

REVIEW OF MATHECKAL FAMILY JOURNAL

By Dr. Michael Tharakan

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MATHECKAL FAMILY JOURNAL

A REFERENCE MANUAL AD 1788 - 2013

AD 2013: 225th Birth Anniversary of Mathunni Matheckal
A Tribute to The Patriarch of Matheckal Family, Arakuzha

By
MATHECKAL KUDUMBAM
May 10, 2014



MATHECKAL KUDUMBAYOGAM - ARAKUZHA

To

All Matheckal Family Members

I have great pleasure to inform that the Matheckal Kudumbayogam has donated various books pertaining to the Matheckal Kudumbam –(its history, families, vision and values) to the Kerala Council for Historical Research (KCHR) .

You will be glad to know that KCHR has archived these publications in its library as official record of the Matheckal Family for future reference, research and to preserve the history of the Matheckal Family for the future generations.

It is also a matter of great happiness that Dr. Michael Tharakan, historian and former Vice-Chancellor of Kannur University suggested the idea to donate the books to KCHR for archiving its history in KCHR.

You will be happy know also Dr. Michael Tharakan also read The Matheckal Family Journal- A Reference Manual (AD1788-2013) and written a Ten-page handwritten review.

Following pages contain the Acknowledgment from KCHR, Summary and Review of Dr. Michael Tharakan.

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- I. List of Books Donated to and archived in KCHR
- II. Synopsis of Review by Dr. Michael Tharakan and Comments
- III. Handwritten Review of Matheckal Family Journal – A Reference Manual (AD1788-2013) by Dr. Michael Tharakan

Matheckal Kudumbam wishes to place on record its appreciation and gratitude to Dr. Michael Tharakan and Kerala Council for Historical Research (KCHR) for his keen interest in the Matheckal Family History and his valuable and sage review and assistance to place our books in the library of KCHR.

Sd/-

**Sunny Matheikal (MG Peter)- President
MATHECKAL KUDUMBAYOGAM**

Arakuzha
11 Nov,2015.

Kerala Council for Historical Research



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08th September 2015

To

Sri. Sunny Mathekal, (MG Peter),
Mathekal House,
Arakuzha P.O,
Muvattupuzha,
Ernakulam District – 686 672

Dear Sir

Greetings from Kerala Council for Historical Research

We acknowledge with gratitude the receipt of the books gifted by you titled 1. *Chrukulam kudumbam* 2. *Paathamudrakal*, Vol.1 & 2. 3. *Mathekal family journal: A reference manual AD 1788-2013* (Two copies) 4. *Mathekal kudumbam* (Two copies). Kindly see the official receipt.

We greatly appreciate and thank you for the contribution. Your contribution will be included in the *KCHR Archives of Malayali Family History & Biography*. We would make it available for researchers and we will ensure that your work will be acknowledged if they make use of it in studies.

Wishing you all the best and thanking you once again.

With regards

DIRECTOR
(Dr. P J Cherian)

Encl: - Official receipt for the donation of books to KCHR library



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Kerala Council for Historical Research

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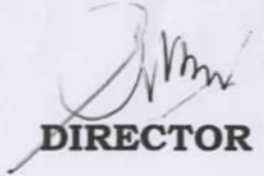
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Archives of Malayali Family History & Biography

RECEIPT

Received with thanks from Sri. Sunny Mathekal, (MG Peter), Matheckal House, Arakuzha P.O, Muvattupuzha, Ernakulam four titles being donated to the *KCHR Archives of Malayali Family History and Biography*.

Date: 08.09.2015


DIRECTOR

Data entered

Accession Nos.	:	11703, 11704, 11705, 11706, 11707, 11693
Title1	:	<i>Chrukulam kudumbam</i>
Title 2	:	Paathamudrakal, Vol.1 & 2
Title 3	:	Matheckal family journal: A reference manual AD 1788-2013 (Two copies)
Title 4	:	Matheckal kudumbam (Two copies)

II. SYNOPSIS OF THE REVIEW BY DR.MICHAEL THARAKAN AND COMMENTS

(Dr. Michael Tharakan is a well known Historian, an illustrious son of the Parayil Tharakans's Family. He is the Visiting Faculty, Centre for Socio-economic and Environment Studies (CSES), former Vice Chancellor, Kannur University, former Ramakrishna Hegde Chair Professor in Decentralization and Governance, ISEC, Bangalore, former Director, Kerala Institute of Local Administration (KILA), Thrissur, former Faculty Member, Centre for Development Studies (CDS), Thiruvananthapuram)

Dr. Michael Tharakan has read the Matheckal Family Journal - A Reference Manual and has sent a ten-page handwritten review and comments. These comments are of immense relevance and value for the future from a historical perspective. The review is carried out in three parts

1. Introductory Comments (1-3 pages)
 - a. The Family Journal is a repository of detailed information about the evolution of the family, its branches and its members presented in three parts
 - b. Part I, chapters 3 and 4 succeed in tying down information to two fixed parameters- one on the basis of the Faith and the other to the roots.
 - c. On Page 3 and 4 Dr. Michael Tharakan refers to the year 1886
.Comments- It may be read as 1987 as it was a typographical mistake in the Matheckal Family Journal.
 - d. Matheckal Family has been a cohesive unit from 1788.
2. General Comments (3-4 pages)
 - a. Use of information and documentation technology adds value and useful to the reader.
 - b. Statistical Profile, Funlearning Exercise and other tables present a detailed profile of the Matheckal Family and explains how the transformation from an agrarian family to diverse professions took place.
 - c. The Journal is combination of modern technology of simulation, application and other techniques along with the value that the Matheckal Family upholds.
3. Specific Comments (5-10 pages)
 - a. The narrative in Part I about the link of Matheckal Family to Sankarapuri Family in AD 52 is too weak to the point of non-existence from a historical perspective.
 - b. The trace to one of the four families in AD 52 is trend seen exclusively in the family histories of Syrian Christians to indicate a tendency to claim higher social status .
Comments- The Malayalam publication Matheckal Kudumbam(1992) was based on certain documents that were available and the Matheckal Family Journal was a translation of the Malayalam publication.

We may include the comments of Dr. Michael Tharakan as a separate chapter in future

The Journal can be updated in future based on evidences in historical publications and/or we may include that such claims have no historical evidences and basis.

- c. Page 7 of the review pertains to P.xii (Introduction) with reference to a Nair and a Christian priest accompanying certain families in their 9th century migration. Dr.Michael Tharakan wonders whether Nair as a caste name extended upto the 9th Century? .
Comments – We may include the comments of Dr. Michael Tharakan in future editions of the Journal
- d. On page 7 of the review Dr. Michael Tharakan mentions that in Ch.1 page 8 of Matheckal Family Journal, the Journal follows the CMI version of Church History and in his review suggests that there are different views on the history and lists several publications in this regards. These would, according the Dr. Michael Tharakan would provide more details of the history in an objective manner and also proved insight into later activities of the “Ezhu Vyakulangal”.
Comments – The points reviewed by of Dr.Michael Tharakan may be taken into account the Journal shall be updated accordingly in future through further research, study and evaluation.
- e. On page 8 of the review, Dr. Michael Tharakan mentions the facts relating to the land ownership status among Syrian Christians with historical evidences while reviewing Chapter 2 of the Matheckal Family Journal. He has listed some publications for further references .
Comments: The points reviewed by Dr.Michael Tharakan may be taken into account the Journal shall be updated accordingly in future through further research, study and evaluation.
- f. On page 9 of the review, Dr. Michael Tharakan suggests that the statement “Syrian Christians were one of the most educated communities (on page 17 of the Journal)”, needs to be revised and writes why this needs to be revised. He cites some more references in this regard.
Comments The points reviewed by Dr.Michael Tharakan may be taken into account the Journal shall be updated accordingly in future through further research, study and evaluation.
- g. On page 9 of the review, Dr. Michael Tharakan refers to page 74 and page 148-149 and specifically refers to Iype Ulahannan, noted for his sense of humour. Dr. Michael Tharakan points out that some of these humours/jokes could have been recorded.
Comments: The points reviewed by Dr.Michael Tharakan may be taken into account . We may ask our families to provide such details and other matters that are of interest for update in future.
- h. On page 10, Dr.Michael Tharakan recalls nostalgically that his Father-in-law and Mother-in-Law were married in a ceremony officiated by Fr. Mathew Vadakkal on page 150 of the Journal.

Matheckal Family Journal, A Reference Manual AD1788-2013

AD 2013: 225th Birth Anniversary of Malthunni
Matheckal, A Tribute to the Patriarch of Matheckal
Family, Arakuzha, by Matheckal Kudumbam, May
10, 2014. [For Private Circulation]: An Appreciation

By

P. K. Michael Tharakan

1. Introductory Comments

This printed volume on the Matheckals, a well known Syrian Christian family from Arakuzha as it should be, is a repository of detailed information about the evolution of the family its different branches and individual members. The information collected is presented in three parts, 'The Caravan Begins', 'The Caravan Moves on' and 'The Caravan Looks Ahead'. The use of the word caravan in the subtitles aptly reminds one of a forward movement of a group of people united in a journey of migration or on pilgrimage. That the journey undertaken by the Matheckals is on a pilgrimage along with the 'people of God', as the family's Faith denotes, is made clear in the ensuing pages.

In Part I, two chapters, 3 and 4 succeed in tying down whatever other information

presented in other chapters, to two fixed parameters, one, the basics of the Faith that all Maltheekals are to carry on their lives' journey and the other, to the roots of themselves as a family; the 'pre-history' of Cherukulam. It is the first time that this writer comes across a family history which distinguishes its membership by stating the basic tenets in which they believe.

In the preface, two preceding works which led to the current volume are referred to, they being Prof. Sonny Maltheikal, MC Mathew Fr. John Matheiken, Maltheikal Kudumbam [A Family History 1992] in Malayalam [as given in "Bibliography"] and Fr. Luke Njaralakattu [1886], Cherukulam Family History [again as given in the "Bibliography"]. Fr. Luke Njaralakattu's name is referred on p ii in "Acknowledgement" along with the year 1886 in brackets. What that year denotes is not clear. On page 39 it is said that Fr. Luke [here 1929 is given in brackets] was the youngest son of Mathai Kuriakose [along with

1900 bracketed]. To an "unrelated reader this mean that Fr. Luke was born in 1929 and his father in 1900. If it is the case, then Fr. Luke could not have written the Cherukulam Family History in 1886. If it was otherwise, it could have substantially altered the historiography of family histories in Kerala. On the same page the significance of Fr. Luke's contribution to the Mattheckal Family History published in 1992 is given. It is he who collected the needed documentation for the Cherukulam Family History of 1987. 1986 is correct *Jan*

The "Acknowledgement", "Preface", "Introduction" and "Prologue" make it clear that the account of the Mattheckal family as a cohesive unit starts from 1788, the year in which Mathunni Mattheckal [p. 36] moved into Mattheckal house in Arakuzha.

2. General Comments

The positive impact of masterly use of modern measures from the information technology area add to usefulness and value

of the volume. This commentator is only a computer semiliterate. Therefore I am not in a position to comment upon such measures in any depth. Nevertheless, special mention should be made of "Statistical Profile" [ch. 12], "Fun Learning-Exercise", and the different tables. They not only present a detailed profile of the Meltheckal family, but also provides an insight into the metamorphosis of an apparently agrarian family into diverse professions of a very high calibre. They can help anyone who is interested in a search for further details. They include not only stem-family members but also families of alliance. What I found most remarkable is that the volume contains "the life witnesses of the predecessors" which will "give impetus to the descendants", as Mar George Madathikandathil had said in his message. To me this volume is a remarkable combination of modern technology of simulation, applications and other techniques along with the values that the family upholds.

3 Specific Comments

Since the volume is for private circulation only, many of the specific comments that I am intending to make, may be ignored. I am looking at this work as an addition to the family histories that are already available in Kerala.

i. It is stated on p. ix and in ch. 4 that the Hattikad family is linked with Cherukulam as well as Sankarapuri and that its roots can be traced back to AD 52. Without any disrespect towards such a belief nurtured by many persons, I would like to point out that the link with Sankarapuri is too weak to the point of non-existence. Among the published family histories available in Kerala, most belong to Syrian Christians. Of them, most trace their origins to 52 AD through links with one of the following four families, Pakalomattom, Sankarapuri, Kalli, and Kalikavu. It should also be noted that no other community try to trace their lineage till the first century. In addition

ch. 1 goes all the way back to AD first century and St. Thomas converting "caste Hindus including thirty-two Nambolthiri [Brahmin] families". First of all, it should be remembered that there are "Christian Scholars" themselves who have raised doubts about St. Thomas having come to India and Kerala. Now we have a brilliant work in which the arguments for St. Thomas having come and the arguments against the same have been critically compared by George Nedungatt SJ, Quest for the Historical Thomas, Apostle of India, A Re-reading of the Evidence [Theological Publications in India, Bangalore, 2008]. When a modern family claims to have been converted by St. Thomas himself [without no mention of possible evidence against it] and that too from "Nambolthiris", the commonly held view that the Syrian Christian families are trying to claim "higher-caste status" ~~without~~ without any evidence, gets strengthened. The largely held view that Syrian Christians suffers

from some sort of inferiority complex also get strengthened.

- ii. On p. XII [Introduction] talks of a Nair and a christian priest accompanied certain families in their 9th century migration. Have you ever heard of a "Nair priest" anywhere at any place in Kerala? I wonder whether Nair as a caste name extend upto the 9th century.
- iii. In chapter 1 (p. 8), the book follows the CH or official version of happenings of importance to the church like the Rocos "schism". It is understandable. But if you feel like being informed of those happenings from a different point of view, you may refer among other works to Palakunnel Malthai Mariam Kathanar, Palakunnel Valiachankal Nalagamam 1831-1900 [Palakunnel Malthai Mariam Kathanar Death Centenary Committee, Changanacherry, 2000] and Karotturcelil Semaroon Mar Deevannassios, Kandamadu Granthavari [Malankara Sabha Charithram], [MSD Publishing House, Kunnankulam 2008]. Both these are contemporary records left behind by active observers. Further, you can get much more intimate details regarding the later activities of two of the "Ezhu Vyekulangal", Bishop Louis Pazheparambil and Fr. Hilarios Tharavattathil, from a "family history" like publication, George Ambooken, Thamaskarikapella Oru.

Devalayum Vismarikanakatha ~~Review~~ Poorvikarum" [EISY Books, Thrissur, 2012]. They were both deeply involved in the affairs of the Amboken family of Mala.

iv. Chapter 2 (p.17) starts with the statement that Syrian Christians were land owners. Now they are Mathai Karanavar in the second half of the 18th century could have acquired control over large tracts of land. There were occasions when the ruling authorities like Rajas or local chieftains needing extra income allowed and encouraged persons who are willing to clear forest and reclaim land from shallow backwaters. It is possible that the Syrian Christians would have made use of such opportunities to acquire land control since they would have had capital from their earlier trading practices. Even now the bigger landholdings by Syrian Christians are on the hills and backwater areas. Even then they could only become "tenants" in Pandaravake (state owned) or cherikkal (Royal controlled) land. They had to wait till the 19th Century when the Pandaravake Patta Vilambaram in Thiruvithamcor and the Jenmie Kudiyu regulation let them have the status of "immoveable tenants". To get Jenmem or "ownership" in land they had to wait till the Kerala Land Reforms Act 1963 (Amendment) first introduced by the Communist ministry. You may kindly read through the Review of PKM Tharekan, Profiles of the Parayil Tharakans: Glimpses of the History of a Family

a Region and a Church. New Delhi, Bloomsbury 2014 by Professor Rajan Gururukul, in the Indian Historical Review, 42(2), 1-2.

v. The statement that the Syrian Christians were one of the most educated communities (p.17) may have also be revised. When Rev. Buchanan in 1800-02 visited the non-Catholic Syrians in Keralam he was struck by the near absence of educational institutions among them. The non-Catholic Syrians could acquire modern or English education in early 19th century through association with the CMS missionaries and their schools. The Catholics were discouraged from acquiring modern/English education by the Missionaries since they considered English as the language of the Protestants. It was only at the time of Nidhuvickal Manni Kathanar at the end of the nineteenth century that Catholic Syrians turned to modern education. Since then, they did remarkably well in this field. For details you may see my own works "Socio - Economic Factors in Educational Development, Case of Nineteenth Century Travancore", Economic and Political Weekly, Vol XIX, Nov. 10 and 15, 1984 and "History of the Process of Marginalisation in the Society of Keralam: A Perspective", Journal of Social Discourse, Vol. 1, Oct. 2013-2014.

vi. On page 74 and 148.9, it is stated that Iype Ullahannan is noted for his sense of humour. Remarkable entry in a family history. Wish some of his jokes were also recorded.

Vii. On a personal note, my father-in-law late Joseph Kurian Thonikuzhi Kunnel and my mother-in-law Alice Kadanthode were married in a ceremony officiated by Fr. Mathew Vadakkal mentioned on p. 150.

1/iii. This is indeed a remarkable attempt at writing a family history with a forward looking perspective, with so many of the Mattheckens educated highly in management and information technology, what is started by this book is likely to be carried forward. All the best.

Kekkalathumuk,

24.9.2015

Richard

PK Michael Tharekum



*To read Matheckal Family Journal online in English and Malayalam and access Database
visit website: www.matheckalfamily.org*