I. SPECIAL NOTICE

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~~~~~~~~~~~ I. SPECIAL NOTICE (Repeated)

We are changing the way we distribute the SUD e-News. In the future it will be posted via Yahoo Groups. Our daughter-in-law, Lila Lidwell, is currently sending invitations to each of you to sign up to the SUD e-News Yahoo group. I encourage you to accept the invitation if you wish to continue to receive my newsletter. You can request to join by sending an email to the following address: <sudnews-subscribe@yahooogroups.com>

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II. The Wilson Family & the Southern Asia Division

In the last newsletter we told you of Dr. D. S. Williams' book, "Highly Committed", about the Wilson family. Chapter 5 consists of 7 very full pages describing their years in the Southern Asia Division beginning in 1935. SUDites will find many, many historic names and families mentioned. The newsletter will continue quoting paragraphs from this fascinating book.

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Back in India [after the 1936 General Conference session] the Wilson family was busy going to school and growing up. Hannah saw to it that the family attended school and church and participated in dozens of activities.

Donald Wallin Wilson was born January, 1938 in Poona while the other children were active in Vincent Hill School. Neal turned 18 in 1938. The division newspaper gives us a few glimpses of the Wilson family. Elder R. H. Pierson gives this account of the children participating in carol singing in Bombay to raise Harvest Ingathering funds:

"What a priceless possession we have in our children and young people! What potential possibilities for service are bound up in the energies of youth! Now that we are approaching another Uplift season we can probably plan to harness some of this pent-up energy for the Lord's working this section of His great vineyard.

"We had some interesting as well as materially profitable experiences in Bombay during the forepart of Christmas week, working with our children and young people in the Uplift work. Sunday afternoon about six o'clock a few of the children went out with capable chaperones to some of the popular 'parades' of Bombay and returned in about an hour's time with Rupees 45-0.

Had we not previously arranged for carol singing seven o'clock, doubtless this total would have been materially enlarged by a longer stay. At any rate, the children all thoroughly enjoyed the work and are eager to go again to help reach the goal of Rupees 250 which has been set for them. (They raised this amount in the 1937 campaign.)

"Carol singing was something new for most of us in Bombay, so we found it necessary to learn much that was new and also adapt what we did know to the circumstances peculiar to Bombay. We were most fortunate in having the very valuable assistance of some of our good Poona young people including Pastor and Mrs. Steves and Maxine, Brother and Sister R. J. Richie, Neal and Clarice Wilson, and Judson and Charlie Thomas."

From six o'clock in the evening until 7;30 public parades or parks where people went for an evening walk of to sit and visit were good places to go.

Children, wearing identification badges, were sent out two by two with chaperones. A prayer was offered at the beginning for God's guidance, and a prayer at the end for thanksgiving and praise for what was collected. The little children used cans with a glass front. A lighted Christmas candle inside lit up the money that was placed in as an offering."

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Spicer Adventist University was finally and formally inaugurated, though seemingly quite coincidentally, but certainly quite miraculously, on August 28, 2014, the day being also celebrated as the Spicer’s Founders’ Day since last few years ever since Dr. Justus Devadas stumbled upon the fact somewhere that classes were first conducted on this campus on August 28, 1942. Though the date was earlier fixed for inauguration on August 21 to accommodate the convenience of the Chief Guest, Mr. Rajesh Tope, Honourable Minister of Higher and Technical Education, Maharashtra, who played a pivotal role in our realization of the Spicer Adventist University Charter, it was he again who later requested us, to our pleasant surprise and joy, to kindly postpone the inauguration to the new date due to some unforeseen emergency engagements in his constituency. Though the postponement caused some inconvenience to some out-station invitees, it gave the university family some lease of time to plan things better besides boosting our morale with the inauguration falling on the Founders’ Day.

Though the meteorology department predicted a heavy downpour, the D day dawned normally, everything was in place, all arrangements and decorations meticulously made, and all the personnel assigned with various roles found in their mettle and fully geared to the occasion. Visitors started trickling in gradually from 2:30 pm and the invited Guests like the Adventist administrators from the Division, local Union, Conference and sections, Church leaders across all denominations from Pune City, former mayor, incumbent corporator, etc, made their appearance from 3:30 pm, welcomed by the University administrators, faculty, staff and students, at the porch of the Ad Building as they alighted from their vehicles and chaperoned by the formally attired students to the venue, the Main Auditorium, through the flag-studded Taj Mahal Road. Later the Guests of Honour like the Chancellor of Symbiosis International University, the Mayor, Principal of Union Biblical Seminary, etc, arrived and stayed back to welcome the Chief Guest Tope and accompany him to the venue and the dais as the audience who till then were engaged in robust song service led by Dr. Paul Bhaggien and group, rose to extend a hearty welcome to the distinguished guests.

The programme started with the masters of ceremony A. S. Varekan and Shirin Stenoy announcing the special song rendered by the University Chorale led by Mary Davy. Then Pastor G. S. Robert Clive, Treasurer of SUD read his fiduciary welcome speech highlighting the century-old kaleidoscopic saga of Spicer since its inception as South India Training School at Coimbatore in 1915 to its present status as Spicer Adventist University with its amazing journey in between. Then Dr. Shekhar Singh, Principal of UBS offered a prayer of gratitude and praise followed by the University Vice Chancellor Dr. Justus Devadas doing the honours to all the dignitaries with bouquets of flowers and gifts of our church published books on health and happiness in lieu of the traditional shawls. Then Dr. S. B. Mujumdar, Chancellor of Symbiosis International University who boasted about his 30-year long association with and inspiration from Spicer and late Dr. M. E. Cherian, the illustrious President for 27 years, urged, in his presidential remark, the Spicerians to keep up the good name, good work and goodwill they always managed to hold and remain distinct from all the 700 plus universities in the country and encouraged the students to imbibe virtues of mission to the society, compassion for the downtrodden and passion for education.

And after the special song rendered by ‘Advent Harmony’, a faculty singing group, Dr. Devadas read the following citation of the plaque before presenting it to the Chief Guest: AWARD OF APPRECIATION respectfully Presented to Honourable Shri Rajesh Tope, Minister, Higher and Technical Education, Maharashtra, in grateful acknowledgement, sincere appreciation and worthy recognition of his rare vision and meritorious contribution to higher and technical education, unstinted dedication to educational leadership, unitary devotion to academic excellence and innovation, exceptional support to promoting holistic education among all sections of the society in the state of Maharashtra and our great nation, India, on the auspicious occasion of the inauguration of Spicer Adventist University, Pune, Thursday, August 28, 2014 by Pastor Rathinaraj John, President, Spicer Adventist University and Dr. Justus Devadas, Vice Chancellor, Spicer Adventist University”. In his response, Mr. Tope, a young, dynamic and convivial minister, of average height and attired in white, and who struck a chord with the audience, both young and old with his simple and unassuming nature, expressed his valuable thoughts, about his nurturing great appreciation for Spicer ever since his first and previous visit to this campus to inaugurate the Pune University Principals’ Conference a few years ago and his respect to the Spicer’s first Vice Chancellor for his prayerful life which he categorically said has enabled Spicer to get the university charter as every time they met together in Mumbai they started and ended their meeting with a prayer — a great testimony coming from a staunch Hindu educationalist. He too expressed his desire to see Spicer, the first Private University in the State of Maharashtra, his baby of sorts, to progress and excel, and apart from offering the regular traditional courses, add skill subjects, a fad in most of modern universities, and move from traditional norms of just
dissemination of knowledge through teaching, to creation and construction of knowledge through research and innovation. And then to a thunderous applause he declared the inauguration of Spicer Adventist University complete.

While still in this jubilant mood, Mrs. Chanchala Kodre, the Honourable Mayor of Pune City, another youthful and beautiful young leader was invited to unveil and present the Spicer University flag to the Vice Chancellor, followed by the greetings from Dr. Daniel Ezhilarasu, General Secretary, All India Association of Christian Higher Education. Then the National Anthem was sung by the Spicer Higher Secondary Students with the audience joining them and then the dignitaries were led through the light drizzle to the Fountain Circle in front of the Ad Building for the unveiling of the Commemorative Monument—a 6' x 2.5' black granite stone supported by two sturdy stainless steel pillars with the following golden letters sculptured into it: "To God be the Glory! Great Things He Hath Done" SPICER ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY Inaugurated by Honorable Shri Rajesh Tope August 28, 2014” and bearing the names of the President and Vice Chancellor of Spicer Adventist University, R. John and Justus Devadas. In spite of the gradual mounting of drizzle which made the colourful umbrellas to mushroom everywhere, the Chief Guest met the press reporters right among the showers for about 10 minutes before he left with his crew for another engagement.

Then the Spicer College Song, no, the University Song, with just the word College in the chorus replaced by Varsity, was sung followed by the reciprocal recitation of the famous Prayer of St Francis of Assisi led by Prof. Joshua Rathnam, a semi politician-professor-church pastor from Pune. Dr. Justus Devadas gave the vote of thanks, declared the following day a holiday for all and then invited all the guests, visitors and faculty to the chef-ordered tasty vegetarian meal served in a beautiful ambience next to his house, finally bringing the inaugural function to a happy end, filling everyone with a feeling of elation in spite of the dampening drizzle, and giving them a fillip to go on with greater tasks ahead.

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IV. Remembering Millicent Florence Davis LeStyne

1. Alfred Raju <alfredraju_d@yahoo.co.in> August 21:
   We are sorry to hear of the death of Millicent Florence Davis LeStyne. We know her when we were at Bangalore 1967 to 1976. We think of good work as principal of Spencer SDA school. She was a living witness to be a godly woman. We pray for her friends and relatives to be consoled.

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2. Florence Fernando <flofernando@icloud.com> Sept. 2:
   One of the sweet singers in Israel has been laid to rest. It is none other than Millicent LeStyne. We have known Millie for many years. In fact, our families had grown up together and so we were more like sisters. Millie was kind, brave, strict, straightforward and would never hesitate to tell you off if you did something wrong. She held many 'portfolios'-mother, sister, aunt, friend, teacher, choir leader, etc. I could still remember her screams and laughter on the games field and her famous expression 'Crickety-crack'. Millie had weathered the storms in her life very bravely and it is so sad that such a wonderful life had been cut short so suddenly.
   Our deepest sympathies go out to her son Leon, sister Dorothea Bell and her many nieces and nephews. All I can say is-life is short. We do not know when it will turn. Whatever, whenever–let us be ready.

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V. Remembering Calcutta & a Visit With the N. C. Wilsons

Gerald M. Reynolds <gemreyn@sbcglobal.net> Sept. 1:

As additional incidents in the life of the N. C. Wilson family are being recounted in this newsletter we have enjoyed receiving, I felt it would be well to report on the following occasion of meeting the Wilsons in India:

The time was early June, 1940. Our ship was to sail June 11 of that year. So, being in what was then known as Calcutta for about a week before we could board the ship, the M. S. Klipfontein, a Dutch liner, we took some time to visit many of the places around Calcutta that tourists like to visit. Among such places was the so-called Black Hole. Another was the Kali Ghat, a special place for Hindus to come to worship and pay honor to their gods. One of the things our guide showed us was how small the reported Ganges River was as it passed through this location. Not much wider than a western irrigation water recovery ditch traversing the rice growing farm lands of Northern California. In our wandering about we encountered the Wilson family, not knowing that they also were preparing to return to the States, as it is said, on PR. So joining them with our guide, and being close to the location where sacrifices were made, our guide asked if we would like to see such a sacrifice that was scheduled to take place in a few minutes. Our guide explained some of the details we would be able to watch.
The Penitent was bringing a live goat as his sacrifice. The guide continued his description, thus: There would be four Hindu priests besides the Penitent himself. One priest would hold the goat upside down by its feet. He would position the head of the goat between two upright sections of railway rails embedded in concrete and set upward therein. Holes had been drilled in these rails so as to permit metal rods being placed above and below the neck to limit the struggling animal so as to not be able to move its head either up, down, to one side or the other, or to retract the head from between these rails. We were told that the object of this sacrifice was the decapitation of the head of the goat in a single passing of the sword blade such that another of the priests would be able to catch the falling head and quickly hold that head over the head of the Penitent as so to purify and baptize the penitent in the blood of the goat. That head could not be allowed to touch the ground or the sacrifice would not be complete and the sins of the Penitent would not be forgiven. Another priest would hold a cup so that the priest holding the body of the goat could allow the flowing blood from the severed body of the goat would be caught in that cup, then handed to the penitent to drink the blood contents of the cup as certain incantations were voiced by the priest officiating. Our guide reminded us that didn't Christians themselves believe that without the shedding of blood there was no remission of sin? Here were gathered Elder N. C. Wilson and his wife on one side with Neil, Clarisse, Gloria, and Bruce, while Neil with his camera took pictures of the proceedings. Also, my parents and two older brothers. Elder and Mrs. Earl R. Reynolds, brothers Bob and Glenn, while Bob with his little Kodak Brownie also was taking pictures. I, being 11 years of age, was horrified by this whole procedure, I saw the struggling goat, the kneeling penitent, the flowing blood, the cup being put to his lips to drink while the head of the goat was held over the Penitent's head! It made me sick! The memory still lives!

In October, 1993, while at the General Conference headquarters working to bring on line the Djibouti Adventist Health Center in Eastern Africa, I encountered Neil as one day he came into the G.C. building, inside by the elevator that goes directly to the Presidential suite of offices on the third floor. He recognized me immediately and I asked if he recalled that event. Indeed he did, and I asked him if he still had any of the pictures that he had taken that day. He said that probably not, as they had very likely been lost in the many moves he had made in the intervening 53 years. But the memory was still as vivid to him as it was to me.

There are other, nicer, memories I have of Neil than this one above. Like for example, the way he could juggle a "soccer" ball between his feet going up the steps from the old gym building at the lower lever below the old Administration, classroom, and ladies hostel building. The times he would swing himself up to sit on the crossbar that formed the goal post on the football field at dear old V.H.S., while the ball was being played at the other end of the field. I recall the day he came running out of that Admin. building shouting with joy that he had passed his Cambridge exams. In later years I had the pleasure of working with Ivor Woodward at the White Memorial Hospital and becoming reacquainted with Clarice, Ivor's wife. I still have pictures of their two daughters I photographed while on a trip to Salt Lake City that took us through Bryce Canyon on our return to Los Angeles from a science convention we had attended. That was in 1956, which was 58 years ago. I do look forward to becoming reacquainted with them all in the times to come after Jesus has rescued His people from this cesspool of Sin.

--Gerald M. Reynolds, D.D.S.

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