

Bro. A Williams

Late Bro. Arogyaswamy Williams, was one of Bro. Bakht Singh's early co-workers. He was born in Coonoor, The Nilgiris, on 3rd March 1911, in a Christian family, to Bro Daniel Arogyaswamy and Sis (Mrs) Samadanam Ammal. He is the second son in a family of 6 children (3 sons and 3 daughters). One of the daughters, Sis (Mrs) Lily Moses Dawn, was wife of Bro Moses Dawn, another co-worker of Bro Bakht Singh, a gifted Bible Teacher, a talented Tamil translator and composer of the many of our Songs of Zion.

Bro Williams was educated in Coonoor, and was working with the Spencers. Right from his childhood he was very bold and a difficult boy to mend or control. The Lord wonderfully saved him, mainly because of his mother's persevering prayers for 13 long years. He came to know His Saviour in 1939 in one of the gospel meetings conducted by Sis Ponnammal Sanyasi those days (about whom there is mention in Bro Bakht Singh's biography, by Bro T E Koshy, along with a group photograph). In the year 1940, during Bro Bakht Singh's first gospel campaign to Coimbatore, Bro Williams met him and, in that campaign itself, in obedience to the Lord's call, surrendered his life for full-time ministry, resigned his job, and came down to Jehovah-Shammah to join Bro Bakht Singh and the early Elders of Jehovah-Shamma. Following a period of learning and training to lead a life of faith, he was put into small ministries. Afterwards, he became the caretaker of the inmates of Jehovah-Shammah, where many servants of the Lord (Bros K Philip, Noel Barrow, C E Dasan, S Martin and others) were trained. Bro K Philip once remarked that, "he was the Principal of the College of God's Servants in Jehovah-Shammah". He was a bold gospel worker and had a great passion for perishing souls. He was also firm in his convictions. Every day, he would lead a team of brothers and a few sisters for gospel preaching in the city of Madras (Chennai). And on return, tired after almost a full day's gospel work, only *kanji* (porridge made of broken rice) would await them! Those days were a period of living by faith. Practically, for everything they had to depend on the Lord, be it spiritual or physical need.

In the mid Forties, there was a need for someone to go to Kalimpong to help the very few believers there and also to establish the work, along with Bro Jordan Khan. One day, Bro Bakht Singh and the Elders of Jehovah-Shamma were fasting and praying to identify this person for Kalimpong. But they could not come to a decision, as no one had the courage to take the risk and toil of going so far and to work in cold climatic conditions. The same day, Bro Williams was severely unwell. After the prayer, Bro Bakht Singh asked Bro

Dorairaj, one of the Elders, to find out his condition and suggested that, he should be admitted into the hospital, if required. When Bro Dorairaj came to enquire about his health, Bro Williams, in turn, wanted to know whom they identified for Kalimpong. Bro Dorairaj was surprised with this query and replied, no one. Bro Williams then volunteered to go, stating that the Lord was dealing with and speaking to him through his illness since he was hesitant to put the step forward. He further told Bro Dorairaj that they should all come down and anoint and pray for him. When Bro Dorairaj carried this desire and request to Bro Bakht Singh, he perceived that it was the Lord's will and he came down immediately with the Elders and anointed and prayed for him. Within few hours of their prayer, he was healed, and then, the very next day he persuaded Bro Bakht Singh to send him to Kalimpong. However, since he was very weak, Bro Bakht Singh asked him to wait for a few days and, thereafter, after setting him apart as a Church by laying hands on him in prayer for this special ministry, he was sent from Jehovah-Shammah, as a minister to Kalimpong. His going to Kalimpong itself was by faith. He was given a train ticket only upto Vijayawada, because those days they could afford only so much. After reaching Vijayawada, he got down the train, trusting the Lord for the journey further up. One person approached him and asked him, weather he was the one going from Jehovah-Shammah to Kalimpong. He then bought him a ticket upto Siliguri and gave him a gift of money also. This is how he reached Siliguri and then Kalimpong.

The work at Kalimpong was both difficult and challenging. For several days in the week he would have to fast and most other times, his sustenance was only tea, without milk and sugar, given by the believers working in the tea gardens. He could only add salt to his black tea. Rarely would he have a meal of just rotis or bun. He had to forget his desire for rice as a South Indian. Wherever he had to go, either to give the gospel, or visit homes or conduct meetings, he had no other choice than to walk several kilometres a day in the mountain-terrains. After such visits or meetings, he would have to stay back there itself and return only the next morning or go to the next place of visit. Sometimes, instead of the believers extending hospitality, he would have to carry something for them to encourage them. There was also much opposition from the Nepalis and Tibetans. On one occasion, four of them (Bros Bakht Singh, Jordan Khan, Noel Barrow and Williams) were arrested after being beaten by an agitated crowd, and taken to the police station. At the police station, these four started praising the Lord upon their knees and praying for the Lord's blessing on those who beat them and also on the policemen as well as other officials. When the policemen heard this, they were puzzled and touched by it, and that led to their release from the police station, and their witnessing became effective afterwards. As a result of some years' toil and labour the Lord

opened doors in Darjeeling, Sikkim and Bhutan as well as other places. It was while labouring for the Lord here that he contracted chronic malaria, which could not be eradicated then. He would get this malarial fever every Tuesday, till his death, for more than 14 years, and so Bro Bakht Singh called him a 'Tuesday man'.

He was married to Sis Angel on 27th October, 1952, in Jehovah Shammah and she joined him in his ministry in Kalimpong, Darjeeling and other places. She too had to get used to the difficult life there of surviving only on black, slat-tea and rare meals of dry rotis. Though South Indians, both learnt Hindi and Nepali to carry on the work there. El-Shaddai, Kalimpong, became a training centre for those who offered their lives for the Lord's service, full-time, where Bro Lazer Sen, Bro Lyngdong, and Sisters Sumitra, Amrita, Mukhia and several others were trained for serving the Lord. Once the work was established, after much labour, teaching and training, he prayed and identified the first set of Elders to look after the work in El-Shaddai, Kalimpong, and other places and, along with Bros Bakht Singh, Jordan Khan and others, set them apart for their responsibilities.

He then came down to Guntur, to look after the work in the Krishna and Coastal belt (Guntur, Vijayawada, Tenali, Bapatla, Chirala, Ongole and Gudur, besides other small places, like Varagani, Annavaram and Repalli). It was again a pioneering work here, with much perseverance and toil. Guntur became the main centre, which catered to all these places, where also Servants like Bros P Benjamin, Aravindam, Suvarna Rao, Jesudas of Gudur, besides many others were all trained. In 1956, they had the privilege of having the first Holy Convocation in Guntur, which was attended by many.

He was then moved to the House of Worship, Vellore, to stabilise the work there in view of the many opportunities, which the CMC Hospital was offering as well as in the North Arcot Districts. After stabilising the work there, he was again asked to go to Kalimpong. By then he was blessed with 4 children; three sons and a daughter. After a couple of years being in Kalimpong, he was asked to come down to Hebron, in 1959, since there was a need for someone to take care of the inmates and the ministry at Hebron, which he did with the help of the Lord's Servants, Bros C E Dasan, K N Augustine and M N Yesuratnam, as well as the Elders, Bros G T Benjamin, D G Dorairaj, Aseervadam and V S Paul who were helping in the ministry, in addition to their secular jobs. Bro Williams was not only a sharer of the Word and gospel-preacher, but a man of prayer and had administrative abilities. When he came to Hebron, there was much to be done to establish the work. Those were very difficult days and days of faith. He, therefore, prayerfully started church prayer every morning (Monday to Saturday) from 5.00 am to 6.00 am, which was enthusiastically attended by

many from different parts of the city, who came with a great burden for prayer. This prayer of the church in the early days of Hebron, which continued for some years, laid the foundation for the establishment, enlargement, edification and blessing of the work in the subsequent years. The Lord also met many needs in answer to this prayer. Bro Bakht Singh also relied on him, and took his advice, in taking many important decisions in the ministry. He had the gift of discernment in prayerfully finding out the abilities and talents in a person, whom he brought forward for the ministry and work of the Lord. Among them were Bros Zac Poonen and Suvarna Rao of Guntur, a Telugu translator, in addition to Bro K N Augustine. He also convinced Bro Bakht Singh about the Vacation Bible School and Youth Camp ministries.

On the 26th May, 1964, following a period of illness (malaria) leading to cerebral malaria, he was called to glory. That was the first day of the First Youth Camp in Hebron. Because he was loved by many, the funeral on 27th May, 1964 was attended by many and, as desired by Bro Bakht Singh, the coffin was carried by God's Servants and believers from Hebron to Narayanaguda cemetery with songs and proclamation of the gospel, *enroute*.

Bro Bakht Singh had the following to say in the June 7, 1964 Issue of the Hebron Messenger about Bro Williams: *"It was in January 1940 during the special meetings in Coimbatore, South India, that I had the privilege of meeting our dear brother for the first time. The Lord began to work in him in a wonderful way and soon after that campaign, he resigned his job and offered his life for God's service. We have been labouring together in His vineyard for the past twenty-four years and five months. It is very hard to describe what a source of strength and inspiration he has been to all of us who were his co-workers, and to those who were ministered unto through him during his ministry in different parts of India. Somehow or other, it was his lot usually to be kept in some of the most difficult places where much ground had to be captured from the enemy's hand.*

The Lord had given him three special gifts, first faithfulness; secondly, great passion for perishing souls, and thirdly, a very great burden for intercessory prayer. Wherever he stayed and wherever he went, all these three characteristics were fully manifested, and it brought life and blessing to many assemblies. We praise God for what He has wrought and accomplished through our brother during the past 24 years. He will be much missed by His fellow-believers and co-workers in Hyderabad where he bore a very heavy responsibility. ... His spirit of prayer and watchfulness was the means which the Lord used to defeat the devices which the enemy uses so often to gain ground in the Church and to bring confusion and unpleasantness among the Lord's

people. Please pray that the Lord may help His servants in Hyderabad now to fulfil their added responsibilities very faithfully and joyfully.”

He left behind his wife, Sis (Mrs) Angel Williams and sons, Samuel, Joseph and Benjamin and daughter, Grace. Sister Williams was called to glory in November 1977. She too kept her faith and ran her race faithfully amidst many troubles, poverty and even sickness, which did not deter her from serving her Master sincerely and faithfully till her end. The children are in the Lord, settled, and serving Him in their local assemblies. His third son, Benjamin, has also gone to be with the Lord in November 2006.

Bro Williams knew Whom he believed, and served Him faithfully, keeping his faith till the end, running his race joyfully and cheerfully, fighting his battles prayerfully, expecting to receive a “crown of righteousness” from His Heavenly Master, who not only saved and called him, but was faithful to him!

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