



Association of Adventist Women

Jasmine Fernando Jacob

— Woman of the Year —

Outstanding Achievement

2004

In 1973, Jasmine Jacob co-founded REACH (Render Effective Aid to Children) International, a not-for-profit organization, presently serving 26,000 children in 24 countries. A most unusual journey brought her to this ministry. She was born in a very humble home in Sri Lanka, later moved to Spicer Memorial College for education, then to America to attend Andrews University and Michigan State University. After arriving in the United States, Jacob accepted various teaching jobs while continuing her graduate education, eventually serving as a Reading Consultant in the Benton Harbor School District, a poor neighborhood just a short drive from Andrews University.



In 1989 Jacob took early retirement with the State of Michigan and began working full-time for REACH International without salary. For thirty years, under her entrepreneurial leadership, REACH International has established its own schools, hostels, orphanages, and vocational centers for destitute children, now with branches in 24 countries. Through childhood education this organization has helped thousands of children break their inherited cycle of poverty. Because this is a ministry, not only an education program, these children are introduced to Jesus.

The REACH International Mission Statement proclaims it is a faith venture in partnership with God.

With this commitment in mind, the founders and staff of the organization wrote: “We will not rush before the Lord but patiently, prayerfully await His bidding.” With millions of children in the world in desperate need, REACH International remains open to new ways to approach the goal of feeding, both physically and educationally, as many children as possible, and seriously considers any request for help.

Dwight Nelson, Jacob’s pastor, lauds Jacob for her outstanding commitment and courage and says, “Jasmine has cast her vision far and wide and today leads a global team of individuals who continue to expand this mission of mercy to earth’s kids. She powerfully evidences the meaning of Christian and Christ-like leadership, all the while neither clamoring for recognition nor climbing for position and prestige.”

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