

# Pudukottai-Thirumayam Region

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## FRANKLIN BANNET

Franklin Bannet has been director of the Pudukkottai-Thirumayam Region since 2018.

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Pudukkottai-Thirumayam Region is one of the newest administrative church units in the Southeast India Union Section, which is a part of the Southern Asia Division of Seventh-day Adventists. It was organized in 2006. Its headquarters is in Pudukottai, Tamil Nadu, India.

Territory: The district of Pudukkottai in Tamil Nadu.

Statistics (June 30, 2020): Churches, 4; membership, 1,388; population, 1,806,262.<sup>1</sup>

## Beginnings of Adventist Work in the Region

The first Seventh-day Adventist in the territory of Thirumayam, Pudukottai District, was Chelliah, father of Jayabharatham, the founder of Mt. Zion College of Engineering in Pudukottai.<sup>2</sup> Chelliah hailed from Kallurani, a small village two miles from Aruppukottai, and studied at James Memorial School, Prakasapuram. At the age of nineteen he accepted Christ as his Savior and was baptized by Pastor Y. G. Thomas. After his marriage in 1951, he migrated to Thirumayam, 25 km from Pudukottai. Pastor S. M. Pandian was the first minister to visit Chelliah's family. He started a company at Thirumayam in Chelliah's home.<sup>3</sup>

In 1954 and 1955 the South Tamil Mission organized two evangelistic meetings—one in Aruppukottai and the other in Pudukottai. Pastor S. Thomas conducted the meetings and reported that everything went smoothly at Aruppukottai where they succeeded in enrolling over two hundred people for the Voice of Prophecy course. Thomas reported similar success in Pudukottai where over one hundred and fifty people were enrolled for the Voice of Prophecy course.<sup>4</sup> The South Tamil Section in their biennial report listed nine evangelistic meetings in Aruppukottai and Pudukottai.<sup>5</sup>

Later in 1965 and 1966 Pastor G. Gurubatham and Pastor Edward held evangelistic meetings at Cauvery Nagar where many immigrant workers were employed at a sugar mill. As a result of the effort meeting, a church was established at Cauvery Nagar, Pudukottai District.<sup>6</sup> Pastor William George conducted a series of evangelistic events as part of the Quiet Hour program in 2002 and 2003. As a result, five churches were established.<sup>7</sup> Pastors B. Joseph and N. David joined the evangelist efforts in the area.

## Organizational History

Pudukotah State used to be a part of the North Tamil Mission which existed separately from the South Tamil Mission from 1920-1928 and again from 1941 to 1948 when India gained independence and the princely state of Pudukotah was taken over by the India Union in 1948. At the committee of the South India Union in January 1949, Madura, Ramnad, Tanjore and Pudukottah were transferred from the North Tamil Mission to the South Tamil Mission.<sup>8</sup> The rest of Tiruchipalli district, apart from Pudukottah, remained with the North Tamil Mission at that time.

To provide an impetus for the work in the territory, the Southern Asia Division and Southeast India Union Section organized Pudukottai-Thirumayam Region in 2006. At that time, the newly organized region had one church and 600 members.<sup>9</sup> Pastor Samuel Jebamani was appointed as the director for the Region.<sup>10</sup>

Pudukottai Region has one Elementary School at Thirumayam started in the year 2007.<sup>11</sup>

## Later Developments

Land for the graveyard was purchased at Cauvery Nagar. Pioneers like S. M. Pandian, T. P. Andrews, N. David, and B. Joseph ministered in this district.<sup>12</sup>

Headquarters and a beautiful church were constructed and dedicated on March 13, 2020 at Thirumayam.

Presently, the region has 5 organized churches, 7 companies, and 1420 baptized members. Through the evangelistic efforts of Manuel Manasseh, V. M Arokiasamy, Rathna Singh, Paul Edison and Franklin Solomon new members were added to the church. Two new church buildings were constructed and one church was renovated by the Maranatha group.<sup>13</sup>

## Executive Officers

Directors: Samuel Jebamani (2006-2017); Jeeva Ponnappa (2017-2018); Bannet Franklin (2018- ).

Secretary/Treasurer: N. Gunasekaran (2006-2008); N. Bhaskar (2009-2012); Samuel Manickam (2012-2015); T. Mohan (2015-2021); Washington A. Joseph (March 2021- )

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### SOURCES

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David, D. "Evangelism in South Tamil Section." *Southern Asia Tidings*, February 15, 1955.

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*Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook*. <https://www.adventistyearbook.org/>.

Thirumayam SDA Church Membership Record Book.

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## NOTES

1. "Pudukottai-Thirumayan Region," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (2021), <https://www.adventistyearbook.org/entity?EntityID=30982>.
2. "History of the Church," *Thirumayam SDA Church Membership Record Book*, 12.
3. *Ibid.*, 13.
4. D. David, "Evangelism in South Tamil Section," *Southern Asia Tidings*, February 15, 1955, 4.
5. *Ibid.* 5
6. "History of the Church," *Cauvery Nagar, Pudukottai SDA Church Membership Record Book*, 3-5. See also V. D. Edward, "Tamil Section," *Southern Asia Tidings*, June 1968, 6.
7. "South Tamil Conference", *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (2004), 319.
8. Minutes of the South India Union Committee Minutes # 6474, Jan 26, 1949, 1790.
9. "New Region- Recommendation to SUD for Approval," Minutes of the Southeast India Union Section Committee # 2006-53, May 15, 2006," 45
10. "Formation of New Regions," Minutes of the First Constituency Session #2006-24, February 16-18, 2006, 25.
11. "Growth of Region from 2006-2019," Report given at the Pudukottai-Thirumayam Constituency, Thirumayam SDA School: 2019, 82-85.
12. *Ibid.*
13. *Ibid.*

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