

Southern Asia Tidings (Eastern Tidings)

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Southern Asia Tidings (published as *Eastern Tidings* from 1902-1917, 1920-1954; *India Union Tidings*, 1917-1919) is the official organ of the Southern Asia Division printed in English at the Oriental Watchman Publishing House, Pune. It serves a dual purpose as the Division news journal and promoter of church programs and interests, and is distributed free to all church members.

The news magazine began as an eight-page monthly, turned into a fortnightly, and changed in 1963 to a sixteen-page monthly. Currently it is published bimonthly.

The date of birth of the *Eastern Tidings* is unknown, its age complicated by intentional and unintentional irregularities in the volume numbers. The first issues are reported to have been typewritten and duplicated for private distribution. Volume 1 possibly began in 1902 and probably stretched into 1903! The earliest known existing copies are from Volume 2 and came off the press monthly from January to December 1904. The initial subscription rate was Re. 1 per year and extra copies could be had for 1 pice each?²

In 1905 the Oriental Watchman press moved from Calcutta (Kolkatta) to Karmatar and the twelve issues of Volume 3 appeared irregularly in a spread from May 1905 to March 1907. Volume 4 No. 1 appeared in April 1907 and intentionally extended to Number 20 in December 1908 apparently to align with the calendar year. However, Volume 4 extended unintentionally to No. 21 with a due apology from the editor.³ The next issue came out as No. 1 but continued as Vol 4 by mistake and continued thus till December 1909 resulting in two Volume 4s, one with 22 numbers from 1907-1909 and the other with eleven numbers in 1909. Meanwhile the press moved yet again, this time from Karmatar to Lucknow, and this perhaps contributed to the muddle. In 1922 the Oriental Watchman moved yet again from Lucknow to Poona (Pune), but this time there was no interruption in the magazine, nor confusion in the numbers. Since then several issues have failed to appear, but the volume numbers have not suffered since 1909.⁴

The name of the magazine which started as the *Eastern Tidings* changed to *India Union Tidings* from 1917-1919 when the India Union was placed under the Asiatic Division. However, when the India Union was reorganized as the Southern Asia Division in 1919, the name of the magazine reverted to *Eastern Tidings* with the subtitle *Southern Asia Division*. The "Southern Asia Division" was dropped in 1945 and in 1953 the name was changed to

Southern Asia Tidings. Following legal complications that caused a temporary suspension, the publishers re-registered the magazine as *New Southern Asia Tidings* in 2001 and the Volume numbers which had reached 96 begun anew from 1.

The earliest *Tidings* catered to the few workers scattered in a land not their home at a time when communication and transportation was time-consuming. The few mission stations were spread across pre-independence India and extended to Burma (Myanmar) and Ceylon (Sri Lanka). The editors encouraged these isolated workers with parables, proverbs and poems. In the first decade the magazine kept track of the movement of workers, and recorded births, sickness, and deaths. In the next decade the magazine chronicled the establishment of training schools and education. In the 1920s literature and public evangelism featured prominently. In the 1930s as the work of the church consolidated and expanded, the *Tidings* reported on silver jubilees and celebrated the first fifty years of work in India. In the 1940s as India drew close to independence from the Britain, church leaders took cognizance of the changing political and regional map of Southern Asia along with the new developments of church growth and administration. As a result the editorial slant of the magazine turned to emphasize the increasing prominence of indigenous nature of work and workers involving evangelism, pastoral leadership, church and educational administration. Eventually the trend led to the appointment of the first national editor in 1977.

With the transfer of the Division headquarters from Pune to Hosur in 1987, the magazine's editorial function also shifted to Hosur from 1987-90.. With the advance in print technology, it now became possible to separate the editor's office from the printing process. As a result the former shifted to Hosur as part of the Division Communication Department, while the printing continued at the Oriental Watchman Publishing House in Pune. The editorial formula shifted from monthly to bimonthly, with the focus of the content remaining the same—news and promotion—with the exception of dropping the report of membership statistics, as this is now covered by the General Conference Yearbook. Currently, the magazine in soft copies is emailed to workers, while hard copies are still produced and circulated.

Editors: A. G. Watson, 1904; J. C. Little, 1905-1909; W. C. Perrin, 1909-1915; R. D. Brisbin, 1915-1918; W. S. Mead, 1919; E. B. Jones, 1920-1924; G. F. Enoch, 1925; J. S. James, 1926-1930; P. C. Poley, 1931; R. A. Beckner, 1932; G. F. Enoch, 1933-1936; R. B. Thurber, 1936-1941; R. L. Kimble, 1942; Mrs. A. F. Tarr, 1943-1948; E. M. Meleen, 1948-1949; Ina White, 1951-1952; L. J. Larson, 1952-1953; Ina White, 1953-1958; Mrs. O. W. Lange, 1958-1963; Nora Guild, 1963-1975; A. M. Peterson, 1976; John M. Fowler, 1977; Juanita Singh, 1978-1983; Edwin Charles, 1983-1989; Dittu Abraham, 1990-2001; A. J. Tito, 2002-2005; Rosenita Christo, 2006-2011; Vara Prasad Deepati, 2011-2015; G. Nageshwar Rao, 2015- .

SOURCES

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Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia. Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1996. S.v. "Southern Asia Tidings."

NOTES

1. "Southern Asia Tidings," *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia* (Second Revised Edition, 1996) 11:666. See also Mrs. C. B. Guild, "Editorial," *Southern Asia Tidings*, June 1965 (Diamond Jubilee Issue), 2.
2. India Mission Committee Minute, July 13, 1903. Beginning 1950s the magazine was distributed free.
3. W. C. Perrin, *Eastern Tidings*, February 1909, 4, wrote that it should have been Volume 5, Number 1.
4. Gordon E. Christo, "Through the Years: A History of the Tidings," *Southern Asia Tidings*, December 2005 (Centenary Issue), 9-13. The problem of the volume and issue numbers was addressed by A. M. Peterson, "Tidings Profile," *Southern Asia Tidings*, June 1976, 1-2, but since he had no access to issues earlier than 1909, resolving the problem was not possible.

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