

Foreword

Massive immigration into America is a phenomenon of our times. It is no surprise that the most rapidly growing segment of the child population of American society is the first and second generation immigrant children. Immigration significantly transforms immigrant parents and their children while it also makes drastic changes in the host communities.

The escalating pace of immigration of Asian Indians and their growing influence in almost every major sphere of American life can no longer be ignored. The author invites us on a journey to boldly explore the critical issues and challenges facing the children of immigrant Asian Indians. Drawing from his personal observations, grassroots conversations, ministry reflections and scholarly research Sam George has provided us with a well-rounded, highly informative and practical volume. *Understanding the Coconut Generation* is a book long overdue.

As a serious student of culture, the Church and the Christian faith, the author with his caring heart and discerning mind carefully diagnoses the social and spiritual struggles facing the Coconut Generation. His conclusions echo what I have seen and heard in the Asian Indian community during my over three-decade itinerant ministry based on this continent. What is helpful are his prescriptions of contextual pointers for ministry and innovative emerging ministry models. He is also hopeful that by embracing necessary changes in our ministry approaches, the Christian faith of the Coconut Generation will not only survive but thrive. Many of the ministry insights presented here could be transferable and applied to the various contexts of the global South Asian Diaspora.

For Sam George this journey to deeper understanding of the emerging generation in order to serve them more effectively is

still in progress. Hence he persuasively invites us to ponder over the questions he has raised and to join in the continuing online dialogue through the website.

I recommend this book with optimism and enthusiasm to all Asian Indian families and all (pastors, youth workers, community leaders, etc.) who meaningfully and redemptively relate with them.

Rev. Dr. T.V. Thomas

Co-Chair,
International Network of South Asian Diaspora Leaders (INSADL)

Acknowledgements

I am deeply indebted to many people who have played a crucial role in this project. My special thanks goes to Rev. Dr. T.V Thomas who has been instrumental in challenging the need for literature on second generation ministry and graciously agreed to write the Foreword. I am grateful to Bishop Euyakim Mar Coorilos for his enthusiastic support and kind endorsement of the book. Dr. Kenda Creasy Dean – an extraordinary teacher, theologian and mentor to me since seminary days whose passion for youth is a continual inspiration. Ram Gidoomal's many rich input from his Diasporic journey in Africa and Europe has been immensely valuable to me. I also thank all other endorsers for their kind and encouraging commendations.

I thank the Board of PARIVAR International, where I serve, in releasing me to pursue this writing. I greatly appreciate timely help from many people in this writing endeavor: Priya George and Shiji Mathew in proofreading and editing, Shoji Thomas for research and tabulations, Bobby Thomas for online survey, Stash John for the web design, Anil Thomas and Jerry Mathaikutty for promotions and Shajan Karottu for cover design. Most of all, I owe a great deal to the young people and youth leaders that I met all across North America. Your passion for God and extraordinary faith gives me a reason to believe that best is yet to come.

I praise God for my wife, Mary M. George - her loving support and encouragement keeps me going. I thank God for our children Daniel Ashish George and Joshua Anmol George, in a way this book is an attempt to understand them. I am grateful to Mary's dad, Mr. P.C. Mathew and my parents, Mr. & Mrs. K.S. George, for helping out with many household chores and taking care of our children, when I was engrossed in writing.

Above all else, I thank Jesus, who called me out of darkness, unto his marvelous light; life has never been the same since the day I had encountered him.