

Fall 2018 Newsletter

This newsletter is based on the article published in *Adventist Today* written by Rita Corbett, dated April 8, 2018, and concerning the construction of the Hope Center in the South East Andhra Conference in the East Central India Union (ECIU).

Visit the MCA website, advmca.org, for the entire article on “The Sad Saga of the Hope Center” and to see related articles and letters.

The organizers envisioned a multi-purpose conference center with offices, staff residences, a training center and school. Programs would be offered to benefit the local villagers socially, mentally, physically and spiritually. It was named the Hope Center. The ECIU, agreed to contribute an administration building if land were purchased. The project was approved by church entities on both sides of the ocean.

The first order of business was to purchase a 10-acre parcel, but the purchased property was only five acres and costlier than expected. At that point the fund-raisers were not informed about the difference between “purchased land” and “assigned land”; the latter belonging to the villagers and cannot be sold except in particular circumstances. The fact that this 5-acre piece of land was “assigned land” was not revealed to donors until many years later—a fact that still remains a threat to the project.

Initially things appeared to be going well, but then rumors began to circulate concerning misuse of donated funds. The fund-raisers became increasingly suspicious when they could not get straight answers or financial records from the church leaders that were trusted to build the Hope Center. Finally on July 25, 2016, John Victor Chinta, then conference president and currently union president, sent an email, stating that the Hope Center had “no land and finance issues.” His assurance has continued to be contradicted.

Increasingly serious questions about project integrity were raised, from questions about the land purchase, to registration, building permits, and conflicts with the local authorities. Notices received from government entities, including a frightening warning that the buildings would be destroyed if the land issues weren’t resolved and proper building permits obtained.

In December of 2016, Rita Corbett prepared a detailed presentation and met with the SUD president Ezras Lakra, treasurer Selvin Moorthy, secretary Dr. M. Wilson; union president, John Victor Chinta, and the former and current treasurers of the South East Andhra Conference, Y.S. Rao and K. Prasad.

Documents that were required by the agreement, and that were so necessary for their relationship with both the donors and Canada Revenue, were urgently needed. No documents from the brethren were received then, and none have been received since, despite repeated requests to all levels. Any documents received came from sources other than church officers.

However, in the meeting a troubling suggestion was presented: If Rita Corbett would quit asking questions and just sign off on the finances of the project, the plans for the Hope Center could be continued.

The denials and excuses didn’t stop the current South East Andhra Conference Treasurer Mr. Prasad from requesting a great deal more money which he claimed was needed to correct the legal and financial problems with the Hope Project, problems which, not long before, were declared not to exist!

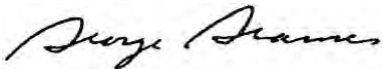
A Hindu contractor who built much of the Hope Center reported that the building costs were inflated above what he had been paid and he was asked

to sign the completion certificates without the final amounts recorded. A non-Christian businessman called the church leaders he worked with “crooks”. Rita Corbett has brought their concerns and document requests to all levels of church leadership, up and down the organizational pyramid on both sides of the ocean: from her supportive local church and British Columbia Conference, to legal entities for the Canadian Union and North American Division, the General Conference President’s office and the GC Auditing Service, as well as division, union, and conference officers in India.

When the issue was communicated to the GC President’s Office, the response was that they would leave the matter with the Southern Asia Division (SUD)—the president was Ezras Lakra, who was one of the subjects of the complaint!

If this report is credible, the Hope project has been irreparably crippled by the misuse of donated funds and the fraudulent activity by church administrators.

The MCA website, advmca.org, has the entire article on “The Sad Saga of the Hope Center” as well as related articles and letters.



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