

South India Training School

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South India Training School (SITS) was established to train indigenous workers at the high school level for Adventist missions in South India; over time it developed into Spicer College, the flagship institution of the Southern Asia Division. Spicer Adventist University in Pune and Lowry Adventist College in Bangalore both grew from this institution.

Origin

The early pioneers were convinced that, second only to medical work, educational ministry had the best potential to penetrate the darkness of heathenism in India. Very early in his ministry in India, Dores A. Robinson pointed out that running a school had the advantage of creating a “friendly communication” with native parents, who were otherwise caged-in by the dictates of casteism in India. In 1904, John L. Shaw, superintendent of the Indian Field, strongly believed that educational work in India was “one of the most potent factors in the evangelization of India.”² In keeping with this conviction, Adventist pioneers established schools in nearly every location where mission work was begun.

The pioneering work in South India was no exception. The warm invitation by the “Tamil Sabbath-keepers”³ in Tinneveli (now Thirunelveli) to open work in their villages in 1908, included the provision to establish “first-class church-schools”⁴ for the community. In March 1908, Judson S. James and his family moved from Bangalore to Nazareth, Thirunelveli, and commenced work among these people. In time, as opposition from local missions run by other faith groups grew, some families from this community chose to take their stand with the Adventists.⁵ Consequently, their children were expelled from schools that were run by opposing factions in the community. Thus, the need to establish an Adventist school in this place became an urgent imperative. This dream was realized on November 1, 1909, when the first Adventist school in South India was started in a rented building with 35 students and two teachers at Nazareth, Thirunelveli.⁶ Right from the start, the religious nature of the school was of prime importance. To lose sight of this objective was, in J. S. James’ words, “to miss the opportunity of making an indelible impress of truth upon the lives of ...young people.”⁷ To accomplish this mission, a school building was constructed and dedicated on June 2, 1911, with the twin purpose of “preaching the present truths...and restoring the image of God in the hearts and minds of the youth.”⁸ Classes commenced there on June 9, 1911.⁹

Within a month of starting the school, the enrollment increased from 35 to 60 pupils and three teachers.¹⁰ By February 1910, the enrollment increased to 84 students, and to 91 by April 1910.¹¹ By September 1912, the mission school conducted classes up to the sixth standard with an enrollment of 100 students.¹² By February 1913, an orphanage/boarding school was started with 17 residents, in the hope that they would one day join the “band of workers to assist in heralding the message”¹³ in this region. As part of the training, senior boys from the boarding school were sent out to distribute literature in the Tamil language in neighboring villages.¹⁴ In time, vacation breaks became opportune time for teachers and students to engage in such ministry among their people.¹⁵ With this beginning, the idea of a training school to train indigenous Adventist workers for South India was planted in the hearts of the early missionaries in South India.

Coimbatore (1915–1917)

With the expansion and progress of the work in South India, there was the need for a training school to provide specialized training to those “advanced in years”¹⁶ (those too old to attend a regular school) and the senior students from the mission school at Nazareth. The quest to find a location for a training school was begun in earnest by J. S. James and Gentry G. Lowry on February 1, 1915. Their search took them to the southern territories of Nagercoil, Trivandrum, and Quilon. Although impressed by the beauties of the Travancore region,¹⁷ they were unable to find a place there which would be suitable for a school. Their month-long search ended in Coimbatore, where they found a residence for Lowry and a property in its vicinity which could be used to establish a secondary school.¹⁸ Among other features, Coimbatore was ideal for its cooler climate and railway connections; and given its location, it had a confluence of people from Karnataka, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu—an added advantage for its mission purposes.¹⁹

On March 1, 1915, the Lowrys moved to the new mission station in Coimbatore and commenced work almost immediately.²⁰ The new school in Coimbatore opened on July 12, 1915, in a “large cotton warehouse”²¹ with an enrollment of 13 students—seven girls, and six boys. This number soon increased to 21, with 13 students from Nazareth, four from Pondicherry, two from the Telugu land, and two locals from Coimbatore. The warehouse was partitioned, with one section being used as the boys’ residence and the other as the classroom for the school. A small house near the Lowry’s residence was used as the girls’ home. The first workers in the school included Lowry, who was the supervisor and Bible teacher; Chinnadorai (non-Adventist) who was the headmaster and teacher; Gnanasegamani (former headmaster of Nazareth school) who served as the teacher and preceptor for the boys; Mrs. Chinnadorai who taught the girls; and a woman from the Church of England who worked as the matron for the girls.²² This was the beginning of what eventually came to be called the South India Training School (SITS).

Growth and Development under Lowry

When SITS opened in 1915, this vernacular training school conducted classes from sixth grade to ninth grade and, by January 1916, the tenth grade was added. By 1917 the school held classes from the first grade to the tenth grade. The school was divided into three departments: the primary department, the lower secondary department, and high school department. The primary section included classes from one to fourth grades, where subjects were taught only in the vernacular language. At the lower secondary section, the medium of instruction was the vernacular and English. It included classes from fifth to seventh grades. The high school department consisted of classes eight to ten where the medium of instruction was exclusively English.²³

Areas of study taught at the school included: Old and New Testament history; Bible doctrines and church history; English language and literature; vernacular language and literature; arithmetic, algebra, and geometry; general knowledge in history of Great Britain, history and administration of India; geography; chemistry; physics; and physiology.²⁴ The Bible course was structured in this fashion: the lower classes were taught Old Testament history; the eighth grade students learned Acts of the Apostles and the life and works of Paul; and the ninth and tenth grade students concentrated on Bible doctrines.²⁵

The aim of the school was to provide the best education in all subjects with an emphasis on biblical knowledge. Practical mission work was considered integral to the training program of the school.²⁶ This was with the hope that, upon completion, students could serve in various capacities in the mission work or, those who wished for further training, could go to the union training school at Lucknow.²⁷ True to its mission, teachers and students engaged in visiting villages, distributing literature, and holding open-air meetings²⁸ regularly, two to three times a month. The first vacation break was spent by students and teachers—organized as “bands”²⁹—in missionary activities. During that vacation, the missionary bands conducted Bible study meetings, home visitations, and literature distribution in six neighboring villages.³⁰ In an attempt to make education more practical, and also to help the institution move toward self-sufficiency, some of the boys worked part-time in the office, while the girls engaged in sewing. This arrangement proved to be advantageous financially, besides providing practical work education to the students.³¹

SITS grew as a well-watered vine³² and, right from its inception, it was felt that “there lies in this school a strength to South India’s future development which is unmeasured if faithfully fostered.”³³ The enrollment which was at 25 in September 1915, grew to 28 by October of that year. Requests for admission had to be denied for lack of space. The plague in Coimbatore that affected the functioning of the training school was first reported by Lowry as early as January 1916.³⁴ Despite this, the new school year opened in the first week of June 1916 with 28 students, which soon grew to 43.³⁵ By the end of the 1916-1917 school year, Lowry reported that out of the seven senior students from SITS, five of them joined the mission work in South India.³⁶ Edward D. Thomas reported that two students from SITS who joined the work at the school in Nazareth were invaluable³⁷ assets to them. SITS was truly an asset in building a workforce for the Adventist cause in southern India. By 1921 the South India Mission was working in 15 locations, with 28 Sabbath Schools, five primary schools, three

intermediate schools, and two training schools, with almost all mission workers in these institutions trained at SITS.³⁸

Bangalore (1917–1921)

Owing to the influx of students from different regions in south India, the decision was made to relocate the school close to the headquarters of the South India Union Mission in Bangalore.³⁹ At the annual meeting of the South India Mission, held June 1-10, 1917, at Coimbatore,⁴⁰ it was voted to relocate SITS to a more permanent place in Bangalore.⁴¹ As a result, Lowry searched three days for a suitable site until he was able to secure one.⁴² In November 1917, the school was moved to rented quarters in Bangalore and resumed its academic activities in February 1918.⁴³ At Bangalore, the school was bifurcated into the South India Boys' Training School, located at Bamboo Bazaar Road, with Eric M. Meleen as its principal; and the South India Girls' Training School, located at 3 Wheeler Road, with Mrs. Lowry as its principal and, later, Ms. Louise Appleton was appointed as its manager.⁴⁴

In Bangalore a Literary and Debating Society was organized to help enhance language and public-speaking skills among students.⁴⁵ H. A. Sam and P. Simon were appointed as chairman and secretary of the society, respectively. It was also here that the sixth-grade students were, for the first time, organized as a graduating class.⁴⁶ Apart from these societies, the Sabbath School department and the young people's Missionary Volunteer Society were also organized. Under the latter, members went out each Sunday to preach and distribute literature in neighboring communities. The Women's Missionary Society, organized in Bangalore under Mrs. Lowry and Mrs. Meleen, also engaged in missionary activities on Sabbaths.⁴⁷

Growth and Development under Meleen

Under Meleen, SITS grew more purposeful in its mission. He believed that the ultimate goal of Adventist training schools in India was to produce indigenous workers for various lines of duty in the mission field. This objective was always vividly kept in sight in the daily academic interactions, devotional activities, or in the preparation of the programs and curricula of the institution.⁴⁸ Meleen believed that, to accomplish this objective, students must first be given a vision of the mission task at hand in India and then be trained to fulfill that task.⁴⁹ He strongly recommended that it was imperative for prospective individuals desirous of joining mission labor to undertake the training given at SITS, especially if they were from other religious backgrounds.⁵⁰

In its endeavor to put theoretical education to practical application, all the students of SITS were organized as a Missionary Volunteer Society, led out by the students themselves. Weekly meetings of the society were held on Sabbath, where students had the opportunity to give devotional talks from the Bible and share testimonies. These meetings also afforded opportunity for practical missionary work, public speaking, and street preaching, besides providing training in leadership.⁵¹ Morning and evening worships were conducted by the students under the supervision of the preceptor. Small groups of students met each Sabbath evening and held short devotional

meetings in their regional languages—⁵²a tradition that is kept to this day at Spicer Adventist University.

Emphasis was also placed on creating a conducive environment for learning experiences in the school. It was strongly felt that beyond mere impartation of knowledge, inculcating a right school spirit⁵³ in students will help them find happiness in the progress and welfare⁵⁴ of the school. It was further believed that such schooling had the advantage of aiding in building the character that is required for selfless service in the work of God. Therefore, the importance of teacher-student interactions outside routine classroom time was stressed. Encouraging student collaboration in building the school, forming student organizations, and organizing debating and literary societies for the students, were all seen as steps in this direction.⁵⁵

The educational scheme envisioned by the missionaries for the school system in south India was to establish one training school in each vernacular mission. And because the South India Union Mission was comprised of people from different language vernaculars, it was felt that it was impracticable⁵⁶ to admit students directly to SITS. Importance was given to opening up regional schools in different sections of the mission field, where students could be educated up to the seventh grade. Upon completion of the seventh grade in regional, vernacular schools, they could proceed for advanced training at SITS. Thus, regional middle schools at Nazareth (Tamil), Neyyattinkara (Malayalam), and Narsapur (Telugu) became “feeders”⁵⁷ for SITS, the central training school of the South India Union Mission.⁵⁸

By 1919, SITS offered a one-year Bible training course to provide quick⁵⁹ and comprehensive training to those who were desirous of entering evangelistic work and who had no prior Adventist education. In keeping with the action by the union mission committee held September 18-23, 1919, in Lucknow, to authorize SITS to begin the eleventh-grade course, plans were put in place for it to begin.⁶⁰ This addition was to facilitate those who completed the tenth grade and were desirous of advanced studies. Subjects to be covered in this grade were mathematics, English, history, science, and testimonies. The course on testimonies was to be a topical outline study on the nine-volumes of *Testimonies to the Church*, written by Ellen G. White, and including some of her other books, such as *Education* and *Gospel Workers*.⁶¹

In a paper presented at the biennial conference of 1919 and 1920, held at Ranchi, it was recommended that Adventist schools incorporate industrial training for boys such as agriculture, carpentry, house construction, shoe-making, tanning, printing, book-binding, poultry, and tin-smithing, among others. Tailoring, lace-making, cookery, and other domestic work were recommended for the girls.⁶² In line with these recommendations, SITS endeavored to integrate industrial education into its school program. Consequently, a printing press was bought and the boys at the school were trained in type-setting and press-work,⁶³ while the girls were trained in embroidery and drawn-thread work.⁶⁴

At the South India Union Mission Biennial Conference, held at Bangalore on November 10-20, 1921, it was voted to initiate a plan that would enable students attending SITS to earn a scholarship. Under this scheme, literature

sales worth Rs. 136 would earn a scholarship that would pay for all expenses for one academic year, in addition to providing some travel assistance.⁶⁵ It was also recommended that girls should be well trained in vocational work such as lace-making and tailoring, before being admitted to boarding schools. It was decided that lace with a retail value of Rs. 75 should provide a girl with a scholarship for one academic year. Provisions were also laid out for students to receive scholarships by credits earned through an organized student-work program.⁶⁶ These scholarship plans were all implemented at SITS.⁶⁷

Krishnarajapuram (1922–1937)

In December 1918, a 12-acre plot of land was purchased for a permanent campus, near the railway station at Krishnarajapuram, on the outskirts of Bangalore.⁶⁸ The site had the advantage of being close to the railway lines connecting Madras, yet far enough away from the unsavory influences and plagues prevalent in towns. Plans were laid to build a bungalow, a school building, a boys' residence, and houses for teachers on the property.⁶⁹ Meleen worked hard to secure the property and took charge of building the school.⁷⁰ By 1923 construction was completed on the main school building that contained the classrooms and an assembly hall; a two-story boys' hostel to accommodate 75 students; a one-story industrial building that accommodated the press, the carpentry shop, and storerooms; three houses for teachers; two small houses for married students and the cook; and the principal's bungalow.⁷¹

Soon after the biennial meetings held at Bangalore on November 10-20, 1921, SITS moved to its beautiful and spacious property at Krishnarajapuram.⁷² Seven years since its establishment in rented quarters in 1915, SITS conducted its classes in its self-owned classrooms for the very first time in January 1922.⁷³

Further Developments at SITS

In order to provide advanced training to those who completed the "sixth form" (high school) and fit them for work as teachers and evangelists, a one-year training course was introduced in June 1922.⁷⁴ The course work included the following subjects: mathematics, ancient and medieval history, rhetoric, composition, pastoral training, public speaking, and testimony study.⁷⁵ In 1924 some mathematics and history courses were removed to make way for more essential⁷⁶ courses at the high school level. Students who completed their tenth standard and were desirous to continue their education were offered advanced training. Courses at this level included: advanced physiology, general science, church history, principles and methods of teaching, major and minor prophets, and testimonies.⁷⁷

By 1923 there was a shift in the way students were financially supported by the mission. Great care was given to the idea of making students more self-reliant. Prior to this, students were given full financial support with almost no cost to themselves. However, it was strongly felt that such students were proving to be "failures,"⁷⁸ and a "useless burden,"⁷⁹ rather than becoming committed workers for the Church. With this renewed emphasis

on industrial work, students were encouraged to work and earn their education through the organized work program offered by the training school. Such a plan had many advantages: it brought only students who were industrious and eager to learn; it created in the native mindset, respect for manual labor; it helped foster a healthy teacher-student relationship; and ultimately, it helped produce selfless workers who were willing to give to the Church rather than take from it.

The unique education provided at SITS—with its industrial qualities—attracted the attention of the Mysore government.⁸⁰ High ranking government officials visited the school and expressed their interest in the work done there. They also promised to offer assistance for establishing a weaving department at the school.⁸¹ By the end of 1924, SITS was operating—with student assistance—a fully-equipped carpentry shop, making furniture for domestic and commercial purposes; a blacksmith shop; a print shop, printing Sabbath School quarterlies in Tamil, Malayalam, and Telugu, besides also printing the *Present Truth* in Tamil, and the monthly *Messenger*; a bindery; a signs and chart-making department; and a needle-work department for the girls.⁸² By 1927 a tailoring unit was added to the industrial department and its products were shipped to different parts of the country.⁸³

Growth and Development under Skau

In 1924, when Meleen was called to be the educational secretary of the Southern Asia Division, O. A. Skau replaced him as the principal of SITS.⁸⁴ The Girl's Training School that had been closed for about two years (1922-1924), was reopened as a section of SITS at Krishnarajapuram.⁸⁵ By August 1924 the school had an enrollment of 55 resident students: 46 boys and nine girls.⁸⁶ Although Mr. and Mrs. Skau were not physicians, the veranda of their bungalow became a make-shift dispensary as natives from the villages came to find treatment for their maladies.⁸⁷ By 1936 the small dispensary, run by students who were being trained in first aid, was treating about 40 patients daily.⁸⁸ By this time there were also calls made by neighboring villages to start similar dispensaries there for some monthly remuneration.

The division committee that met January 18-25, 1926, recommended that a course on the principles of colporteur work be introduced in the secondary and training schools.⁸⁹ Accordingly, considerable emphasis was placed on colporteur work through courses offered and by holding a regular colporteurs' institute at SITS. Students from SITS showed great zeal and excelled in this field.⁹⁰

In 1926 a piano was bought for 100 Rupees, and music classes in part-singing, violin, and piano, under Mrs. Skau, were introduced as part of the school program.⁹¹ For students from other vernacular fields who were interested in working in the Tamil field, a special language course in Tamil was conducted by M. Arpudan.⁹² By 1930 a stenographic department was started to train students in office secretarial work.⁹³ By this time the school was proud to own "the best library...in the Division," with the acquisition of about 2,300 books to its credit.⁹⁴

Under the leadership of Skau, the literary and debating society was further developed into what came to be called, the South India Training School Students' Promotion and Literary Society.⁹⁵ Its aim was to enhance the speaking and writing abilities of the students and to equip them for success in their future careers, in addition to also helping SITS in its advancements as an institution. The society met every Saturday night for its debates, speeches, language games, recitations, and so on. Besides these activities, the society also encouraged students to learn a new English word each day, have in their possession a *Pocket Oxford English Dictionary*, read six books each year, and spend at least three hours each week in the library.⁹⁶

The young people's Missionary Volunteer Society at SITS also developed during this period. In an effort to make this society a soul-winning enterprise, it was voted that all the members of the society should engage in witnessing through literature publication and distribution.⁹⁷ In connection with this, it was resolved that 50 Adventist periodicals be mailed each week to various people during the year 1927. Members also pledged to maintain a consistent spiritual life by reading the Bible, the Morning Watch, the Sabbath School lesson, and keeping a prayer journal every day.⁹⁸

Another landmark achievement came in 1928, when SITS was powered with electricity. This meant the campus was well-lit with electric light bulbs wherever there were buildings.⁹⁹ Students who once studied under dim kerosene lamps, now found much joy in reading under bright electric lights. The pump-house where water had to be manually pumped by hand was now fitted with an electric motor that could pump water with the press of a button.

At the division meetings held at Pune from February 20 to March 7, 1929, it was decided that, since the Southern Asia Division had a small constituency, there was only a need for one institution to educate Indian students from all over the division for advanced training above the tenth grade.¹⁰⁰ It was further decided that SITS was suited to take on this challenge and accept students from other unions for advanced training. With this landmark decision, SITS was well on its way to becoming the flagship Adventist institution in the Southern Asia Division. The year 1929 marked an important milestone in the life of SITS as it moved from a high school to a junior college.¹⁰¹ With passing years, it became vividly clear that the influence and scope of SITS reached beyond the limits of India's geographical boundaries.¹⁰² By 1930 there were 37 students representing a variety of languages—Singhalese, Tamil, Malayalam, Kanarese, Telugu, Marathi, Burmese, Santhali, Bengali, and others from Mauritius. By 1930, SITS was renowned for its competent industrial program, zealous colporteur training, and instilling in students a fervent missionary spirit.¹⁰³

In keeping with the recommendation of the 1929 council to hold summer schools for teachers and wives of Indian workers,¹⁰⁴ SITS conducted a combined teachers' summer school and ministerial institute during the summer of 1929. O. A. Skau, J. C. Collett, E. D. Thomas, and H. Christensen were the resource personnel. Teachers who enrolled for the summer school could choose from the following courses in the curriculum: testimony studies, pastoral training, normal arts, advanced Bible doctrines, psychology, and pedagogy.¹⁰⁵ By

December 1930, SITS was offering regular courses for the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth standards. Special classes were also offered in ninth standard Bible, English, and mathematics for those who could not complete these subjects prior to enrolling in the institution.¹⁰⁶

Growth and Development Under Losey

In the spring of 1930, when Skau went to America on furlough, the principalship of SITS fell on Leon B. Losey.¹⁰⁷ By 1931 the school had seven teachers and 37 students, representing all the unions of the Southern Asia Division, with the exception of students from the Northwest Union.¹⁰⁸ This would change in 1934, when SITS became more cosmopolitan with students from all the unions in the division.¹⁰⁹ By 1935, languages that were represented at SITS included Amharic (Ethiopian), Galla (Ethiopian), Bengali, English, Gujarathi, Hindi, Kannada, Kara (Burmese), Malayalam, Marathi, Persian, Singahalese, Tamil, Telugu, and Urdu.¹¹⁰ The year 1933 saw a complete overhaul of the school program and plans were made to provide more space for classrooms, library, and the reading room. The industrial work in the school became a strong feature of SITS.¹¹¹ The religious fervor of students was sustained through regular worship services, Week of Prayer meetings, Big Week (a program initiated by the division to promote sale of Adventist literature), Sabbath School investment program, uplift programs (an initiative to raise funds for social welfare), and the Missionary Volunteers activities.¹¹²

By 1933, SITS was moving forward in its development as a junior college with an enrollment of 43 students. Two more classrooms and a spacious library were added to the school.¹¹³ On the academic front, an entrance examination procedure was introduced at SITS, in an attempt to raise the scholastic standard.¹¹⁴ Those failing to pass the examination had to study the fundamental subjects¹¹⁵ before being admitted to the school the following year. By 1934, SITS was conducting only three classes—twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth standards—providing specialized training for evangelists, stenographers, teachers, and farmers.¹¹⁶

An area that deems special mention is the development of the farm under Losey. Although SITS was situated in the “heart of the poorest farming section”¹¹⁷ in southern India, a good portion of the school’s estate was developed for farming purposes and various crops were planted.¹¹⁸ In an ingenious way, students made a hand cultivator out of a bicycle wheel, which proved very useful for this purpose, and a well was dug for the purpose of irrigating the farmland. By 1933 a dairy and poultry farm was started. Rhode Island Reds and Leghorns brought from America by Meleen were presented to the poultry farm.¹¹⁹ By the next year the poultry farm had 70 turkeys and 250 chickens.¹²⁰ The “mammoth bronze turkeys”¹²¹ that were imported from America became objects of great interest to locals, who mistook them for ostriches. The school’s farm became a model in improved agricultural methods for neighboring villages, and very often SITS was called upon to provide agricultural workshops to native landlords and farmers. In time, farm products not only brought in a handsome revenue to the school, they also helped SITS gain nation-wide acclamation for its industrial education.

By 1935 there were about 60 boys who were receiving training in agriculture, dairy, poultry, and shorthand and typing, among other skill-based courses offered here.¹²² The unique industrial education provided at SITS opened doors for many visits by officials from the Mysore government, including the Dewan of Mysore, the director of agriculture of Mysore state, the deputy commissioner of the state for livestock, and, also, Mahatma Gandhi; they were all highly appreciative of the work done there.¹²³ An indelible impression was made so that Dewan proposed that the poultry industry be taught at the Hebbal Agricultural College under the guidance of SITS.¹²⁴ After his visit, the president of the Mysore agricultural department at Hebbal was determined to make SITS a model¹²⁵ for the industrial institution that the governor was planning to open in Karnataka. In addition, a cohort of students from the military dairy farm run by the government was taking special training at SITS every Sunday.¹²⁶ By 1936 the poultry farm had more than one thousand chickens and turkeys—the “most perfect flocks...seen anywhere in the world.”¹²⁷ Poultry livestock, eggs, incubators, brooders, egg-scales, trap nests, and chicken coops produced at SITS were shipped to different regions in India and Sri Lanka.¹²⁸

The arrival of Mr. and Mrs. Henning as teachers at SITS saw the establishment of yet another area of industry—radio technical work. After becoming a teacher at the institution, Henning made arrangements with the largest radio shop in Bangalore to open a workshop at SITS for radio servicing and repair work.¹²⁹ A section of the printshop at the school was designed for this purpose as demand for this work grew. With this new industrial work, the school gained a monthly income and soon received service calls from other dealers in the city. Plans were also made to offer a six-month course in radio repair the following year.¹³⁰

By 1936 SITS was comfortably positioned as the “peak institution of the division” and was truly fulfilling its purpose of furnishing the Southern Asia Division with Indian workers in various areas of work.¹³¹ Workers for the Publishing House in Pune; teachers and staff in secondary schools; and office staff for church offices and mission stations were mostly trained at SITS. As one put it, the institution had indeed become the “Indian Workers Manufacturing Company.”¹³²

Renamed as Spicer College

Recognizing that one of the problems confronting the Southern Asia Division was the lack of indigenous leadership, the division leadership sought—through earnest prayers and deliberation—to formulate policies that would move them forward in training leaders. There was a general consensus among the leaders that “fields...prospered most where indigenous leadership has been encouraged and developed.”¹³³ Accordingly, advanced educational attainments were considered to be a critical factor in fostering and developing Indian workers and leaders. This would be a factor in the policies laid down at the division council held in Pune from December 31, 1936, to January 2, 1937. In line with this burden, two actions voted at the council warrant special mention: 1) that beginning with the academic year, 1937-1938, most of the high schools should have Indian principals and staff;¹³⁴ and 2) that there be only one vernacular junior college for the division.¹³⁵ According to the

latter action, it was resolved that “the Krishnarajapuram School be operated as a Division co-educational Junior College for the training of vernacular workers, with a representative executive board appointed by the Division Biennial Council.”¹³⁶ It was also resolved that all other schools in the division—with the exception of Vincent High School—offer coursework only up to tenth grade or lower.

The leadership of the newly formed college consisted of L. B. Losey, principal, and M. S. Prasad Rao, treasurer. The members of the school board, voted at the council, included: “N. C. Wilson, L. B. Losey, Division Educational Secretary, E. M. Meleen, F. H. Loasby, T. J. Michael, Dr. A. E. Clark, J. O. Wilson, M. S. Prasad Rao, Secretary of Board, E. J. Henning, L. G. Mookerjee, H. Christensen.”¹³⁷ Additional workers who were appointed by the school board that year included: Mr. and Mrs. Pohlman as teachers, Mr. Amirtham to assist in the commercial department, and Ms. Cole to be the matron for the girls.¹³⁸

The 1937 resolution was truly monumental. It was a harbinger of a new era in the life and existence of SITS. The institution would be the sole official college—“a training base for...Indian leadership”¹³⁹—in the Southern Asia Division. By April 1937, this unnamed division college was given the name, Spicer College, in thankfulness to the diligent mission efforts of William Ambrose Spicer in India and the world over. This change of name was announced rather poignantly by Losey, the principal, when he penned, “South India Training School is no more!”¹⁴⁰ Yet very reassuringly, he pointed out that the demise was only in name. In essence, the work and legacy of SITS were to live on—with even more vigor and resolve—under the banner of Spicer College.

Principals

Gentry G. Lowry (1915-1917); Eric M. Meleen (Boys’ School, 1918-1924); Mrs. G. G. Lowry and Ms. Louise Appleton (Girls’ School, 1918-1922); O. A. Skau (1924-1930); Leon B. Losey (1930-1938).

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