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VERY SPECIAL NOTICE & IMPORTANT MESSAGE ABOUT SUD E-NEWS

We are changing the way we distribute the SUD e-News. Soon it will go out only via Yahoo Groups. The old distribution method worked well in the beginning when there were few subscribers and the editor was 20 years younger! Now, with thousands of subscribers, the old system is both time-consuming and burdensome for me as I am nearing age 93 to send out the newsletter each week as I have been doing, so the new method will be much easier for me and you can still receive it regularly.

You already received several invitations to sign up to the SUD e-News Yahoo group. We will send out one more round of invitations to join the Yahoo group. Please accept the invitation if you wish to continue to receive this newsletter. Alternately you or any interested party can subscribe by sending an email to the following address: <sudnews-subscribe@yahoogroups.com>. If you are already receiving the newsletter via Yahoo groups, you need do nothing further. After the third round of invitations have been sent, the SUD e-News will go out only to addresses that subscribed to the Yahoo Group.

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I. Letters
1. Richard Samuel <samtrio@verizon.net> April 16:

Reading the historical note about Pr. E. D. Thomas being the first Indian Adventist ordained minister reminds me of my grandmother, Mrs. Samburnamal John--herself converted from Hinduism, became a great Bible worker and a preacher of God's word. In her late 70s, being blind, knew the Bible so well quoted many verses by memory. We are also blessed that Mrs. M. S. Prasada Rao, now over 100 years of age, is in California and who is a stalwart of the Adventist faith, carrying on the legacy set forth by her father, Pr. E. D. Thomas.

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II. Sri Lanka Authorities Seek to Disband Adventist Congregation

from Adventist Review April 15:
The president of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Sri Lanka asked for worldwide prayers for a congregation of nearly 80 members that local authorities are seeking to disband at the request of Buddhist monks. The congregation's struggle in the village of Pitabeddara, located in the south of the predominantly Buddhist island state, comes after Buddhist monks forced the closure of another Adventist church and amid a growth in religious liberty concerns around the world. Adventist believers are worshiping in the Pitabeddara house-church, which is also the pastor's home, despite an order from the authorities to disband, said George Wambeek, president of the Sri Lanka Mission of Seventh-day Adventists. A court in the capital, Colombo, is scheduled to consider an appeal made by the pastor for freedom to worship in the house-church on May 7. Wambeek said there was no easy solution to the threatened closure, and he appealed to church members to pray. "We have 77 believers in this company, and many more are waiting to join," he said. "But due to this threat and opposition by Buddhists monks, the church can't develop." The pastor ignored the order to disband because the top local governing body, the Cabinet, was not involved in the decision and he saw it as an attack on religious freedom instigated by Buddhist monks, Wambeek said. He described the pastor, a former police officer, as "very bold" and "burning to work for the Lord and bring in souls to the church." "The lawyer who is fighting this case for us also advised us not to stop worshiping because this was an instigation by anti-Christian groups led by Buddhist monks," he said. The church's options appear limited. If it doesn't win the court case, church members could complain to the national human rights commission in Colombo that they are being deprived of their right to worship freely and ask that it intervene, church leaders said. While a trip to Colombo might work in the church's favor, it also might create additional problems. The Buddhist monks could agitate the masses, causing unrest in the community, and then accuse the Adventists of disturbing the peace. Seventy percent of Sri Lanka's population of 20.5 million identifies itself as Theravada Buddhists, while 12 percent are Shaivite Hindus, and 10 percent are Muslims. Christians account for about 7.5 percent of the population, and 6 percent of those are Roman Catholic. The Adventist Church, which first entered Sri Lanka in the early 1900s, has about 3,300 members worshiping in 60 congregations across the country, according to the latest figures from its Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research. The church has faced trouble in Sri Lanka before. A pastor and several other church leaders were beaten earlier in Deniyaya, located about 20 miles (32 kilometers) from the house-church, and the Adventist Church lost its house of worship in that town. Fears about religious liberty are not limited to Sri Lanka. In late March, the Adventist Church expressed concern about two church members who were detained in Muslim-dominant Bangladesh on unclear allegations linked to religious freedom. Last August, Hindu activists threatened to seize an Adventist church in an Indian village after reconverting its last members. Ted N. C. Wilson, president of the Adventist world church, raised
concerns about religious freedom during a meeting with United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon earlier this month. "Unfortunately, what is happening in Sri Lanka is not new but the result of growing religious intolerance," said John Graz, director of the religious liberty and public affairs department of the Adventist world church. "When religious freedom is attacked, all freedoms are in danger," he said. "I hope the government and the people of Sri Lanka will allow the house-church to continue to worship."

III. Descendants of E. D. Thomas
Merlyn Fernando <merlynfernando@yahoo.com> April 18:
Following up on the recent Adventist World reference to Grandpa E. D. Thomas, born 1898, and ordained by pioneer J. S. James in Pragasapuram, readers may like to note that the only surviving child is a daughter of his, Grace Prasada Rao, who has just celebrated her 102nd birthday. She has her mental faculties, but moves about in a wheelchair as she fatigues easily. Loretta, her first born, keeps a close eye on her, as she lives in a serviced apartment in Santa Cruz, Calif. After years of unhappiness between Grandpa and his siblings, most all of whom were favoured Anglican Christians, we now move amicably with the second and third generations. Two of the brothers lived in Ceylon and two others became Adventists, of whom one was a physician in private practice in Tinnevelly. Finally they all respected their eldest sibling, EDT, for who he was and what he stood for. Praise the Lord!
A replica of the James Memorial church [Pragasapuram] now stands in Hosur on the Koilpillai ashram property. N. T. Nallamuthu, who was from here, is buried on what was our Kottawa school property [Ceylon]. Another Sabbath keeper from Pragasapuram, S. Thambakaram and children built altars for God wherever they moved along the west coast of Sri Lanka. His son-in-law, D. J. Gnanakkan, was elder of the Bethel Tamil church from its inception till recent years. They remained the longest in Sri Lanka, even through difficult political days.
We visited Pragasapuram in 2006 and conducted our daughter's wedding in the church of our roots and saw a thriving school with several school buses for children's convenience. Boarders came from as far NE as Meghalaya. The original "sweet water" well as an answer to prayer in a brackish water area was still in use. And so was the mortar and mud walled first bungalow, 100 years strong. Since then, 13th Sabbath offerings and school expansion may have replaced it.

IV. Prayer Request for Ms Premila Victor
SAAA <Info@saaa.org> April 20:
Special prayer is requested for Ms Premila Victor, the daughter of our dear and long time members, Mr. & Mrs. John and Lilly Victor. Premila experienced severe discomfort and pain in the abdomen area last week. She was hospitalized and after several tests she was diagnosed with cancer in the liver and in the pancreatic area. She's in critical condition, in the Intensive Care Unit, at Holy Cross Hospital.
As a faith based Association and community, believing "nothing is impossible with God" and "prayers of the righteous availeth much," let us uphold Premila and the Victor family in prayer; entrusting her into the
loving care and guidance of the Great Physician, as doctors, nurses, family and friends attend to her. May God grant her a full and speedy recovery, according to His will.

V. La Sierra University's India Cow Project
from Adventist News Network:
"As part of a strong focus on sustainable projects, La Sierra Enactus has been operating a field station in Denkanikottai, India. Women in that region typically make $2 per day, barely enough for food. La Sierra Enactus has established a cow bank, which loans cows to women in four villages, and has developed agreements with local milk wholesalers to purchase all the milk the women bring for sale. Every woman who has participated in the program has seen her income at least double, and no one has defaulted on her loan during the two years of the project."

VI. Death of Joseph Selvaraj
Wesley James <wjames231@msn.com> April 22:
It is with deep sadness that I inform you that Joseph Selvaraj (aka Selvaraj Vedamony) passed away around midnight on Tuesday, April 21. Apparently he stopped breathing in his sleep, and Priscilla noticed it around 11:45 p.m. She called 911, but, I guess it was too late. He was taken to the Loma Linda University Medical Center where he was pronounced dead. He was 68. Funeral plans are pending, but it will not be this weekend.
You may reach us at one of the following numbers: Priscilla, 909-796-1464 / Wesley - 909-708-9116
Please keep Priscilla in your prayers. We are grateful to belong to the wonderful family of God, and the knowledge and assurance of Christ's soon return is our greatest consolation and hope.

To remove your name from the mailing list of this newsletter, simply reply to this e-mail and put "REMOVE" in the Subject line.

Posted by: "Charles Tidwell Sr" <charles.h.tidwell@gte.net>