

Karimnagar Diocese 133 years and Beyond:

Church of South India Karimnagar Diocese

A Story of Transformation (1879-2012)

The Wesleyan Methodist Missionaries from England began working since 1879 in the Districts of Hyderabad, Medak, Nizamabad, Karimnagar and Nalgonda. As a result of their mission work Churches were established along with Schools and Hospitals. After the formation of Church of South India in year 1947, Karimnagar and Nalgonda areas from Medak were annexed to the Dornakal Diocese.

There was a small village, by name 'Gulshanabad', about 85 kilometres from Hyderabad in the erstwhile 'Nizam's Dominion' in the Telangana region of today's Andhra Pradesh. According to one tradition, it was a village where flowers were grown on the banks of the rivulet Pasuperu for the rulers of that time. It was perhaps a typical Muslim village with a few people from other communities. The old mosque on top of the hill, and the existence of no other major temple in the village, is an indication to this tradition. The name 'Gulshanabad' means 'a place of flowers'.

With the coming of the Methodist missionaries, notably Charles Walker Posnett in 1896, the

Story of Gulshanabad to Medak began. William Burgess, a British Methodist missionary from Madras, with Benjamin Wesley, an Indian evangelist, came to Hyderabad in 1879. A year later came Benjamin Pratt. This trio laid the foundations for the Church in Secunderabad and Hyderabad, although British chaplaincies for their military existed long before. The pictures of William Burgess and Benjamin Pratt are on display in the CSI Wesley Church, Clock Tower, and Secunderabad. They moved on to villages like Siddipet, Karimnagar and Gulshanabad, which is today's Medak. Another missionary named Frederick Lamb joined the trio in bringing the Gospel to these remote areas.

Charles Walker Posnett, his sister Emilie Posnett and her friend Sarah Harris set their feet in

Gulshanabad and laid the foundations for Medak in 1896. This new trio – Charles, Emilie and Sarah, remained in Medak for at least another forty years, and their labours were not in vain. They worked and worked and worked for the glory of God in the Districts of Hyderabad, Medak, Nizamabad, Karimnagar and Nalgonda for the good of the church and for the welfare of all people. So much so, Posnett is known as "Posnett of Medak". **Possnett**, as it is rightly said, **saw with his heart rather than with eyes.** (Epitaph in Medak Cathedral).

Emilie and Sarah deserve proper recognition, for without their support and co-operation, Posnett probably would not have achieved what he did in Medak, Hyderabad, Nizamabad, Karimnagar and Nalgonda. They were his constant companions in the ministry, and played an important role in the missionary strategy of that time. It was a collective ministry. The support of Robert Possnett Esquire to his younger brother Charles Possnett is unforgettable. The successive generation of the Possnetts namely, Sir Richard Possnett and Lady Shirley Possnett, Michael Possnett and his wife and Mr. Dickon Possnett and Mrs. Hanna Possnett, have been a continuous source of inspiration and support for the work of God in the region. The motto of Possnett Dora was "**the utmost for the highest**".

The Great Famine and the Great Rescue:

The story begins with William Burgess, Benjamin Wesley, Benjamin Pratt and Frederick Lamb, who sowed the initial seeds of the Gospel. Charles Walker Posnett, Emilie Posnett and Sarah Harris planted and watered; and God gave growth (1 Corinthians 3.6). It was William Burgess and Benjamin Pratt who worked first in Karimnagar.

Within three years of the arrival of the Posnetts and Sarah in Gulshanabad the monsoon failed and the area was faced with terrible famine, on top of the persistent tuberculosis, malaria, cholera, plague and other diseases. The missionaries took up the challenge on a war-footing and started distributing whatever they had to the poor and the needy. Rice being the main food, Posnett bought and transported rice from the former Mysore and Madras States, and rice was distributed among the poorest of the poor. The philanthropic work of the missionaries became so well known in the area that they began to call the place 'methuku' (a grain of cooked rice) which later became 'Medak'. As D. T. Niles, a well known preacher and ecumenical leader from Sri Lanka, once defined evangelism: "one beggar telling the other beggars where food is available. Thus 'methuku' became the 'Medak' of today. After receiving rice, the poor people of Gulshanabad village extended their hands in building the great Medak Cathedral and other institutional buildings. Historians called it a "food for work" programmes, but not the missionaries. Their intention was not to convert, but to give a sense of human dignity to poor people as they worked and received the freely distributed rice. The poor were not "rice Christians", as others have sometimes called them, and indeed many of them did not become Christians. It was Christ's compassion and grace that was at work, seeing the human need through the eyes of the young missionaries.

The story of Posnett is a story of new life for the people of not only Gulshanabad village and its surrounding hamlets but all over the the Districts of Hyderabad, Medak, Nizamabad, Karimnagar and Nalgonda. In education, which was denied to them for ages, in health and hygiene, which was unknown to them for centuries, in social life which had been confined only within their low-caste group; people began to see a difference. It was the beginning of a new life, a new social order, new hope and transformation. What was begun in Medak gradually spread to other districts of Nizamabad, Adilabad, Karimnagar and Aler region of Nalgonda.

The Great Change:

1. The story of Methodist Mission is a story of Transformation.

Transformation comes through education. It has been always the vision of the missionaries to have Badi (School) and Gudi (Temple - prayer hall) in every village. Education and worship went hand in hand. Badi and Gudi together, continue to be a relevant concept. Most evangelists and rural pastors continue to do this ministry. The wives of the evangelists and pastors in the villages take care of the Badi and also Gudi for which some allowance is given by the Women's Fellowship under the inspiring and able leadership of the President of the Women's Fellowship. These schools are called Natu badulu an expression taken from the rice fields ('natu' means 'to plant the rice saplings'). These nursery schools are like rice fields where seeds of education are sowed. Education is important - without it transformation is not possible. Such schools were established in hundreds of villages in the the Districts of Hyderabad, Medak, Nizamabad, Karimnagar and Nalgonda. Some of the such evangelist houses still exist in the villages of

Medak, Karimnagar and Nizamabad. They remind the successive generations the beginning of the transformation. During the day children were taught how to read and write and stories from the Bible. In the evening and in the night adults were taught the same. Recently with the generous help of the **Seva Bharat** organisation in India, we have started in 25 centres of the Karimnagar Diocese Adult literacy programme. In each centre 25 to 30 adults will be taught how to read and right; simple arithmetic, basic health and hygiene; awareness of issues of the community; basic financial management and spiritual growth.

2. The story of Methodist Mission is a story of Enlightenment.

As prophet Isaiah prophesied, people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, and for those who sat in the region and shadow of death light has dawned. (See Isaiah 9.2; Matthew 4.16) The founding of the Bible school "**Satya Veda Patashala**" in 1901 to teach Bible to men and women went a long way in leading people to biblical knowledge and enlightenment and training of evangelists. The school has been revived with a new name "**Medak Evangelistic Training Centre**" and a number of evangelists have been trained in the course of time, and have been ordained as full time ministers. My father and mother Perumalla Prakasham and Sundaramma were proud trainees of this renowned institution like hundreds of others in the first part of the 20th century. After their "A Grade" or "B Grade" training (depending upon their abilities and education (third form or fourth form or fifth form, an expression used in those days for grades or classes) lasting nearly four to five years, the evangelists were sent along with their newly wedded wives to the villages for evangelistic work. As a matter of rule, only couples were sent to the villages. There was a great demand for them from almost every village. They would teach the people how to read and write and also how to read the Bible. Candidates would be prepared for baptism and confirmation. At the same time, the evangelist couple could also produce their own vegetables, keep cattle and also some times even cultivate paddy. Their salary was small and if any of those evangelists' children were in boarding homes, then a small amount was deducted as fees. Thus they were taught to be self-sufficient too. In addition to the fees, the evangelists were expected to contribute to Christian Giving in the villages. Just as the Medak Evangelistic Training Centre, **Bishop Prabhudass Memorial Evangelistic Training School** has been opened at Jagtial in 2007 where periodical training is given to the evangelists and deacons in the Diocese of Karimnagar. Already 25 evangelists and some deacons have been trained here. There is no alternative for pastoral care in villages other than the evangelists. Periodic visit of pastors does not really help.

The Satya Veda Patashala's magnificent building in Erra Gadda (Red Ridge), which now houses the CSI High School and B.Ed College, was the theological college and Bible school at the time of Possnett,. Training programmes have been conducted for many men and women, young and old, through the Men's Training School and the Women's Training School, bringing light into the minds of people and love in their hearts. Another Girls Training School was established in Karimnagar which later became Boys Hostel. Hundreds of women were trained here in the past. Even today it is called **GTS compound in Karimnagar**. A small tailoring unit for women under the direction of the Diocesan Women's Fellowship is being held in this compound. There is also a worshipping congregation in the building called **St. Mark's Church** and the ground is being used for multi-purposes including revival and healing meetings.

3. The story of Methodist Mission is a story of New Creation.

The Medak church compound is one of the beautiful and spacious compounds in the Church of South India. The magnificent cathedral is the central point of the compound. In the words of the master builder, even Possnett, “**My best for my Lord.**” (Epitaph in the Cathedral) The glory of the cathedral is portrayed through the magnificent stained glass windows depicting Nativity, Crucifixion and Ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ, made and presented by Sir Frank O. Salisbury, R.A.C.V.O. With a large arch at the entrance which was built, recently a double road leading to the magnificent and glorious “Pedda Gudi” (Big Church) - today’s Cathedral was made - a straight road connecting the Cathedral and the theological school building, with banyan trees on both sides, paddy fields, sugar cane fields, spacious football grounds, excellent buildings for schools, hospital, farm house, and pilgrims centre, parsonages, a large ‘Bishop’s house’ that can accommodate at least five to six families, with many guest rooms, Sandhya Nilayam (home for the elderly) and so on. It is a place, in the words of Bishop Ananda Rao Samuel, the former Moderator of the CSI, where saints have walked and holiness prevailed.

There are a number of bhabhis (areas/localities) where, in former times, church workers in schools, colleges, hospital, farm etc. lived in houses built for them. The story of the new creation in Medak is also the story of a new creation in many other places like Ramayampet, Sangareddy, Yellareddy, Kamareddy, Nizamabad, Armoor, Dudgaon, Nirmal, Luxettipett, Bellampalli, Jagtial, Karimnagar, Aler to name a few. The story of Methodist Mission is the symbol of the many stories of new creation in the Diocese of Medak and Karimnagar. The Diocese of Karimnagar was and is blessed with many missionary heritage lands both in towns and villages. Over the last five years many of the evangelist houses as well as the parsonages built by the Missionaries have been renovated in the Diocese of Karimnagar. Three churches built by the missionaries still exist in Karimnagar Diocese, namely, the Wesley Cathedral (since 1978), Wesley Church Jagtial and Wesley Church Aler. Wesley Cathedral has been completely renovated and rededicated in 2011 as we are celebrating its centenary in 2012. In the same way the Jagtial church was also completely renovated in 2009 and was rededicated. Aler church is still under renovation. We are grateful to these congregations.

4. It is a story of Evangelisation.

This was evangelisation by the evangelists under the guidance of the missionaries. **Yuvana Samajams** (young men fellowship), **Yuvathi Samajams** (Young women fellowship), **Dhanda Yathralu** (Evangelistic campaigns carried on by the senior evangelists and pastors going to the neighbouring villages for preaching tours), **Jathras** (evangelistic festivals) at Christmas and Easter time which continue even today, **Chinna Manda** (small children groups) for Christian education and bible classes, and other Central Services in villages during the Lenten season, are some of the traditional methods used for village evangelisation. In those days, bullock carts were used if they could be afforded, if not, they used their feet and travelled by foot, for they were all filled with zeal for the Lord and his gospel. Medak and Karimnagar have been **the seat of rural evangelism** and over the years hundreds of evangelists have contributed to it. The Gospel spread rapidly and the following **Ilakas** were established between 1888 to 1939. In Karimnagar and Nalgonda Districts.

Ilakas/Pastorates established

1. Karimnagar in 1888 (church, school, hospital, boarding homes for boys and girls and Girls Training School)

2. Jagtial in 1905 (church, school, hospital, boarding homes for boys and girls)
3. Kothagattu/ Huzurabad in 1913
4. Arnakonda in 1923
5. Ibrahimpatnam in 1929
(Ibrahimpatnam , Dudgaon, Elukatur, Gummirala, Muthyampet – caste converts),
6. Aler in 1929 (church, school, hospital, boarding homes for boys and girls)
7. Pastala in 1929
8. Panigiri in 1929(church, school, hospital, boarding homes for boys and girls)
9. Kodimial in 1932
10. Sircilla in 1936
11. Korutla in 1939

Space does not allow me to mention all the names of the evangelists. Bishop Premasagar's **Vision for Equipping Local Congregations for Mission (VELCOM)** has roots in this kind of ministry. Bishop Prema Sagar's wife Mrs. Daisy Prema Sagar hails from Bethgal in Karimnagar District. The Rev. Charles Walker Possnett gave Rev. Daniel Napoleon, an Indian Pastor of Bethgal to preach the first sermon in the Medak Church on 25.12.1924 at the time of the dedication service.

What an honour for Bethgal!

Bishop Bobbili Prabhudass and Bishop Gone Devasahayam laboured in Karimnagar Diocese especially in the field of mission and evangelism. My own vision for Karimnagar given in 2007 contains the revival of the evangelism and mission which is being carried on. So far, since 2007 April, over 47 churches have been dedicated in the Diocese along with several parsonages. Over 25 churches are under construction.

5. Host of Witnesses:

It is a story of many stories of dedication, commitment, faithful service, sacrifice, by men and women, young and old, lay and clergy, missionaries and Indians in the Methodist Mission areas especially in Medak and Karimnagar.

The following missionaries and Indian clergy and laity served faithfully.

(Due to lack of information and records, it is difficult to say exactly who worked where.)

The Pioneers: Missionaries: William Burgess, Benjamin Pratt and Frederick Lamb.

Benjamin Wesley, an Indian evangelist.

The Pillars: Charles Walker Posnett, his sister Emilie Posnett and her friend Sarah Harris.

The Evangelistic co-workers: *(The lists below in alphabetical order are by no means complete. Any omission is not intentional but due to lack of information on hand and it is regretted).*

Pastoral Leadership - Ordained Missionaries:

Alan Roughly, Alfred W. Hooker, Arthur Whitbread, Barnard, Bishop R. Lipp,

C.B. Hornby, Charles T. Winters, Edmund C. Horler, C. D. Monahan, Canon Brown,
Canon Philip, Dorothy Hill,

Ernest T. Leslie, Eber Priestley, Edgar Hardfield, Edgar Thomson, Ernest W. Gallagher,

Frank Colyer Sackett, Frank W. Wilkes, Frank Whittaker, F. C. Philip, C. E. W. Bellingham,
Frederick T. Shipham, Francis A. Wenyon,

George M. Kerr, Gordon C. Early, Gordon Shaw, G. E. Hickman Johnson, G. Tinsley Peet,
G. E. Long,

Harold Spencer, Harold T. Bird, H. Wilfred Stafford, H. Guard Price, H. Penri Davies,
Hunt W. Sober,

J. Opie Urmston, J. Gordon Bennett, J. C. Knight Anstey, John G. Gill, John Lowe,

John E. Cooper, Joseph Windup, Joseph E Maltin, L. Simpson, L. Scrase,

Ash well, Greenwood, Thompson, Linforth, Taylerson, E. Barrett, Atkins Morris, Baines,

Barr, Bay ton, Coleman, Cole, Catherine Cumshaw, Cussans, Dora Johnston, D.M.Clough,
Emily Possnett, English, Eva Mair, Freeman, Germyn, Green, Kate Greenfield, Hodges, Hester
Hare, Louie Trott, Minus, Moore, Margaret Byron, Maggs Leslie, Richardson, Sally Anstey,
Singleton, Sara Harris, To Wilson, Tucker, Tripp,

Mrs. Atkinson Marries, Ball Pratt, Bessy Simpson, Brewis, Burgess, Mrs. Dr.Constance
Whittaker, Mrs. Daisy Volkmann, Mrs. Edwards, Enid Priestly, Lamb, Harding, Lily Sackett,
Lowe, Page, Phippen, Phyllis Possnett, Spencer, winters,

M.L. Leith, Moses F. Crews den, N. Taggart, Noel R. Brewis, O Lionel Vickers, Owen Spencer
Watkins

Park Alexander Gilbertson, Robert Hewett, R. Ughard Lockwood, Robert A. Marsh,

R. Livingstone, Rownilly Ingram, Stain ton Morris, Stanley Edwards,

Thomas H.Barrett, Thomas Thompson, Thomas Whittle, Thomas Martin, Thomas E. Harding,

William Burgess, Wilton Morrow, W.J.Noble, W. Edwin Lant, W. LeCato Edwards,

Wilfred Cart ledge, W.A. Grist, W. McNicol,

Mr. A. S. Hartley Esquire, Mr. Howard Dalzell and many others and their spouses.

Indian ordained Ministers:

Alladi Dharmiah, Addanki David, Aakula Titus, A.M. Palmer, Billa Enoch, Batsu Raghaviah, B.Kotiah James, A. Masilamani, A.C. Dayanand,

Balavoori John, Baluvoor Luck, Bandugula Devadatham, Basa Eleazer, Bollam David, Bollam Gnana Prasada Rao, Baddam Johnson, Baddam Devasahayam, Bommarthi Manikyam, Bobbili Prabhudass, Boini Israel, Busamalla Benjamin, Bunyan Joseph, Bathula Samuel, R. Samuel, Bandugula Samuel, Badda, Billa Enoch Novah, Basu Ragaviah, Billam Jacob, C.S. Sundereshan, Cyril Gardner, Daniel Napoleon, Deva Bushanam, Dakarapu Purushotham, Dasari Premanandam, E. L. Anantha Rao, E.P. Yesudass, Edla Bushanam, Elamal Israel, Elka G. Anandam, Ettam Yesurathnam,

Godala Anantha Rao, George Harding Kadari, Gattu David, Godala Titus, G. Devasirvadam, Gone B. Devasahayam, Gajula Levi, Gaadam Luke, Guyyani Samuel, Gunakonda Jeevarathnam, Gone Reuben, Gorre Prabhudass, J. D. Subbiah, J. P. Cotelingam, Jella John Wesley, J.Y. Abraham, Jella Abraham, Jekkula Emmanuel, Kommu Zachariah, Kekkula Emmanuel, Konthalapalli Philip, Katta kanthiah, Kasala Rathnam, Kasa David, Lali David,

M. Gnana Prakasham, M. Samuel, Midde Daniel, Makka Y. Jeevarathnam, M. Muthu Arthur, M. D. Philip, Moses Venketramiah, M. Prabhudass, Molathati Vidyanandam, Manne Satyanandam, Mettu Luke, Manne G. Elias, M. John Wesley, Maddela Gabriel, Narsappa Mathew, Nellore David, Nemuri Joseph,

Pittela Y.Luke, P. Ratnayya, P. A. Muthiah, Pabbati Prakasham, P. J. S. Appadorai, Pereji Solomon, P.Venkataswami, P.B. Simon, Pulimanti Benjimin, Pirangi Prakasham, Pagola Solomon, Pandiri Prakasham, S. Dharmiah, Soudamalla David, Thammadi Ashirvadam, Thammadi Jeevarathnam, T.I. Chinnaiah, T. Krishna Rao, T.Devavaram, Timothy Martin, Thummala Barnabas, Thadamalla Joseph, Tupili Charles Prasanna Rao

V. Samuel, Varansi. Suraiah, Venket Rao Paul, Yesudass Devasirvadam, Y. John Christudass, Yata Rathnam,

Medical Ministers - The Medical doctors and co-workers:

Miss A Moss, Arley Munson, Dr. Arthur F. Russell, Miss Ambery Smith,

Miss Ball, Mrs Barclay, Miss Bowes, B.S. Frank Israel, Mrs Christie, Campbell, C. Wig field, Cocket, Dr. J.D. Cotelingham, Drs. E.Kanthiah, Drake, Dow, Speight, Miss E. Wilson, E.Current, Miss Elsie Watts, Ethelda Meakin, Miss Elizabeth Wright, E. G.

Daniel,

Miss F. Standing, Furness, A. Flett,

Miss G. Green, Dr. Miss G. Wigfield, Miss L. Parsons, Miss G. Hodges, Dr. G. John Wesley,
Miss Harris, Miss Hawkins, Miss Heard, Drs. Isabella Kerr, H. Couldrey, H. Dron,

Miss J. Kingston, Miss J. Cooling, Dr. Miss Janet John, John Lowe, L. M. Hogerzeil, Miss Lena
Banks,

Miss Mead, Miss M. Cross, Miss Medley, Miss O. Wimble, Miss Pike, Platt,

Miss Rosetta Jackson, Miss R. Witney, Richardson, Miss B. Ride out,

Miss Singleton, Sommer, Dr. P. Samuel, Miss S. Rankin, Dr. Snowdon, Dr. Stephen Taylor,

Miss S. Anstey, Tripp, T. F. Davey, W. E. Thompson,

The Educationists - Missionaries:

Miss Atkinson, Miss Ashwell, Miss S. A. Anstey, A. L. North edge,

Miss Bayton, Miss R. Baines, Miss M. Barr, Miss B. Snowdon, Mrs. Burgess,

Miss Crain, Miss D. M. Clough, Miss Cooper, Miss Cunnington, Miss Cussons, Miss Coleman,

Miss Cullen, C.D. Phippen, Miss D. Beulah,

Miss Edge, Miss Eva Mair, Miss English, Edward Simpson,

Miss Fredoux, Miss A. Ferguson, Miss Fannie Allen, F.T. Shipham,

Miss K. Greenfield, Miss Garmin, Miss Greenwood, Miss G. Peddler, George Stainton Morris,

Miss Hay, Miss H. Hare, H.P. Davies, Hartley, C.T. Groves, Hubert Thorp,

Hugo Wilfred Sibree Page, S. Hartley, T. Lesley, Miss Richardson, Miss Stevenson,

Miss Tomlinson, Miss Tomlinson, Miss Thompson, Miss Tucker, Miss Meir's, Miss G. Mines,

Miss Moggs, Miss Maud McDougall, Miss M. Armstrong, Miss N. Morgan,

Miss M. Wheat, Miss Rosetta Jackson, Miss Volckman, Miss I. Whitworth, M. P. Walsh,

Indian Educationists:

Basa Premanandam, B.Y. Prabhudass, Dasari Vijayarao, D.M. Emmanuel,

Mrs. E.B. James, Prof. Gideon, G.L. Samson, Gnana Prabhudass, K.A. Jonathan,

Katta Reuben, Miss S. Kondiah, Miss Masam Prema Benjamin, Michael Vijaya Rao,

Miss Pushpa Peter, P. Devadass, K. P. Krupanandam, Mrs. Suguna L. Anantha Rao,

Sokkula P. John, T.P. Sadanandam,

Outstanding Indian Lay Leaders:

A.C. Abraham, C.D. Jacob, C.C. Paul, Ch. Prabhudass, Gone Job Reuben, Isaac Abraham, , K. P. Sadanandam, Kommu Gorge, K. D. Ephraim, Marikili Samuel, P.D. Prasada Rao, Prof. A.P. Rajarathnam, P. Clarence, S.P. Raju, R.G. Horsley

Methodist Missionaries who worked in Karimnagar Area: LEST WE FORGET

The Rev. Benjimin Pratt, The Rev. William Burgess, The Rev. Thomas Thomson

The Rev. F.C. Sackett, The Rev. Davies Pentry, The Rev. O.L. Wickers

The Rev. H.W. Sibre Page, The Rev. G. E. Long, The Rev. Garforth

The Rev. D.N. Heap, The Rev. Eric J. Lott, The Rev. David Hall

The Rev. Brain Walker, Mrs. Margam, Mrs. Bows, The Rev. H. Bird

The Rev. E.T. Bird, Mr. J. Rose, The Rev. Hockley, The Rev. Cartledge

The Rev. Ikman Johnson, The Rev. Lant, Sr. Irmile Range, Ms. Parks

Sr. M. Chapman, Ms. Anne Judson, Mr. Pill Kinton, The Rev. Watson and

Ms. Edna Marriott.

(Source:CSI Karimnagar Diocese 2008 Souvenir, reported by B. Soundarya Thilaka Manikya Rao)

6. Methodist Mission had the outstanding Leadership at the helm of the Church Affairs:

Methodist Chairmen in the Hyderabad District:

1879 to 1896 Rev. William Burgess, 1896 to 1939 Rev. Charles Walker Posnett

1939 to 1945 Rev. Colyer F. Sacket, 1945 to 1947 Rev. Frank Whittaker

The contribution of their spouses namely, Mrs. Burgess, Mrs. Phyllis Possnett, Mrs. Sackett, Mrs. Dr. Constance Whittaker, Mrs. Enid Priestly is unforgettable. They were not only missionary wives but also leaders in mission in their own right; they were perfect hosts and very caring and loving towards all.

It is a story of many stories of outstanding programmes, events, actions, initiatives, schemes, and projects which have transformed life of the people. The Methodist mission areas of Medak and Karimnagar stand as an outstanding example of evangelistic work.

It is a story of that goes on creating new stories. The period of 133 years could be divided into two: Pre-1947 and Post 1947. 1947 is the cut-off date with the formation of the CSI. Until 1947 it was the Wesleyan Methodist Church (WMC) and after that it is the Church of South India Medak Diocese and Karimnagar Diocese. The Wesleyan Methodist Church consolidated the

evangelistic work, the educational and healing mission of the church, both the Dioceses, while continuing to strengthen the evangelistic work, consolidated the self-support, self-propagation and self-administration measures in the dioceses.

Under the Leadership of Bishop Solomon, various Ministries, such as Child Care, Education, Health and Healing flourished. In the year 1978 Churches in the Districts of Karimnagar and Nalgonda were bifurcated from Dornakal Diocese along with Warangal District, the Diocese of Karimnagar became independent. Over the years the Mission and Ministry of the Church declined.

Since 2007 God's appointed time has come to revive the Church and its Ministries. We thank God for his faithfulness and we remember with gratitude all those who have rendered, selfless, committed, dedicated, sacrificial, transparent, faithful and accountable service to the Lord in the Church, We have re-dedicated ourselves to rebuild the Karimnagar Diocese and its Ministries and Mission of God. As part of the rebuilding process construction of Evangelists Houses, Parsonages, Villages Prayer Halls and Community Centers, Primary Schools and Primary Health Centers and renovation of the old buildings in the Diocese has become an urgent necessity.

Church can only live through Mission and Mission can be expressed through services offered to the people especially to the poorest of the poor. An appeal is made to all members of the Church in the Diocese to become part of the reconstruction work through their prayers, generous contributions and active cooperation in Evangelistic & Pastoral work, Education, Medical Work, Women's Fellowship, Youth Fellowship, Christian Education & Social development. There is development in pastoral work, in education, in social work, in rural developmental work especially among women and young girls in Karimnagar Diocese after 2007.

7. It is a story of the Church of God and its Growth.

The Church has been an active and vibrant church locally, and also at pastorate, District and Diocesan level. Along with the pastor or evangelist, there are many voluntary church workers who assist the pastors and also take charge of the worship services in the absence of pastors. There are also in many churches Sangha Peddalu (church elders) other than the pastorate committee members who look after the pastoral care of the families in different localities by visiting them and praying for them. They are also called bhasti leaders (area leaders). In most congregations there were Saturday intercessory prayer meetings in the church, when members of the congregation gather together to offer intercessory prayers. This tradition continues even today in some churches.

8. It is a story of the Church of South India.

The day Pedda Gudi (the Big Church) was declared as the Cathedral of Medak, it became the story of the Church of South India. The first Bishop Frank Whittaker was consecrated on 27th September 1947 in Chennai along with other new bishops at the inauguration of the CSI and

installed as Bishop in Medak in the Pedda Gudi on 2nd of October 1947. In 1950 he was the Deputy Moderator of the CSI and also the convener of the Constitution Committee. Bishop Pereji Solomon, Bishop in Dornakal, at the time when Karimnagar was part of Dornakal was also Moderator of the Church of South India in 1960s. Later Bishop Peddi Victor Premasagar became the Deputy Moderator in 1986 and Moderator in 1988 and 1990. Then Bishop Sugandhar became the Moderator in 2004 and 2006 after serving two terms as the Deputy Moderator. CSI Medak Diocese and CSI Karimnagar Diocese have been contributing its leadership to the CSI Synod as well as to the theological education at Andhra Christian Theological College Hyderabad (ACTC) and the United Theological College Bangalore (UTC) and to the ecumenical church at large. Bishop Premasagar and Late Rev. Dr. R. Yesurathnam served on the Faculty of ACTC for many years both as teachers and principals. Currently Rev. Dr. Ch. Vasantha Rao from Medak and Rev. Dr. Reuben Mark and Rev. Praveen Sudheer from Karimnagar are serving on the Faculty. It was my privilege to be on the Faculty of UTC from 1991 to 2000 and having represented the CSI in Germany serving the ecumenical relations as India Liaison Secretary and Deputy General Secretary of EMS, God has called me to be the Treasurer of Medak Diocese 2005 to 2007 and since 2007 as Bishop in Karimnagar.

Diocesan Bishopric Heritage:

Bishops of the Diocese:

1. Bishop Frank Whittaker 1947 – 1948

(Merger of Karimnagar Group Church Council with Dornakal Diocese)

2. Bishop Elliot (Dornakal Diocese) 1945- 1955

3. Bishop Pereji Solomon (Dornakal Diocese) 1955-1978

Independent Diocese since March 12, 1978

4. Bishop Babbili Prabhudass 1978-1982

5. Bishop Gone Benjamin Devasahayam 1982-1987

6. Bishop Kallepalli E.Swamidass 1987-1992

7. Bishop Sanki John Theodore 1992-2007

8. Bishop Dr. Perumalla Surya Prakash 2007- onwards

The story of Karimnagar Diocese since 2007 in its Mission and Ministry is an open story for every one to read.

Many are part of this story. Hundreds of missionaries, hundreds of Indian ministers, pastors, evangelists and their spouses have been part of this story. Only a few are mentioned here by name, but their names are all written in the Book of Life. Their children and children's children are a witness to their labours in the vineyard of God. These are not just names, but names with great stories of committed service to the Lord and his church during most difficult times.

May their tribe increase!

Many have played a very creative role in this story. Times have changed in the last 133 years. New challenges and new opportunities for mission and evangelism prevail in the present context. We are called upon to be faithful Christians and members of the Church of God in India by being committed to the Church of South India Diocese of Karimnagar, its mission and ministry.

Be a part of this story. Claim this inheritance.

To God be the glory. Great things God has done.

To all who laboured faithfully, ever and always be thankful.

And the story goes on ...

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The Rt. Rev. Dr. P. Surya Prakash,

B.A., B.D., M.Th., Dr. Theol.

Bishop in Karimnagar

September 27, 2012. (65th Anniversary of the CSI)
