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John M. Fowler <<FowlerJ@gc.adventist.org>> October 3:

M. J. Prakasam completes Ph.D. In education,
Increasingly more and more educators, pastors, and administrators in Southern Asia Division are successfully completing doctoral degrees in various fields, thus propelling the Division toward more mature and trained leadership in several areas of the church. Among nationals, I can remember, the first Indian to receive a Ph.D. was Dr. Chitra Dass in the early 60s and his was in mathematics. The second person was Dr. Cherian.

Today we have almost lost count. Nevertheless, the latest to obtain a Ph.D. deserves to be noted. Dr. M. J. Prakasam, while serving full-time and leading Lowry into a brilliant academic tertiary program, particularly in B.S. and M.S. in nursing, has completed his Ph.D. dissertation and defense in Bangalore University. One of the most prestigious universities in modern India, the university and its faculty of education has recognized the academic worth and contribution of Dr. Prakasam's dissertation: "A study of administrative procedures adopted by secondary schools in relation to academic achievement, achievement in co-curricular activities and social competencies of their students." The relationship between administrative procedures and development of student competencies is a subject that will no doubt contribute to fine-tuning and development of leadership and competencies among students. Congratulations, Dr. Prakasam.

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II. Letters

1. Umesh Kumar Pokharel <umsan@wlink.com.np> Sept. 21:
"God has opened the doors of Nepal to more open Gospel work" said Pr.

Chuck Jenson, Director of the Nepal Field in the SUD e-News, September 12, 2012.

Pr. Jenson and his wife Cathy landed in Nepal at the beginning of 2010 with the clear vision to re-organized the Nepal Field of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, to proper structure and proclaim the everlasting gospel through out the country and within two years he has been able to accomplish some very significant tasks; for that I would like to congratulate Pr.

Chuck Jenson, Mrs. Cathy Jenson, and Brother Kapil Baniya.

Kindly remember Nepal in your prayers as the work grows the needs and challenges also arise more; we need more Gospel workers and for more churches to be built.

Mrs. Cathy Jenson is very dedicated women leader who has taken challenge to be part of Scheer Memorial Hospital for a short time; I know she is working day and night for the uplifting of the hospital.

Umesh Kumar Pokharel, Pastor
Seventh-day Adventist Church
Kathmandu, Nepal

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2. Boxer Kharbteng <khar_btg@yahoo.com> Sept. 21:
Yes, Mr. Arvind Engles, what you wrote about Mr. Rajendra Prasad in the last newsletter is spot on. I observed his writing skills while I was at Spicer. I am glad to see him using the his writing talents to articulate for Spicer College.

III. Spicer College Sponsoring Burra Khana
   Elisha Pulivarti <epulivarti@msn.com> Sept. 30:
   Dear Friend: You are most welcome:
   In commemoration of Spicer's North American Centennial Celebrations
   A Social Rendezvous of Nostalgia and "Burra Khana" hosted by Spicer College President for former students, faculty, staff and friends of Spicer at Southern Asian Adventist Church Fellowship Hall Sunday in Silver Spring, MD, October 14, 2012 at 6 p.m.
   RSVP: <president@spicercollege.com>
   (To present an item of nostalgia or entertainment, call 301-879-7222 or e-mail: <sasdac@sasdac.org>)

IV. Burma Vignettes-- Early Missionaries: # 2
   Mervin Myat Kyaw <<mervinmk@yahoo.com.au>> and his wife Nan are Karen Adventists who worked many years in Burma and Thailand and now live and work in Australia--Mervin as School Services Officer 1 (SSO-1) in a primary school and Nan as a full-time lay minister in the Werribee Karen Church, appointed by the Victorian Conference of SDA.. He has written a manuscript covering Adventism in Burma from its very beginning to the present and of his work in Thailand. He is searching for someone to edit his manuscript for publishing as a book. He has kindly given me a copy and permission to share it with readers of our FED and SUD newsletters.

   (2) Heber H. and Carolyn Votaw (1905-14)
   Heber H. Votaw, with his wife (a sister of US President Warren G. Harding) arrived in Rangoon in January 1905 when the General Conference responded to Myanmar's call. Both Votaw and his wife, Carolyn, were nurses. He was 23 years old at the time he arrived Myanmar. There were only three Sabbath keepers in Yangon at the time. Votaw rented a hall and started his evangelism. A telegraph operator was interested in the Three Angels' Messages of Votaw. He was, however, transferred to a town called Meiktila.
   This man told friends and neighbours of the good news he had heard from Votaw in Yangon. A. W. Stevens, a lawyer, was interested most with regard to the messages he heard and of the educational philosophy principles the church organisation was working.
   Votaw was a man of vision. He initiated Meiktila Technical School to train workers for the mission service - ministers, teachers, colporteurs, Bible instructors, office workers, nurses etc. By the time Votaw came to Meiktila the idea of opening a school with the principles of our educational philosophy were already underway. The leading citizens of the town had already started raising a fund for building a school and implementing other necessary works. All Votaw needed to do was to find an education man to come to the school. Votaw attended the General Conference session in America in 1909 and made a stirring appeal for an education man for Myanmar. Robert Bruce Thurber was sent to Myanmar that same year and Meiktila Technical School was established and with Thurber in charge. This school later became famous far and wide of Myanmar.
   Pastor Votaw was an able organizer, as well as a successful evangelist.
   The Votaws visited Mawlamyine (Moulmein) at the end of 1905 and two Myanmar brothers, Chit Hla and Po Hla, together with their families, accepted the Adventist message. These two brothers became valuable workers in the mission.
   Elder Votaw baptized many converts, beginning from Daw May and her brother U Maung, found by first self-supporting missionaries to Myanmar, Meyers and Watson. Pastor Votaw baptized some would-be missionaries too. A. H. Williams, an Englishman, who brought new mission station at Ohn Daw with Elder George Hamilton, and later became a missionary himself; he was baptized by Elder Votaw. Mr. A. A. Baash, a German businessman and later a missionary in Myanmar and many other countries, was also baptized by Elder Votaw.
   Elder Votaw served magnificently from the time of arrival in January 1905 until his return to America in May, 1914.
[Bryan Votaw, a missionary in Northeast India in the 1930's & 40's, was a nephew of Heber Votaw. Bryan & Verna's daughter Lois served in the 50's & 60's. Evelyn Tidwell is a niece of Bryan, and thus related to Heber Votaw!]

~~~~~~~~~~~ V. Thambiraj Thomas Retires

Justin Singh <JUWWL@aol.com> October 1:

Another distinguished son of Southern Asia Division from a great family, Dr. Thambiraj Thomas, retired on September 1, 2012, after 44 years of distinguished service to the Seventh-day Adventist Worldwide Church. Dr. Thomas and His wife, Patricia (nee Wallang) live in La Palma California. They have two children and four grandchildren. His son, Terrill, teaches Art at La Sierra University, Riverside, California; he and Noelle have two daughters. Dr. Thomas's daughter, Fernette, along with her husband, Kevin Turner, resides and works in Twin Falls, Idaho. The Turners have a daughter and a son. Below is a short bio of Dr. Thomas.

Dr. Thomas began his educational career in 1966 as a biology teacher and dean of men at Roorkee Adventist High School, North India Union, Southern Asia Division, after graduating from Spicer Memorial College, India. Arriving in Maryland in 1968, he began working on his graduate studies at Howard University, Washington, D.C. He served in the Columbia Union Conference for eight years as elementary teacher and principal, and moved with his family to Southern California in 1978. He served in the Southern California Conference as a teacher and principal for the SDA Union School (K-8) and as principal of St. Gabriel Academy, before his appointment, in 1998, as an Associate Superintendent of Schools for Southern California Conference. He earned his doctoral degree from Loma Linda University in 1984. He was invited to join the Pacific Union Conference as an Associate Director for Secondary Education in the year 2000, served there until his retirement.

Dr. Thomas chaired the Pacific Union Secondary Curriculum Committee and served on numerous curricula-related committees for the North American Division. He has chaired summer committees for the North American Division that have developed secondary curriculum guides in music and visual arts, social studies, mathematics, and health, as well as the Committee on Standardized Testing. He has also been involved in the revision and development of several documents currently in use in the Pacific Union Conference, including the Registrar's Handbook, the Handbook for School Board Members, and the Focus on Learning Self-Study Instrument used by academies in the Pacific Union Conference for regional accreditation by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges. He is a member of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development and the National Association of Secondary School Principals.

Throughout his educational career, Dr. Thomas remained committed to improving the quality of Adventist secondary education in the Pacific Union Conference. He did all he could by working in collaboration with conference curriculum committees, secondary associate superintendents, secondary administrators and teachers, to prepare students for excellence in higher education here, and for the Kingdom to come.

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(6/1966 to 6/1968) Teacher-Secondary; Northern Union Section, India
(9/1970 to 12/1972) Teacher-Elementary; Chesapeake Conference
(1/1973 to 6/1978) Principal-Elementary; Chesapeake Conference
(7/1978 to 12/1990) Teacher-Elementary; Southern California Conference
(1/1991 to 6/1992) Principal-Elementary; Southern California Conference
(7/1992 to 12/1997) Principal-Secondary; Southern California Conference
(7/1998 to 7/2000) Associate Supt.of Schools; Southern California Conference
(7/2000 to 8/2012) Associate Director-Secondary; Pacific Union Conference

~~~~~~~~~~~ VI. Sweetie Ritchil's Morning Watch, Oct. 5:

--from RENEW, the women's morning devotional book for 2012

"The Lord Knows Best"

"Psalm 143:8"

"I was traveling from Los Angeles to Arizona and was really worried because Arizona was a new destination for me. Moreover it would be almost night when I arrived there. I had reserved a taxi, but I didn't know how everything would work out. My heart was pounding. My uncle and I both prayed before I left on my journey, asking that God would take care of all the details.

"When I arrived at the airport, I looked around for any familiar face. A small voice guided me toward a woman who was eating ice cream. As I sat behind her, a voice again prompted me to ask her where she was going.

"'I'm here to attend some philanthropic meetings.' she responded.
"My heart started beating faster. 'You mean the ones at the IW Marriot hotel?'

"Yes, those were the ones, the same meetings I had come to attend. Both of us were so happy to find each other and become friends right there at the airport. I just thanked the Lord! We then exchanged names, and I learned that her name was Jasmine.

"When we arrived at the hotel, I went to the registration desk to get my room number and the key. The clerk asked me for the room rent for the entire meeting session: $729. I brought it out of my purse, but then she said, 'You have to pay $250 more as security. It will be refunded.'

"'I'm sorry; I didn't receive any information about that. I only have $280 for my food and return taxi. Being a foreigner in the United States, I don't have a credit card.'

"What was I going to do? I had traveled so far, and now this. Just then Jasmine came forward and told the clerk, 'Here is my credit card. Put my name as her security.'

"I was speechless! Once again I thanked the Lord for His leading. How wonderful is our God! When we surrender fully to Him, He clears the way before we even think about it. Don't you want to surrender to Him fully right now, without hesitation?

"'Happy are those who make the Lord their trust.' (Ps. 40:4 NRSV)

["Sweetie Ritchel writes from Bangladesh, where she is the treasurer for the union mission, and has served the church in different financial areas. She has been involved with children's Sabbath school and is women's ministries and Dorcas director. She loves Bible reading, composing religious songs, writing articles, and finding ways to help the helpless."

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VI. Indian Drunkard Becomes Gospel Worker

"I was a troublemaker in my village in India. My father had introduced me to alcohol when I was 9 years old and it had become an overpowering habit. I quit school and stole money to buy liquor. My family, my health, and my friends all suffered because of me.

"I began spitting up blood. Frightened, I quit drinking until the blood-spitting ended. Then I started drinking again. I was 23 years old and married. Our lives were miserable because of my addiction. I drank up my earnings and left my family to find food.

"One night I staggered home drunk, and saw a man waiting at the bus stop. He turned to me and said he was a man of God. I stopped to listen, and he told me, 'There is a God who can solve your problems. I want to come to your house and tell you about Him.'

"'I'm not interested,' I told him. 'I'm a drunkard and I don't know God.' But the man walked with me to my home. There he told me about God. But I was too drunk to understand what he told me. 'I'm going to sleep,' I said. 'You can sleep here until morning.'

"The next morning I found the pastor still there, so we talked again. I was sober and found understand what he was saying about God. I was curious about this God who is alive and powerful and who answers honest prayers. I wanted to know more, so I went with the pastor to his house some 25 miles (40 km) to study with him.

"God took away the desire for alcohol and cleared my mind. I accepted Jesus as my savior, and my wife and I were baptized in 2008. Today I know that the meeting with the pastor was a divine appointment.

"My wife and I began sharing Christ's love with others. Today we serve as Global Mission pioneers, sharing God's love in my home town, where everyone knew me as knew me as a drunkard, troublemaker, and an idol worshipper. They can see what God is doing in my life, and I tell them that God can do the same in their lives.

"So far God has given us 20 people for Christ. I'm working with 30 or 40 more people. I'm filled with joy that God could use me, a drunken idol worshipper, to bring the love of Jesus to others." -- Ramesh Raut is a Gospel Mission pioneer in India.

[from the GC Office of Adventist Mission] ~~~~~~~~~~ To remove your name from the mailing list of this newsletter, simply reply to this e-mail and put "REMOVE" in the Subject line.

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