hence the family got the name Kanekattu. The family name Pazhangeril was also given that name suited to the place. The name Madathil came from the names of important Brahmin families of that time, Ithuval Madam, Moovidathu Madam and Earthamaseri Madam. Our forefathers bought their wet-lands and formed Kodiyathu Madam and Kollavana Madam.

Legend has it that our parent family, the Kallur family, originated in Niranam. There is no information about the fathers who lived in the 13th and 14th generations of the Kallur family. The clearly-known ancestor of the Kallur family is Geevarghese Mathuchan who lived in the 15th generation. We see that Kalloor family expanded with the birth of five children to Geevarughese Mathuchan and his wife Annamma. The eldest son was Geevarughese Kochitti and the second was George Varghese. The eldest daughter was married to the Manalil family. The third son was Mathew and the fourth was daughter Rebecca married into Thazhcheyil family. Sri. Geevarughese Mathuchan was a believer of the Malankara Orthodox Church. This father, who was a complete devotee of God, was respected in Thiruvalla. During the division of the Church of Malankara as two sections, he was assiduous in preserving as much as possible the oriental character of the Syrian Church. What Shri M. Varghese, the first President of our Kudumba Yogam had learnt about the origin of our family was that the father of Kalloor who lived in the 14th generation was the brother of Kollamana Potha who had shifted from Niranam to Thiruvalla. Kollavana Potha had lived at the western end of the Kolla family house in Thiruvalla and the father of the Kallur family had lived at the eastern side. We understand that after the death of Potha, who had no children, it became the Kallur family. Shri M. Varghese had known about his grandfather as one who was very loyal to his religion and church, and that he was respected by everyone for his leadership in

church and for his wealth. Geevarughese Kochitti, the eldest son of Geevarughese Mathuchan father, had two daughters by his first wife and two sons and one daughter by his second wife. George Varghese, the second son, has two sons and two daughters. The third son Shri. C.G. Mathew has three sons and two daughters.

The following is the description of the origin of Madathil family as authored by Shri. P.P. Idiculla, the President of our family Kudumba Yogam.

### **FAMILY HISTORY OF KOLLAMANA MADATHIL**

A branch of the famous Pakalomattam family from Kuravilangadu had settled in Thiruvalla about four centuries ago under the loving insistence of Pazhayamadathil Potti, after clearing a dense vegetation of Kanjiram trees belonging to the Pazhaya Madom near the Krishnaswami Temple in Kavumbhagam of Thiruvalla and began to stay there.

This Christian family came to be known as Kanjirakkattu family because their house was built in a place where there were plenty of kanjiram trees.

At that time, there was a custom that when the articles for worship were taken to the Hindu temples, if they happened to become impure due to the proximity of the lower castes, the Syrian Christian should touch them or put rice in them so as to make it pure. It was also for this purpose that those in the Pazhaya Madam brought the above family from Kuravilangad to Thiruvalla and provided them with all the facilities they needed. The Kanjirakkattu family acquired a large amount of landed property and other assets through commercial activities and was acclaimed as a powerful and famous family in Thiruvalla.

Later, after the death of his first wife, a Kurian in this family married a second time.

Kuriachan had three daughters in his first marriage and three sons in his second marriage. The eldest daughter Mariamma was married to Mathulla of the Moothedathu family. This Mathulla is the founder of the now-famous Kandathil family. It is this Mariamma who is known as Vallyammachi.

When Kuriachan's eldest son Idiculla got married, with the blessings of all, he got cleared a forested area about 500 yards northwest not much far of

the now Paliekkara, (Thiruvalla) St. George's Church and built a new house there. He shifted his residence to this house along with his wife. Since the place where the house was built was full of dense vegetation when compared to other places, the place began to be known as 'Kodiyakadu' (thick forest). Thus, that family home became famous in the name 'Kodiyattu.'

After the marriage of his two younger brothers, Idiculla, who had settled in Kodiyattu, bought the property called Kakkanattu Kizhakke Madam, which had no direct heirs, near the present Thiruvalla Church bridge from its owner and settled there. This is the ancestral home that was later known as Kodiyattu Madathil.

Idiculla who settled here was married to a woman named Aleyamma in the ancient Thaenmadathil. The Valia Idicullachettan couple had only four daughters. In it, the youngest daughter, Kocheliyamma was married by Idicullechan, the eldest son of Mathuchan of the famous, Kollavana family and was received into the family as 'dattu' (adoption) by Madathil Valiya Idicullechan.

Everyone addressed this new member of the family as Kochidicullechan as the son-in-law also had the same name Idiculla.

It is felt that the preliminary history of Kollavana Madathil family has been clear from the above.

The Pazhangeril family was the Kollamana family in the 13th generation. Shri Kollamana Potha, the father of the 14th generation, was the founder of the Pazhangeril family. Our forefathers understand that it is the younger son of Pazhangeril family, Shri Potha, was the founder of the Pazhangeril family. There is no clear evidence for that; it has to be proved. Shri Potha who came to Punalur on business was the owner of a lot of landed properties. This father, who was a perfect devotee of God, was the person who wanted to reform the first church established in Kerala. When reformation took place in the Church under the leadership of Kovooreachan, Shri Potha stood firm in the Marthoma church in favour of reformation. He was a wealthy man and spent a lot of money on church constructions and related purposes during the early days of

the Marthoma Church. This father wanted man to grow spritually without being confined to the traditions and customs of the Church. Hebrews 6:1:3 is relevant here. “Therefore, let us go on toward perfection leaving behind the basic teaching about Christ, and not laying again the foundation on repentance from dead works, faith toward God, instruction about baptisms, laying on of hands, resurrection of the dead and or eternal judgment.”

Mr. Potha married from the Nalamvelil family in Punalur. After the death of his first wife, he married Sosamma of the same Kizhakke Nalamvelil family. The couple had four sons and four daughters and the Pazhangeril branch was seen developing.

The beginning of the Mananthumali family was from Shri Itti and Shri Potha who lived in the 15th generation. It was the root family in the 13th generation. Our fathers had understood that the Manethumali family got separated from the root family from the father of 14th generation. Therefore, Mr. Itti and Mr. Pothan, who we clearly know, are the founders of the Manethumali family. Both of them, who were perfect devotees of God, remained steadfast in the Malankara Syrian Church. The main means of livelihood of the Manethumali family was agriculture and business. Paddy cultivation and coconut trees on the dry lands were the sources of income. During the harvest season in Punchappadam, the owner used to stay in hanging tents day and night and managed the agricultural works. The ancestors of Manethumali family had lived at Kavumbhagom and Azhiyidathuchira in Thiruvalla. This branch is known by the family name Manethumali because the houses were built on land reclaimed from wet lands. Our ancestors who lived in the 12th and 13th generations were engaged in managing farming activities. A brief description of paddy cultivation which was the main crop of those days, is given below.

The Kanekkattu family branched off from the 13th generation. About the fathers who lived in the 13th and 14th generations, it has yet to be discovered. The Kanekattu branch can be seen developing from the time of Shri. Idiculla, Pothan and Idiculla K.P. who lived in the 15th generation. The Kanekattu branch of our family consists of Catholics. Roman Catholicism was established in Kerala by banning Kerala customs such as Theendal, Pula, Punyaham, slave

trade and certain Hinduistic features which existed among Syrian Christians in the early days. Also, due to conversion, our Christian forefathers faced a lot of persecution from Hindus. And our ancestors had to face stiff opposition from the Parangis also. Fortunately, this conflict was ended by the efforts of His Holiness the Pope, and the majority of the people had come to stay in the Catholic Church. From there, our Kanekattu branch came to Karakkal near Thiruvalla due to the conflict at Kuravilangadu and also due to the increase in population. To the brothers namely, Shri Idiculla, Pothan and Idiculla K.P. of the Kanekattu family, ten children were born and we can see the expansion of Kanekattu branch.

The legend makes it out that the origin of our family must have taken place some time between the 1<sup>st</sup> century and the 12th century. After the origin of our family, it can be seen that Kollamana, Kolloormadathil and Manethumali families remained believers in the Malankara Orthodox Church, Pazhangeril family in the Marthoma Church and Kanekattu family in the Catholic Church. Because of this, in the early days of these three Churches, our forefathers had to endure many hardships and sufferings in order to maintain the Church in times of crises. Also, a lot of landed properties and money is seen to have spent on it, too.

### **Mathu Kollamana (1768 - 1841)**

Mathuchan Kollamana was the first father of the 13th generation. He was a member of Niranam Church. Information about his father, mother and wife is unknown. Kollamana Mathuchan, the founder of the Kollamana family, had six children. The eldest son Abraham Mathuchan, the second Kollamana Potha and the third Mathu. The eldest daughter was married into the Chethippurakkal family. The younger daughter was married into the Eruthunkal family in Kottayam. The fourth son was Pazhangeril Potha. Shri. Mathuchan died at the age of 73 and was buried at Niranam Church.

### **Kollamana Potha (1793-1853)**

The eldest son of Kollamana Mathuchan of the 13th generation was born in Niranam in 1793. Potha was married and had no children. He was very loyal to his religion and was respected by all for his leadership in the church and his wealth.

At the most difficult stages of the Syrian Church, Kollamana Potha who was a firm believer in the ancestral tradition and in the independence of the Church, did not succumb to any temptations and stood steadfast in the ancestral Church. Below is the real life story recorded about Pothan Vallyappachan in the book 'Reformation' by the first Vicar General of the Marthoma Church, Kovoov Ipe Thommakathanar.

When many of our churches were dominated by reformist groups, the Patriarch Bava was invited to restore the churches by Kollamana Potha, Kodyattu Jacob Kathanar, Payinumoottil Geevarghese Kathanar and Chalakkuzhi Mathan who were prominent leaders of the Malankara Orthodox Church. The Patriarch was received in all pomp at the Kallissery church. The idea of moving to Thiruvalla Church is being discussed very seriously...! All the Chiefs stand with their loins and heads braced and ready for anything. The roads from Pulikkezhu Kadavu to Thiruvalla Paliekkara church and its surrounding areas were transformed into a paradise - like place. The Parishners of both the churches along with Kodyattu Jacob Kathanar and Kollavana Potha both of the Kambolathil Kattappurath Church and Painummootil Geevarughese Kathanar and Chalakkuzhy Mathan of Kambolathil Pallipparambil Church, along with the members of both these Churches, and as per the decision of all those mentioned, the Patriarch Bava had also made up this mind. In order to forcefully enter the Palliekkara Church; it was thus heard the two churchmen, Kodyattu Kombukatanaru, Kovana Potha and others in Kathanar Palakuzhi Mathan, the church members of all those mentioned, the Patriarch Bava also had decided to forcefully enter the Paliekkara Church, it was thus heard. Besides, they had determined to break the locks of the Church rooms under our possession.

As it is Hosanna Sunday, a large crowd has gathered in Thiruvalla Kattappurathu Church. A lot of pilgrims come and join in the Palliekkara Church to attend the church service of Kovoovachan. The Holy Mass began in the most pious manner. The Service is almost half way... Then, there comes from the west side of the church, the flow of people rushing in several lines towards the east. Though a boy, this news spreads throughout the church. Kovoov Ninan,

Punnoose, Thottungal Kurian, Thekkethil Itty etc. were taking stock of the situation and were positioned in the porch of the church. All the doors were closed. Some people knock on the door here and there... Now let us pass on to the front yard, Punnoose and Thottungal Kochukunju,, who were sitting there, went out to inform the news to Mandayathum Vathukkal. When Shri Punnoose looked for an umbrella to go to the Kacheri, as he could not find one, he grabbed the umbrella from the shoulders of a prominent, noble and proud man viz. Kollavana Potha of the opposite party uttering “Give the Umbrella.” While many people were watching, the gentleman was terribly upset with mental agony and felt insulted for having dispossessed of his umbrella in such an objectionable manner. The person in question, who was sick and 60 years old, then felt thirsty and walked to a nearby house to quench his thirst, and there he left for his eternal abode. The dead body was sent to Mavellikara Civil Hospital for post-mortem and during the examination, apothecary (Dr) Swaminath Pillai and Thiruvalla Mission Assistant Apothecary Geevarughese, who was with him, found that the death was caused by Apoplexy, the state in which blood rushes through nerves and enters the brain due to pain, fear and tension and by the blockage of blood that oozes from the piles of the body of persons having excess blood. A certificate was issued by them to this effect. This is how it is recorded in the book ‘Naveekaranam’

But, the death of Potha that occurred on his falling down on the Church floor turned out to be murder. The police handcuffed the accused and took them to Kollam on foot. Potha’s body was buried at Niranam Church after post-mortem. He was 60 years old when he died. The case involving Mathunni, the third son of Potha’s younger brother Abraham Mathuchan, was settled under the influence of the opposing parties by imposing fine on the accused. After that, on Sundays, both the parties offered Mass alternatively in Paliekkara Church.

### **Kallur Geevarghese Mathuchan (1852 - 1914)**

#### **Annamma**

The birth and death details of Geevarghese Mathuchan, the founder of the Kallur family, are not known. Shri. Varghese, the first President of our

Kudumba Yogam, had only a hearsay about his great grandfather. Mathachan, who was respected in Thiruvalla was a perfect devotee of God. He was a wealthy man and spent a lot of money on church construction works etc. He married Annamma from Keezhvaipoor. The couple had three sons and two daughters. The eldest son is Geevarughese Kochitti, the second son George Varghese, third a daughter, Ammachi, who was married into the Manalil family at Thiruvalla, fourth the son C.G. Mathew and the fifth was daughter, Rebecca who was married into the Thazhcheriyil family.

The members of our original family, the Kallur family, were believers in the Orthodox Syrian Church, the first Church in India. Besides, the Kollamana, Madathil and Manethumali families remain in the Orthodox Syrian Church. But the Pazhangeril family is in the Syrian Marthoma Church and the Kanekattu family members in the Catholic Church.

#### **Potha Pazhcheril (1852 - 1914)**

- 1. Mariamma, Kizhakke Nalamvelil**
- 2. Sosamma, Thekke Nalamvelil**

About Kollamana Potha, the oldest father in the family, the late Shri Idiculla Philip, who was the Vice President of our family has only a hearsay about his Vallyappacha. The information as given by Philip to Mr. Idiculla is described as follows: Sri. Pothachan, a 14th generation member of the Kollamana family, came to Punalur on business where he married Mariamma in the Kizhakke Nalamvelil family. His wife died on her first delivery. After that, he married Sosamma of the same Thekke Nalamvelil family. The couple had eight children, four sons and four daughters. The eldest son, Thomma Idiculla, the second daughter who was married into the Mulamoottil family, the third son Idiculla, the fourth was the daughter married into the Kakkadampalli family and the fifth also was a daughter married into the Karukayil (Thundiyl) family. The sixth son, Potha Idiculla, the seventh was a daughter married into the Cheruvakkal and the son was George.P. of Marthomma Church, who was a perfect devotee God. Pazhangeril Potha who was a perfect devotee of God embraced Marthoma Church. Shri Potha who was a rich landlord had passed for a gentleman in Punalur.

When the Reformation took place in the Church, he was one of the leaders who supported the reformation and gave all his support at the beginning of the Church. Shri. Pothachan was convinced that reformation was necessary for man to become spiritually enlightened rather than the tradition of the Church.

On those days, the Orthodox Church would offer Mass only in Syriac. When the reformation took place in the Church, for the first time, it was celebrated in Malayalam under the leadership of Kovoorchan. That Sunday after the Mass (the day Mass was offered for the first time Malayalam), when the worker climbed a coconut tree to pluck coconuts at a house near the church, he fell down and got injured. Then the head of that house said, “Today, when the Mass was celebrated in Malayalam, I thought there would be some trouble.” At a time when such superstitions and Hindu customs had prevailed, it can be seen that reformation was needed in the church.

### **Services to Church by our Family Members**

Our forefathers worked very hard for constructing the Palliekkara Church, Kattappuram Church and Thekke Church in Thiruvalla. In the ancient times, agriculture and trade were the main sources of income for the family members. At the same time, an important medium for social service for family members was the church and Parish they were involved in. Our forefathers worked sincerely in community service areas especially for the poor sections, and for the Orthodox, Marthoma and Catholic Churches to which our family members belong. Among them, the prominent were Shri. Kallur Geevarughese Mathuchan, Shri Kollavana Potha, Shri Mathu Abraham Kollamana, Shri Madathil Kochidicullachettan, Shri Pazhangeril Potha, Shri P.I. Philip, Pazhangeril (Orphanage Philip Sir), Itti Manethumali, Shri. Idiculla Kanekkattu and Shri. Potha Idiculla, Shri. Mathu Abraham served as the Trustee of Palliekkara Church for a long time. Mr. P.I. Philip was devoted to helping the poor. An orphanage was started in Punalur at a time when orphanages were rare. Besides, he helped a lot for the growth of the Marthoma Church. Following is the information provided by our Kudumba Yogam President Shri Madathil Idiculla about our ancestors, Thiruvalla region and of the past events.

## **Thiruvalla - Paliykkara Church**

The Christian leaders of Thiruvalla once met with the desire to establish a church of their own in Thiruvalla. The family members who took the lead in this meeting were the families of Kovoora, Kollamana, Kodyattu and Manalil. As a result of petitions, prayers and hardships, in the course of a long period, permission was finally obtained from the presbyters, Brahmin chiefs and the government to establish a church at Paliykkara. Thus, a small thatched structure was built on the site where the Paliykkara Church now exists today, and it was consecrated as a church. The land for the church was given by the Karanavar (doyen) of Kodyattu, then known as Kanjirakkad.

The Christians used to gather together on Sundays and other days. Apart from religious matters, they discussed the social problems they were facing and took decisions on them. Needless to say, this was not at all appreciated by the then Brahmin leadership. Whenever there were any special occasions or when it was felt that some serious matters need be known to each other and need to be made known and communicated, they used to ring church bells for the people to assemble. Suitable decisions were taken at such gatherings and this had become a practice.

In the 19th century, it is needless to say that the Christians were thus growing as a force to be reckoned with. At that time we were not looked upon with tolerance by other sections. Once, a few Potties joined together and broke the church bell with the help of an elephant at night and set fire to the Church. This incident led to a Case. The then resident (Munroe Saip) intervened. After a long litigation, the verdict was pronounced in favour of the Paliykkara Church. The gist of the judgment was that the Church should be built at the expense of those who burnt the church. The teak wood required for the construction of the Church was procured from the government forest land with the royal permission by the Resident. He also donated a sum of money. Thus the Paliykkara church, as is seen today, was built.

As mentioned earlier, though the members of the families aforesaid were monitoring the construction of the Church, it was felt by the other families that,

they had some privileges in the Paliekkara Church under the influence of Kovoorchan.

Consequently, the families of Kodiyattu, Kollamana, Manalil and Chalakkuzhi approached the clergy heads and the government. As a result, permission was granted to Kodiyattu Varkey Idiculla and others to build a church. That is how the St. George's Church, now known as Kattappurathu church, was built on the land given from Kodiyattu.

Kattappurathu Church members also felt the same that had happened to Paliekkara Church. In other words, the other Parishners began to feel that the Kattappurathu Church belonged to the Kodiyattu family members.

By nature, we are a set not to be cowed down by any! Vengeance was with us then and now! At last, the families of Kollamana, Manalil and Chalakkuzhi took initiative to construct another church. Thekkappalli (Maruvalkkeppalli), as of today, was built thus.

This much has been stated as an introduction to convince the members of our family that the Kollamana family was instrumental in constructing all these three churches and that they had involved in it head-long. This is not a hearsay, but a historical fact.

### **Madathil Kochidukkalechan**

#### **Kocheliyamma Kodiyattu**

At the time of the above mentioned historical event, Mathuchan was the head of the Kollamana family. Mathuchan who was second to none with his might, intellectual prowess, landed property and money (the Puncha fields on the Vengal side and the homesteads on the Vempala side had belonged to Kollamana family then) did not have to think much to find out a suitable alliance for his eldest son Idiculla. Kocheliyamma, the younger daughter of Kodiyattu Madathil Idikkulechan who was highly capable and famous, was the most suitable in all respects as the bride of his daughter Mathuchan; he was cocksure about it. When Mathuchan had proposed his son, Idikkulechan was also in total agreement to it. Before long, the marriage was celebrated in all pomp. The marriage was consecrated at the Paliekkara Church.

Idukkalechan of Madathil had no male offspring. At that time, Kocheliyamma and Kochidukkalechan stayed in Kodyattu Madam as Kocheliyamma was the youngest of the four daughters. Since there were two Idicullas in the same house, the son-in-law was addressed as 'Kochidukkalechan' and the other as 'Valiyudukkalechan' by the people around.

Kocheliyamma's mother was a member of the famous Thaenmadathil family. The mother of Joelachayan of Chalakkuzhy was Kocheliyamma's maternal sister. Not long after Kochidukkalechan's marriage, when the construction of the church at Kattappuram was almost complete, Valyidukkalechan died. After that, the Madathil house was administered by Kochidukkalechan.

Kocheliyamma-Kochidiculla couple had two sons and two daughters.

### **Itti Manethumali**

The prominent fathers in the Manethumali family, who we know clearly, are Shri Itti Manethumali and his younger brother Shri Pothan. The details relating to the 13th and 14th generation fathers of the Manethumali branch who split away from the parent family in the 13th generation have to be traced. Shri Itti and Shri Pothan were members of the Thiruvalla Paliekkara Church. The information regarding their birth, marriage and death is not known. They were perfect devotees of God and remained steadfast in the Malankara Orthodox Church. Shri Itti had two children, the elder son Itti and the second was a daughter. Thus, the Manethumali family can be seen developing.

### **Idukkala Kanekattu**

Among the fathers living in the 15th generation of the Kanekattu family were the eldest brother Shri Idukkala, the second Shri Pothan, and the third brother Sri. K.P. Idukkala. The Kanekattu branch separated from the original family were Catholics. As a result of the efforts of His Holiness the Pope, who was reigning during the period, the Christians were relieved off the attacks from the Hindus and Parangis. Besides, the Christians who were here, again underwent a transformation. Several believers who were against Hindu practices prevailing in the Church became firm believers in Catholic Church.

These three brothers of the Kanekattu family remained steadfast in the Catholic Church without their faith being faded out. Sri. Idukkala Kanekattu migrated from Niranam to a place called Karakkal near Thiruvalla and lived with his brothers. From 1498, the Catholic Church in Kerala grew into a larger church.

The official emblem of our family has been designed to mean that the members of the family have joined together to lead our family as one whole. A house in Kerala tradition is shown with the names of our family branches around it. The last ring and the figure of a person symbolises the family members standing hand in hand.

### **Family Committee**

The families of Kollamana, Kallur Madathil, Pazhangeril, Manethumali and Kanekattu have come together and decided to hold a family meeting in Thiruvalla once a year to get to know each other, share love and become united with each other, giving priority to prayer. A Committee was formed in the first meeting of the Kudumba Yogam held in 1998 to help the smooth running of the Kudumba Yogam that was got registered in Register No. T. 111 dated 06.01.2001. The Kudumba Yogam now meets twice a year; the first in the months of March and April and the second in the month of November. Since we have more members in Dubai, a Committee has been formed there also and it helps the activities there.