

Belchambers, Marion Hulda (1886–1949)

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Cheryl Christo Howson earned a graduate diploma in computer aided interior designing at the Dr. Bhanuben Nanavati College of Architecture for Women in Pune, India. She co-founded an interior design company in Sri Lanka and worked as a copywriter. She contributed to the morning devotional published by Women's Ministries at the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, the *Shepherdess International Journal* magazine, and the *Adventist Review*. She has written several plays. Currently (2020), she lives in Hosur, India while preparing for a piano exam.

Marion Belchambers was a pioneer worker who served the Seventh-day Adventist Church as a teacher and administrator, as well as at the publishing house in India.

Early Life and Conversion

Marion Hulda Belchambers was born in 1886 to Mrs. Caroline A. Rosler and Mr. Belchambers.¹ Her mother was the daughter of a Lutheran missionary, and her father was Baptist.²

Along with two brothers and a sister,³ she grew up in a rather strict Baptist household in Calcutta, India. Not being satisfied with the Baptist church, however, her parents were always ready to go to any new missionary meetings held in Calcutta. When they heard of the Saturday morning meetings conducted by Pastor D. A. Robinson, they allowed Marion to attend with one of their neighbors, Mrs. Gill, and her two daughters. Very soon, her parents and her brother were regularly attending Sabbath School with Marion.⁴ The Belchambers family accepted the message in 1896.⁵ Both of her parents were baptized by Elder W. A. Spicer. Marion was baptized a few years later by Elder J. L. Shaw.⁶

Education

Marion and her two younger brothers were among the first pupils to enroll at the earliest Seventh-day Adventist school for European and Anglo-Indian children, which started at 154 Bow Bazar, Calcutta, in 1899. Miss Martha May Taylor, the first secretary-treasurer of the mission, was Marion's teacher.⁷ Within a few months, Marion began helping Mrs. F. W. Brown teach the kindergarten class.⁸

Unfortunately, the church school closed, and in 1900 Marion had to go back to public school. Two years later, Marion and her two younger brothers were sent to the boarding school for European and Anglo-Indian children that had just opened in Karmatar in 1902.⁹

Career and Ministry

After her baptism in January 1903, Marion began working in the mission, often living with missionaries. Initially, she worked in church schools, first at Karmatar and later in Calcutta when the school was held in Mrs. L. F. Hansen's home.¹⁰

In 1905 Marion was picked to work in the treasury office, receiving training from Mrs. Quantock, the secretary-



The first constituency of the Northeast Union in Calcutta, 1921. First row (seated), L-R: W. A. Spicer, H. E. Willoughby (president of the Northeast Union), L. G. Mookerjee (union secretary and East Bengal Mission president); Mookerjee's wife Clara May (Loveday) is standing seen between L.G. Mookerjee and Willoughby, and on her left with a dark hat is Miss Marion Belchambers (union treasurer). The photograph was taken at 6 Dehi Serampore Rd, Calcutta.

treasurer of the India Mission, who happened to have been her first teacher at the school in Calcutta in 1899!¹

When the printing press was moved to Karmatar, Marion went with them to serve as the mailing clerk for both the *Oriental Watchman* and *Herald of Health* magazines. At that time, the post office at Karmatar was too small to handle all the papers, so she and the other staff had to wrap, stamp, address, and pack all the magazines in large bags; then, the editor, Mr. J. C. Little, would take the night train to Calcutta to post them to all the subscribers!²

In addition to her work at the print shop, Marion also helped Miss Samantha Whiteis with some medical work. Part of this included being strapped to a bullock-cart while riding over dried paddy fields in order to visit patients out in the country. As a young lady, Marion considered these trips to the country quite a treat!³

Miss Belchambers was a member of the first party of workers to arrive in Lucknow, soon to be the union headquarters; just before Christmas in 1908, to establish the work in that city!⁴ Part of her duties included working in the office of the International Tract Society.⁵ She was among the 10 charter members when the Lucknow church was organized in 1910.⁶

However, tragedy soon struck the Belchambers family. Marion was unable to reach Calcutta before her sister passed away in their mother's home on October 4, 1920. Nina Belchambers had been an assistant teacher at the Seventh-day Adventist School for Europeans at Annfield House in Mussoorie.⁷

Shortly after, on November 30, 1920, Miss Belchambers was appointed to be the acting subtreasurer of the India Union in the Lucknow office.⁸ Many years of service were spent in Lucknow, but that was to change. On June 14, 1921, Miss Belchambers left for Mussoorie, where she was appointed the business manager of the school. Somehow, she managed to keep the books of the Northeast and the North-west India Union Missions at the school office, where she was assisted by Sister Shannon.⁹

After the school year ended in 1923, Miss Belchambers left Mussoorie.¹⁰ She moved back to Lucknow, where she was served as treasurer of the North-west India Union.¹¹ At the biennial meetings in April of that year, the duties of secretary were added to her work.¹² Eventually, she also served as the Book Depot manager.¹³

The publishing house placed a call for Miss Belchambers, who had been on a year's leave of absence from service in the Lucknow office. She accepted and moved to Salisbury Park, Poona (now Pune), in 1936.¹⁴ Not long after, she also served as the secretary-treasurer of the Western India Union.¹⁵ In March 1941, Miss Belchambers was appointed the secretary-treasurer of the Northwest India Union and left Poona to take up that appointment.¹⁶

In 1946 Miss Belchambers returned once again to Poona, having been appointed the accountant and cashier in the division treasury office, in which capacity she continued to work until a week before her death.¹⁷

Later Life

Miss Belchambers's health began to deteriorate, but she continued to work until she was compelled to take to her bed on Sunday, February 6. She was admitted to the nursing home on Wednesday.¹⁸ Miss Marion Belchambers passed away on February 13, 1949, at 12:30 a.m.¹⁹

She was laid to rest in the Division Cemetery, Salisbury Park, Poona, on Sunday, February 13. The funeral was conducted by L. G. Mookerjee, who was assisted by Pastor E. M. Meleen and C. A. W. Ritchie.²⁰

Contribution

Miss Marion Belchambers dedicated her whole life to service in the denomination as a missionary, right up to her death, in spite of often having poor health. She was considered thoughtful and considerate to those she came in contact with and trained a number of young men to serve in office work throughout the field.²¹

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