



Stenio Gungadoo, c. 2015.

From *Record*, September 17, 2016.

Gungadoo, Stenio (1945–2016)

BARRY OLIVER

Barry Oliver, Ph.D., retired in 2015 as president of the South Pacific Division of Seventh-day Adventists, Sydney, Australia. An Australian by birth Oliver has served the Church as a pastor, evangelist, college teacher, and administrator. In retirement, he is a conjoint associate professor at Avondale College of Higher Education. He has authored over 106 significant publications and 192 magazine articles. He is married to Julie with three adult sons and three grandchildren.

Originally from the Indian Ocean island nation of Mauritius, Doctor Stenio Gungadoo served as a pastor in the Seventh-day Adventist Church for 47 years. At various times, he was a local church pastor, an evangelist, and a

church administrator in Africa, New Caledonia, Fiji, and Victoria in Australia.¹

Stenio Gungadoo commenced his pastoral ministry as an evangelist with the Mauritius Conference in 1967. He married Maryse Seenyen. She was the daughter of Pastor Narainsamy and Louise Seenyen, the youngest of five daughters.² They had one son, Daryl.

After obtaining an associate degree in Theology in Madagascar, he perused further studies in Collonges, France, in 1972-1973, and returned to Mauritius as a pastor. He was subsequently appointed to the Indian Ocean Union Mission in Madagascar as a departmental director in 1982. In 1985, the Africa-Indian Ocean Division (based in Abidjan, Ivory Coast) invited him to serve as Church Ministries director.³

Between 1988 and 1990, Gungadoo completed a Masters in Divinity from Andrews University, then in 1993 he was awarded a Doctor of Ministry degree, specializing in Missiology.⁴ Upon completion of this study, Dr. Gungadoo was invited to be the president of the New Caledonia Mission in the South Pacific Division. He served in that position for three years until he was appointed as president of the Central Pacific Union Mission with headquarters in Suva, Fiji.⁵ He functioned in that role until the year 2000 when, in a major reorganization of the Union Conferences and Missions in the South Pacific Division, the Central Pacific Union Mission was reorganized as the Trans Pacific Union Mission.

While president, Gungadoo ran an evangelistic series each year. He also "adopted" a church while in Fiji. He helped the adopted church members run a crusade, then trained them to continue reaching out to the community. In a church that had only 10 people attending their prayer meeting, he reported that the number grew to 60-65, including a number of young people.⁶ One of the many rewarding experiences that he enjoyed as union president was to conduct the ordination service for the man who was the first Melanesian Ordained minister in New Caledonia and later became the first Melanesian president of the New Caledonia Mission.⁷

In 2000 during the General Conference session, Gungadoo was invited to be the associate Stewardship director of the General Conference.⁸ However, he did not accept that appointment, but instead moved to the Victorian Conference in Australia where he served until his retirement in December 2014. While in Victoria he was, for a time, the Ministerial Association secretary of the Conference.⁹

During his ministry, Gungadoo represented the Church in an official capacity on a number of significant occasions including the negotiating of reopening of the Church in Burundi after a coup; assisting the United Kingdom Embassy in New Zealand when working through issues relating to Pictairn Island; and on three occasions, attending the opening of Parliament and the Judiciary at St. Paul's Cathedral in Victoria.

Gungadoo retired from active service in December 2014. At that time, he was presented a special citation which read:

Stenio is a wise counsellor with a love for learning and a deep commitment to the study of the Word. He is passionate about digging into the Scriptures and sharing his discoveries with others through preaching and

teaching. An able leader and administrator, Stenio enjoys equipping the Church and being involved in evangelism. Stenio is versatile in his ministry; be it preaching, teaching, pastoring, administering, or leadership. His willingness to mentor and encourage others in ministry continues to impact lives positively. The words of the Apostle Paul apply to his approach to ministry. "But I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God." Acts 20:24¹⁰

During his retirement, he remained active in ministry, often conducting short-term evangelistic efforts in Central America, Asia, and the South Pacific islands. Doctor Gungadoo died on Sabbath, August 20, while in the Kenyan city of Kisumu. He was in that city conducting one of his evangelistic series of meetings. This one was for the Migosi SDA Church.¹¹ He was survived by his wife Maryse and his son Daryl.

SOURCES

Brady, Rodney. "First Melanesian Ordained in New Caledonia." *Record*, April 26, 1997.

Cangy, Gilbert, Stenio Gungadoo, Erol de Silva. "Narainsamy Seenyen obituary." *Record*, December 5, 1998.

"Island Leadership Elected at Session." *Record*, November 25, 1995.

Kingston, Kent. "Victorian Pastor Dies Unexpectedly at Overseas Mission." *Record*, September 17, 2016.

Manners, Bruce. "President Looks to Future." *Record*, August 9, 1997.

"More from SPD Go to GC." *Record*, July 29, 2000.

Nash, Adele and Joffre Gilchrist. "Long Journey Leads to Ordination." *Record*, February 25, 2006.

NOTES

1. Unless otherwise credited, the information in this biography comes from the personal knowledge and experience of the author, who was a close colleague of Doctor Gungadoo during the last 20 years of his life.
2. Gilbert Cangy, Stenio Gungadoo, Erol de Silva, "Narainsamy Seenyen obituary," *Record*, December 5, 1998, 15.
3. Daryl Gungadoo, email message to author, October 2, 2018.
4. Ibid.
5. "Island Leadership Elected at Session," *Record*, November 25, 1995, 10.

6. Bruce Manners, "President Looks to Future," *Record*, August 9, 1997, 6.
7. Rodney Brady, "First Melanesian Ordained in New Caledonia," *Record*, April 26, 1997, 12.
8. "More From SPD Go to GC," *Record*, July 29, 2000, 3.
9. Adele Nash and Joffre Gilchrist, "Long Journey Leads to Ordination," *Record*, February 25, 2006, 5.
10. Daryl Gungadoo, email message to author, October 2, 2018
11. Kent Kingston, "Victorian Pastor Dies Unexpectedly at Overseas Mission," *Record*, September 17, 2016, 7.

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