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I. Church Growth in Southern Asia

John M. Fowler, in current Adventist World Review

"...[M]iracles, ancient and new, mark the history and mission of the church in southern Asia. One of the first Adventist missionaries was a woman, Georgia Burrus, who came to India in 1895; her first convert was a woman.... The church has witnessed thousands of women and men, paid workers and lay members, young and old, who lived in home, sowed in tears and reaped in joy. The church that began with 23 members in 1899 today is poised to cross the 2 million mark by the next General Conference session. Urban seams and rural outposts across the land are bursting with Adventism.

"The growth is not in membership alone. Airwaves, once unavailable for the proclamation of the gospel, are now at our reach. Hope Channel and TV ministry broadcasts in six languages reaching vast masses across the country.

"Evangelism is no longer the monopoly of men. Women and young people are increasingly involved in church growth and development. Adventist education is mediated through seven colleges and 356 K-12 schools to 175,000 students.

"Nepal and Bhutan are tasting the joy of the gospel without hindrance for the first time. Never before in the history of the Southern Asia Division has so much been accomplished by so few for the salvation of so many.

"However, what is yet to be done rises as Mt. Everest in comparison to the plans of what has been done thus far. Standing on that plain of achievement, Southern Asia's leaders and believers feel confronted by a thousand peaks to climb; membership audits, moving stewardship upward from being the lowest per capita tithe in the world, providing a living wage to pastors and teachers, and building a highway for our God that will wind through thousands of villages and towns yet untouched by Adventist...

[You will want to read the entire article, "Beyond a Staggering Agenda: Adventists in Southern Asia." Dr. Fowler tells the story of Jeyaselvi who lives in the village Kannankurichi in South India. Nine years ago she was in deep distress physically and financially. A single mother of a little son, she was befriended by a Hope Channel Bible worker, John Prakasam. Later she was baptized by Pastor S. Johnson. Now, 9 years later she is no longer homeless, hopeless, hungry. With God's blessings she has a home of her own and has made accommodation for an Adventist church in her little town.]

(Just before the 1958 General Conference Session in Cleveland, Ohio, someone suggested at a SUD council meeting that we adopt a division membership goal/moto: "Twenty thousand There'll be/ Before GC.")

II. Seeking Info About Pioneer Missionary Charles C. Belgrave

Dr. D. S. Williams <mdwilliams39@gmail.com> January 19:

Can you help me find information about a black missionary by the name of Charles C. Belgrave who went to India in 1913. I have tried to contact people in India but no one replies. I want to know if he had children in India, did he die there, are there pictures of him, etc. He was originally from Guyana but came to the States to study and be trained. Here is a little bit about him:

"Brother Belgrave understands the Hindustani language, so that we felt he might be able to work in some section where Hindustani is spoken. He expects to take a little training at Melrose and then go to India.

"Voted, That the treasury the authorized to arrange transportation for... Charles Belgrave and wife, to India, by whatever route may be decided upon.
"He wrote from Melrose, Massachusetts on August 19 that he would leave today for New York and sail on the 31st for British Guyana. He was praying that the blessings of God would rest upon his 'alma mater'. Who did he marry? "January 1913 he and wife reached Calcutta after more than five weeks on the sea from England. They were to locate in the mountain village of Garhwal and teach at the school there. He was in charge of the school and the rest of the teachers were Indians. Instruction was given in Urdu, Hindi, and English. There were sixty-two boys in the school and they were greatly in need of 16 lamps, which would cost $30. He appealed to Mount Vernon College to help the work along by giving the money with which to buy the lamps.

"It was hoped that some of the high caste boys would take their stand for Christ during 1914. Early in January the headmaster, a young Indian man who had been with them since the school began took his stand for the advent message. He was baptized in April at the school so that the students would have the privilege of seeing and being influenced by the rite. The school now had over seventy boys of the Brahman and Rajput castes. The school provided ten standards of work."

If you don't know anything about him, do you know anybody who is interested in history and might be able to help?

Thanks and blessings,

--
Margaret and DeWitt Williams
Retired and Enjoying Life
DeWitt S. Williams, EdD MPH
Former Director, Health Ministries NAD
240-264-8499

Check out my new book "Highly Committed" about the Neal and Ted Wilson family. It can be seen at BarnesandNoble.com or TeachServices.com ~~~~~~~~~ III. Death of Mrs. Vimala John

Mrs. Vimala John was born in Murkuperi, on 28th Dec, 1939 to Gnanamani and Robert Duraiswamy, and educated in James Memorial School. She was married to V. John in 1961, and started mission service at Roorkee. She joined Spicer Memorial College and completed her education after which she joined as a teacher in Falakata from 1971-1979. She also worked in Jalandhar, Nedukandam, Kotagiri, Bangalore, KGF and Prakasapurum (James school) schools. Following her retirement, she continued her service as a teacher at a reach school for 2 more years. She also served as teacher and headmistress at a Muslim school for 4 years. She was always active, a loving mother, patient and kind teacher and a faithful worker in God's vineyard.

She leaves behind her husband, Pr. John; 2 daughters, Julie and Maxine; their spouses; and 4 grandchildren.

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IV. Dr. Chacko M. Paul Launches Book

Rajendra Prasad <rajendraprasad2000@yahoo.com> Jan. 16:

January 11, 2014 was a high day in the history of Spicer College family in general and in the family of Dr. Chacko M. Paul in particular when it saw the launching of his book entitled "Syrian Christians: One Tradition, Many Faces" at his residence at 7:30 pm at the hands of the College President Dr. Justus Devadas in the presence of the College administrators and family and friends, followed by felicitatory messages from friends and VPAA which finally culminated in dinner. The academic department of the college is happy and proud that after a brief spate of earning PhDs, an era of publishing books has started. The book, based on his doctoral thesis and containing 6 chapters and published by V. Joshi and Co., Pune, deals with the origin, growth, and contribution of the Syrian Christian Community in Kerala. Dr. Paul, a nephew of Dr. M. E. Cherian, former President of Spicer College, is the Head of History Department and Director of Counseling and Guidance Centre at Spicer College. He is himself a Syrian Christian and has put his heart and soul in bringing out the life story of this special tribe in God's own country which has, by its unique and noble tradition, been dominating the churches (including SDA), convents, hospitals and schools not only in their state but in the country and beyond.

The Syrian Christians, quite ironically, are neither from Syria nor truly Christian, having borrowed or rather retained many practices from their original background of Hinduism, especially Brahmanism. The typical traditional attire of men consists of white shirts and dhotis while the women, especially old-timers, dressed in white close-necked blouses and lungis (modern wrap-arounds) with the pleats of an off-white half saree draped across, and lumps of gold loosely hanging or rather precariously dangling from their delicate sagging ear-lobes, may soon be a dying species. And their traditional appam (rice and coconut milk cake), and 'kanji vellam'
(rice gruel) after all, may not owe their origin to this community. Having spent seven of my most impressionable years at the prestigious Mar Ivanios College, Trivandrum, owned and operated by the Syrian Catholic management, I too have closely observed this community from close quarters, have been intrigued as well as impressed by their customs, traditions, culture, rituals, attire, and cuisine and have come to appreciate their broadness of mind, largeness of heart and loftiness of spirit. It is their tolerance and appreciation of all religions that helped scores of even non-Malayalee Adventist students to pursue higher studies quite peacefully in their institutions, being officially given Sabbath-offs and exempted from the compulsory NCC training and served milk or ‘vella chhaya’ (diluted and sweetened milk when the number of Adventist students increased) instead of coffee or tea in the hostel mess and even granted admission to much sought-after postgraduate science courses like Chemistry - hold your breath - from their management quota, like me! And the ubiquitous presence of their cadre mainly in the area of education, health care, politics, social service and religion all over the world speaks volumes of their discipline, dignity, dedication and devotion to duty. Prominent names in this community include Cherian, Kurian, Tharian, Ninan, Mathai (Mathew), Markose, Lukose, Kuiakose, Paulose, Thomas, Varghese, Gheevarghese, etc, and certainly almost every hospital world-wide has either an Achamma, Annamma, Ponnamma, Sosamma, Aleyamma, Mariamma, Saramma, Kunamma, or Kunjukunjamma, (though quite ironically no Marthamma),(or their modern versions like Annie, Mary, Sara, Susee, Molly, etc)------- these angels of mercy who bring sinking patients back to life, not merely through their nursing care but through their personal touch—a medley of voluble, incessant but friendly chatter, altruistic nature, joie de vivre, and dignity of labour, willing to do even the most menial jobs most gracefully. My hats off to them! May their tribe increase!

Read this book, if you wish to learn more about them. It is priced just at Rs 120 (about $ 2 only) and one may contact Dr. Chacko Paul at +91 9850907153 or <madathamchal@yahoo.com> for a personal copy.

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V. Spicer’s Morning Watch Devotional for 2015

Elisha Pulivarti <epulivarti@msn.com> January 13
[Correction on item sent last week.]

SPICER MEMORIAL COLLEGE CENTENNIAL MORNING WATCH COMMENTARY 2015. To all Spicerians: You are invited to write a message for the centennial morning watch. Have you experienced God's leading hand in your life? This is an opportunity to share your experience with others. Theme: God's Leading through Spicer.

Length: 350 words, a title, a Bible text and a prayer at the end of your message. Deadline: January 30, 2014. Please submit via email to Elisha Pulivarti at <epulivarti@msn.com>.

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VI. Daisy Rani Rao Receives the Paul Harrison Award at CMC, Valore

Johnson Koilpillai <jkoilpillai@gmail.com> Jan. 15:

My daughter, Dr. Daisy Rani Rao, recently received the prestigious Paul Harrison Award for Meritorious Service in Rural Areas. This Award, CMC's highest honour, is presented to an alumnus for significant, steadfast and selfless service, thus living out the motto of the institution, 'Not to be ministered unto but to minister.' Dr. Daisy, along with her husband, Dr. Narendra Rao, a Community Medicine specialist, have been making the difference through several rural hospitals that were on the verge of closure. Their contributions to the ministry of health have been outstanding and, often, beyond the call of duty.

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VII. Chadalawada School’s Christmas Program

from PRIA’s December Newsletter

"This school year the Chadalawada School has been closed for many days because of political unrest in the state of Andhra Pradesh. In spite of this, teachers and students anticipate Christmas as they decorate their classrooms with colorful stars and pictures.

"On December 23 the administration and teachers of the school are inviting parents to come and enjoy a program produced by the students. The school children will participate in several activities such as singing songs about the birth of Christ and repeating memory verses. They will enjoy acting in skits on the birth of Jesus and performing other Bible stories like the Good Samaritan. In keeping with the season of giving, the school plans to have Santa distribute sweets to the children."
"We are glad to report our children participated in district-wide sports, and they were in competition like Ring Toss, Badminton, and a game called Kho Kho. Compared to other schools in the area, Chadalawada School students won most games and are now qualified to participate in zonal level games. The secret: they pray before playing!"

VIII. India/China Music Concert 2013
  Edison Samraj <adventistmediacentre@gmail.com>
  India/China Music Concert 2013 presented by the musical federation of India at the Corinthian Club was held on 30th December, 2013 at 6:30pm at Nyati County NIBM Annex. The invitation was extended in partnership with UNESCO for South Asia and the Chinese consulate was the guest of honor. As the peace ambassador for world peace, I was present there as a guest of honor. It was powered by the Central Consortium and CMA. It was packed with Indian and Chinese artistes on violin, harp and percussion instruments. The highlight of the evening was a performance by the Shankar brothers at the drums. It was an extraordinary performance for close to 45 minutes on different levels of percussions. The evening was well spent.

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