I. A Cup of Water & 33 Become Adventists

--Aventist Review July 31:
by Derek J. Morris, editor, Ministry magazine

Paulraj Massillamony, ministerial secretary of the Seventh-day Adventist Church's Singapore Conference, grew up in the small village of Kanniseripudur in south India.

His father was a government schoolteacher. Their family religion was a mixture of animistic Catholicism mingled with popular Hinduism. To supplement their family income, Paulraj's father practiced mesmerism, hypnotism, palm reading, and communicating with the dead.

Even as a small boy, Paulraj noticed his father's special powers. His father could control people's movements, compelling them to turn to the left or to the right. On one occasion, a person came to the house suffering from a severe headache. Massillamony placed his hand on the person's head, dragged the pain through the person's body, down to the foot, and then "threw" the pain out of the body. On another occasion, a neighbor brought some cookies to their house during a Hindu festival. Paulraj watched as his father commanded the basket of cookies to tip and spill some cookies onto a plate.

Paranormal activities were not unusual in the Massillamony household. The father believed his special powers came from Mother Mary and their village saint, Xavier. His devotion to scores of gods, saints, and the spirits of his ancestors locked him and his family in darkness.

One evening there was a knock at their door. Jeyaseelan, a lay Bible worker, was visiting their village, part of an evangelistic team holding meetings in a town 12 miles (20 kilometers) away. He asked for a cup of water. Massillamony showed no interest in interacting with the stranger, but because this act of hospitality was expected in their culture he consented. After Jeyaseelan drank the cup of water, he went on his way but returned
the next day. He expressed his thanks for the cup of water the previous day and asked if he could pray for the Massillamony family. Paulraj's father was not receptive to the idea but finally agreed since he also was a professing Christian.

This persistent lay evangelist returned the next day, asking if he could read a text of Scripture and offer another prayer of blessing for the family. Jeyaseelan returned again the next day asking if he could explain the Scripture he had read the previous day.

After a week of relationship building, Jeyaseelan invited Massillamony to attend the evangelistic meetings in the neighboring town. He agreed. As he listened to the presentation, he was deeply moved by the powerful message from God's Word. He returned again and again for more than a month, excited to learn more about the truths of the Bible.

But Massillamony was also experiencing intense internal conflict. The Word of God was challenging his long-held traditions and superstitions. There was an intense tug of war. Was this new teaching really the truth or just another person's opinion?

One day, while walking to his schoolhouse, Massillamony encountered a whirlwind on the road. He was unable to proceed. Then a gentle voice called to him from out of the whirlwind: "Massillamony, I am with you. I call you. You are on the right track."

This divine revelation gave him courage. His fellow villagers, however, were upset with his newfound faith. They threw rocks at his home, breaking tiles on the roof. His children were ostracized and expelled from the Catholic school in the village.

But Massillamony was not discouraged. He had fixed his eyes on Jesus and he would not turn back.

Convicted by the Spirit of God, Massillamony encouraged his wife and seven children to embrace the truth he had recently discovered. Using his gift of teaching, he also shared with his neighbors and friends. Within a year more than 50 villagers had accepted the Adventist message and a small church was established in the Massillamony home. After a few years, land was purchased and a permanent church building was constructed in their village.

With an Adventist education, Massillamony's three sons all became Seventh-day Adventist pastors, including Paulraj. His eldest brother, Dhanapaul, serves as a pastor in south India, and his middle brother, Jeyapaul, serves as a pastor in Beirut, Lebanon. All together, 33 family members are involved in active ministry for the Lord Jesus Christ.

Paulraj told me this remarkable story over breakfast this week at a preaching symposium in western Indonesia, where we both were presenters. I asked him about his own family. He has two children, a son, Ben, and a daughter, Betty. They are both studying to become missionaries. What a legacy! And this great miracle of God all started with a cup of water. Does that remind you of another story in the Gospel of John?

II. Letters

1. Surendra Paul Gill <spgill@comcast.net> July 24

I had the great privilege of conversing with Elder Edison Samraj at the GC Session in San Antonio, Texas. As he enlightened me the work he and his staff are doing in India, I became very much interested to learn more about his leadership and blessings he is bringing to the Adventists Church Family.
It will be totally insane for me to ignore mentioning about one of his staff: Pastor Johnson Swamidass, Production Manager of Hope Channel India. It was constantly observed that Pr. Swamidass was untiringly busy, raising funds for Hope Channel India. I was so moved, frequently I will ask other staff to cover our ASI Exhibition and join with them to raise funds for the Hope Channel India. I must commend Elder Samraj having a staff like Pr. Swamidass. He should be considered as a great asset to Elder Samraj’s leadership. Under his leadership, reaching to the unreachable, bringing Spiritual Healings and preparing souls for His Kingdom made me feel so proud to say - Praise to be God! On behalf of Southern Asia Adventist Family, Elder Samraj soul winning focus, outstanding leadership and contributions benefitting all of us. It does not doubt me that his appointment as the Research Guide for D. Y. Patil University will be great blessing to those he will guide. Further it compel me not only to congratulate Elder Edison Samraj but also to congratulate the Southern Asia Adventist Family for having him as a great asset for the Adventist Organization. I look forward not only praying as he has requested but also support his leadership through my ministry called Good News Ministry International, Inc. which is based in Silver Spring, Maryland. I challenge others to join in supporting his leadership and the work he and his staff do in India.

Elder Surendra Paul Gill, Founding President, CEO
Good News Ministry International, Inc.
722 Pebble Beach Drive
Silver Spring, Maryland, 20904-3579
Cell: 240-478-1875

2. Don Bankhead <drbankhead@gmail.com> July 28
Please convey our condolences to the family of Michael Prasadarao. We were neighbors for 7 years in Hosur. We enjoyed meals together, and have many happy memories of that time. We pray that the Lord will sustain and bless each one. Marjorie sends special love to Lalita.
-- Don and Marjorie Bankhead

III. Death of Mrs. Annal Packiam Pandian
SAAA Info@saaa.orgzon.net July 24
The Southern Asia Adventist Association (SAAA) is saddened to announce the death of Mrs. Annal Packiam Pandian, mother of our member, Mrs. Janet Gnanakkan. Mr. Robert Gnanakkan and Janet have been active members over the years and have served in leadership roles as well. Though they live in Baltimore, distance was never an issue for them. They come cheerfully and participate or serve in SAAA programs. They are known to many in the community and are well respected.
SAAA extends heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families. Please continue to uphold them in your prayers. May God grant them courage to face each day, in the loss of their loving mother. God grant the families His assurance and His comfort, for better days to come, till that Golden Morning when we’ll meet our loved ones again.

IV. Two Ladies for the 90+ Club:
1. Sondra Skau Spiva <sspiva@outlook.com> July 25
Noted your 90+ club listings....Mom, Katherine Skau, was 90 on June
7. You can add her as well!

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2. Irene Pandit <ipandit@verizon.net> July 25
Please add my mother's name to the 90+ Club; Mrs. Lily John -- 92 years.
Thank you.

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90+ Club

V. Pr. Ramesh Y. Jadhav, President, WIU Speaks at HopeSide Church
HOPESIDE <contact@hopeside.org> July 24
Many delegates from India who have attended the recently held General Conference Session in San Antonio, Texas are here in the Washington area on the way back to India. Many of them will be coming to HopeSide this weekend for a great get together for worship and fellowship.
We are privileged to invite Pr. Ramesh Y. Jadhav and his wife Sumitra to HopeSide. Pr. Ramesh is the featured speaker during our Divine Service. He has a Theology degree from Spicer Memorial College, now known as Spicer Adventist University, located in Pune, Maharashtra, India. He has served as a pastor for many years. He has been serving as the president of Western India Union (WIU) for the last 10 years. He is very fluent in Marathi, Hindi and English. WIU consists of the Indian states of Gujarat, and Maharashtra; and the union territory of Dadra and Nagar Haveli; comprising the Central Maharashtra, and Gujarat Conferences; the Mumbai Metro, North Maharashtra, and South Maharashtra Sections; and the Saurashtra, South Gujarat, and Vidharbha Regions. Churches: 243, Members: 110,063, Population: 185,408,404, Pop./Member Ratio: 1,685.

VI. Auto Accident in Shillong
James Warjri <jgwarjri@netvigator.com> July 31
from his AKA Newsletter
On the morning of July 3, 2015, Elder Emil & Kong Ibahun (Malngiang) Fernando were excitedly looking forward to the early hours of the Sabbath when they could watch the proceedings and worship services of the General Conference session in San Antonio, Texas, USA. Then they found out that their computer wasn't receiving signals well. They put the gadget in the car and drove to Shillong where the necessary repair work was done. On the way back, as they neared Sohra (Cherrapunjee), of course it was rainy and foggy. An upgoing jeep took a little bit more space so Elder Fernando tried to avoid it but the car hit a little wall and went nose down into the side ditch. Another vehicle stopped and took the two to the local hospital and almost immediately they were transferred to the North-East Indira Gandhi Regional Institute of Health & Medical Sciences (NEIGRIHMS), Shillong. Elder
Emil was back to his normal self after a few days, but Kong Ibahun's head and hip injuries were serious. She will have to lie motionless for at least another 3 weeks. Let us keep her in our prayers.

VII. New Book by Mervin Kyat Kyaw
Pastor Mervin shared a manuscript with me that he was writing several years ago and I included many short biographies of long-time Burma workers in the news letters. Just last month he kindly sent me a copy of the book now in print. It is called "The Legacy of Eric B. Hare And Tribute to Wonderful Missionaries." Its cover is a beautiful color picture of a smiling "Dr. Rabbit" and on the back cover a picture of the smiling author. In the section dealing with missionaries and outstanding national leaders are many pictures.
The author's country of origin is Myanmar (Burma). He studied in Yangon (Rangoon) Arts and Science University and graduated with a B. A. in 1963 and a B. Ed. in 1965. He served as principal of middle and high schools for 28 years. The call came to him in 1993 to Thailand via South Korea where he served the Lord as a teacher at Bangkok Ekamai International School and then as a Global Mission pioneer for Mayanmar in Thailand for 11 years resulting in 91 souls saved. He migrated to Australia with his family in 2004. He and his wife, Nan, who is now pastoring the Werribee Karen church in Victoria, are still serving the Lord with 61 persons already accepted Jesus as their personal Savior.
The author may be reached by the following addresses:
Mervin Myat Kyaw E-mail Address: <mervinmk@yahoo.com.au>
Mervin Myat Kyaw
33 High Street
Werribee VIC 3030
Melbourne, Australia

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