Kannanoor C.S.I. Church:

Kannanoor is mainly a protestant Christian Centre. The origin the Kannanoor C.S.I. Church is attributed to Rev. Charles Mead. It is said that Mead shifted the Mission Centre from Mylady to Nagercoil to achieve the Westward expansion of the mission. If the cause of its expansion many new branches were started. One among them was the Kannanoor Chruch. It was constructed in a six cent plot donated by Mr. Vethamonickam of Thachamvilai. In this site a thatched shed was put up for worship\(^1\). On 21 December, 1820 Sunday morning Hindus assembled in front of Kannanoor church and interrupted the worship\(^2\). They forced the poor worshippers to carry coconut stems towards Padmanabapuram palace to feed the elephants. Those who refused to do such works, were abused and beaten.

---

\(^1\) Magazine Published on the 178\(^{th}\) Anniversary of Kannanoor C.S.I. Church, Dated 20-1-1998, Kannanoor, Page -9.

\(^2\) George, G.H. Women Liberation Struggle in the Kanyakumari District, Marthandam 1982, P.44.
severely. Many men and women hid themselves to escape from the corporal punishments of high caste people. Yet some young Christians rose against them and failed.

High Caste Hindus caught some Christians, kept coconut leaves and stems on their head, pulled and dragged them to the palace. This message spread like a wild fire. This incident was heard by the people in the nearby places like Pulipanam. Persons named as Isaki Madan and Thamdakkaran rose to the rescue of those who worshipped in Pulipanam church. They arrived there and defeated the enemies. The Christians who carried coconut stems and leaves on their head were relieved from the burden and disgrace. Moreover, they caught some high caste Hindus and as a punishment forced them to carry coconut leaves and stems on their heads and asked them to drop them down in front of Kannanoor Church and let free.

---

3 I bid P.45.

4 I bid.

This incident caused a great insult to the high caste Hindus. As a reaction on 23 December 1828, about 500 Hindus attacked the Christians of Kannanoor Church with weapons and set fire to the Church. The angry caste people threshed the Christians and took away their valuables.

As days passed, all the Christians of that place assembled together and had chosen a place of worship. There they constructed a church with Palmyrah leaves. The present church served as a school with 2 classes. Teachers who worked in this school had involved in the church activities also. Days passed on, harmony and religious unity improved. As a consequence, some of the Nairs who once opposed the faith and its propagation in tooth and nail became friendly with the Christians. Some of these were even unmindful to donate land to the missionaries for the church construction. For example, the present site of the Kannanoor church came as a gift from a dominant Nair family of the place in 1901.

---


7 Ibid. P. 47.
The foundation for the church (40 length and 20 breadth) was laid in February 1908 by Issacc Henry Hacker. The Church was dedicated in 1914 and Mr. William was the first Church worker. As the days passed the Kannanoor Church become a pastorate Church, Rev. Devadhasan, the pastor of this church created a good record in the history of this church through his dedicated service. He was honoured highly by the congregation and the L.M.S. administration Bishop J.A. Jacob issued a certificate of merit in honour of his service on October 10, 1944.

Gradually there was a sporadic increase in the membership of this church. At present it has 550 families as per Church in record. The present pastors of the church Rev. Johnson and Meshak are taking care of the church with utmost satisfaction of the entire congregation. The committee of this church consist of 8 members. They are Mr. Paul Raj, Mr. Gnanadhas, Mr. Edwin John, Mr. Manomony, Mr. Gigi,

---

8 Ibid.
Mr. Gurudhas, Mrs. Amutha & Mrs. Sheela Bharakka. The Church has its functionaries like Sunday School, Christian Endeavour, Women fellowship, and Young Men Christian fellowship. It renders Gospel work, social service and educational service to the people of this locality.

**Role of Ananthapadmanabhan:**

Marthanda Varma (1724-1758) who ruled during that period was highly impressed with the dedication of Ananthapadmanabhan. In recognition of that the king issued tax-free properties scattered throughout the country. This benevolency of the king created hatred and enmity in the mind of Queen and minister Ramayan. They created problems against Ananthapadmanabhan. Ananthapadmanabhan's victory over the Dutch in the historic battle of Colachal in July 31, 1741, further enriched their enmity towards him. The royal felicitation accorded to this hero of Colachel battle in a ceremonial function arranged in the Aruvikarai palace further

---

11 Ibid. P.12.

12 Personal Interview with Mr. Paul Raj, Church Secretary, Residing at Kannanoor, dated 10-04-2006.
enraged the situation. Antagonist Ramaiyan and the minister plotted against Ananthapadmanabhan and killed him\textsuperscript{13}. Ananthapadmanabhan’s temples is found in Kannanoor near Thachanvilai. Every year his devotees like poet K.P. Varatharasan observes his pooja ceremony.

**Pooja for Goddess Kali:**

Ananthapadmanabhan’s successors worship Thirupaapur Kali Amman. Every year a ten day celebration will be arranged in honour of Goddess Kali, a Nadar deity. Ganapathi omam pooja will be followed by temple flag. The seat of the Amman is washed by hoist performed water and decorated with coloured lights\textsuperscript{14}.

On 8, 9 and 10\textsuperscript{th} days from morning 6.30 onwards ceremonies like Thiru Villakku Pooja, Prayers, Songs of Kali Amman are performed. This will be followed by religious conference and villupattu on the 10\textsuperscript{th} day, and the celebration


\textsuperscript{14} Festival Report, Ananthapadmanabhan Temple, 09-09-2006, P.1.
well come to an end with Pooja and the dropping down of the temple flag.

**Vaikunda Swami Temple (Ayya temple):**

In Udaiyar vilai, a place situated ½ Kilometer from kannanoor, there is a famous Vaikundaswamy temple and it was established in 1953\textsuperscript{15}. The prayers are conducted well every morning and evening in this temple Vaikundaswamy a Nadar devotee. On behalf of the District annual festival is conducted for 10 days “Reading of Life” history of Vaikundasway from the month of June is a naval feature\textsuperscript{16}. This temple has been claimed by two families of the place as their own. However it functions on behalf of all people of this village. This temple was built – by Thiru. A. Kesavan nadar. Now his son K. Archunan is in charge of it\textsuperscript{17}.

\textsuperscript{15} Inscription on the Foundation Stone Ayya Temple, Kannanoor, 1953.


\textsuperscript{17} Personal Interview with K. Arjunan, residing at Kannanoor, dated 03-05-2006.