

Mr. M. Patrick Joshua (1939-2020)

A tribute by R. Stanley, 19 June 2020



Patrick Annan, as he was affectionately called, was the second of the four children of Mrs. & Mr. A. Masillamani, both of them Teachers. The first one was a girl whom they named as *Jebakani*, meaning “fruit of prayer!” Annan’s mom, *Parimalam* (= fragrance) was a woman of prayer who had close links with the Nazareth Prayer Fellowship where I was born again. She was one of the senior mothers whose prayer life influenced my mummy and several women of our village. No wonder Annan became a prayer warrior and died as a **Man of Prayer**. His ministry in the closing years (2001-2020) was called “National Prayer Network.”

The passion with which Annan’s parents named him as Patrick is obvious. Patrick (AD 396-491) was known as the Apostle of Irish. During his lifetime ministry Ireland changed from paganism to 1,00,000 believers. His favourite Bible verse was Matthew 24:14, “The Gospel of the Kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the Nations, and then the end will come!” Annan lived and laboured with this **Missionary Vision** till he breathed last. The Friends Missionary Prayer Band (FMPB) was fortunate enough to have him as its Treasurer and General Secretary for several years. He exhibited the characteristics of Joshua of the Bible in being positive and courageous.

Whoever pays tribute to Annan cannot but mention his striking **simplicity**. There had been times when his extreme simplicity made his coleaders uncomfortable! Thank God for this rare breed which blessed this generation. The Biblical simplicity portrayed in the life of our Saviour is almost absent in today’s Christendom, especially among the Evangelists, Preachers, Pastors and the like. I ask him, “Anna, we the servants of God started our ministry in utter simplicity, but before too long we fell into the trap of materialism and show-off. How did you swim against the tide of this age all through?”

When the FMPB went through a deep financial crisis, being badly in need of Rs. 47,000/-, Annan gave away to this Mission all the savings he received from Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) when he resigned from it in 1977 as a Development Officer after 17 years of service. All jewellery was also given away. His four children were studying at this time. Annan’s dear wife, Sushila Akka, stood with him without murmuring. Her Homecall, following the terminal illness of cancer in 1994, was unbearable to Annan, but he never lost the Joy of the Lord (Hab 3:17,18). This missionary-minded couple dedicated their firstborn son to God’s work (Ex 13:1,2). He and his wife, both holding Doctorate in Linguistics, are involved in Bible Translation in a remote area in Uttar Pradesh. He could not travel from the field to attend his Dad’s funeral on 18 June. The second boy, Jim Elliot (27), died of Malaria in 1994 in a mission field in Jharkhand. Think of losing the spouse and a son in the same year! Their last son is with World Vision India in West Bengal. Their daughter, Sabine, took care of him during his last two years. No wonder Annan’s very life was a **missionary challenge**. He loved India and gave all his three sons to bless this Land.

Annan’s native place is *Idayankudi* in Tirunelveli District. The meaning of the name of this place is “Shepherds’ Shed.” I’m not surprised over Annan’s **shepherding heart** for the missionaries under his care. Oh for many such leaders for Indian Missions! Annan “served God without fear, in **holiness** and in righteousness before Him” all his life (Lk 1:74,75).

Annan was personally an inspiration to me in many ways. Besides using me in FMPB’s major programmes, he often encouraged me to maintain prophetic edge in my writings. He ministered to the Staff of the Blessing Youth Mission a couple of times. The entire Christian world would miss him terribly. “O God, give us many selfless and sacrificial leaders like our beloved Annan!”