



# YOUTH & ADULT MISSION

2024 • **QUARTER 1** • SOUTHERN ASIA DIVISION





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**On the Cover:** Nathan longed to do something for God after reading mission stories in the *Mission* quarterlies. He prayed, and God answered in a big way. Story, page 28.




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 = stories of special interest to teens



This quarter we feature the Southern Asia Division, comprised of four countries: Bhutan, India, The Maldives, and Nepal. The region is home to 1.4 billion people, including 1.1 million Adventists. That's a ratio of one Adventist for 1,246 people.

Reaching 1.4 billion people is an enormous challenge that can only be accomplished with God's help. As part of the effort, the Southern Asia Division has chosen 10 projects in India to receive the Thirteenth

Sabbath Offering this quarter. The projects are listed in the sidebar.

If you want to make your Sabbath School class come alive, we offer photos and other materials to accompany each mission story. More information is provided in the sidebar with each story. For photos of tourist sites and other scenes from the featured countries, try a free photo bank such as [pixabay.com](https://pixabay.com) or [unsplash.com](https://unsplash.com). You could show the photos to the children on your computer or mobile device while you read the mission story, or you could print the photos to decorate your Sabbath School room or church bulletin board.

In addition, you can download a PDF of facts and activities from the Southern Asia Division at [bit.ly/sud-2024](https://bit.ly/sud-2024). Follow us at [facebook.com/missionquarterlies](https://facebook.com/missionquarterlies). For more mission stories and mission-related materials from the Southern Asia Division for first quarter 2024, download the PDF version of the *Children's Mission* magazine at [bit.ly/childrensmisson](https://bit.ly/childrensmisson) and Mission Spotlight videos at [bit.ly/missionspotlight](https://bit.ly/missionspotlight).

If you have found especially effective ways to share mission stories, please let me know at [mcchesneya@gc.adventist.org](mailto:mcchesneya@gc.adventist.org). I am always eager to hear new ideas about how we can plant seeds for mission in people's hearts.

I have prayed for you as you share the mission stories in this publication.

Let's join together in heeding Jesus' command, "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you (Matthew 28:19, 20; NKJV).

Thank you for encouraging others to be mission-minded!

## Opportunities

The Thirteenth Sabbath Offering this quarter will support 10 projects in the Southern Asia Division:

- Construct classrooms and labs at school, Palakkad, India
- Construct English church, Lowry Adventist College, Bengaluru, India
- Construct Central English Church, Bengaluru, India
- Construct high school, Aurangabad, India
- Construct girls' dormitory, school, Thanjavur, India
- Construct girls' dormitory and children's auditorium, school, Pasighat, India
- Reconstruct church, conference center, and dining hall, youth training center, Manginapudi, India
- Reconstruct school building, Anni, India
- Construct classrooms at school, Namunagar, Andaman Islands, India
- Construct classrooms and administrative building at school, Nepal

INDIA | January 6

# A Good Start

Simon



Simon loved running in northern India. He especially admired Usain Bolt, the Jamaican sprinter who is known as the fastest man alive.

Simon has never forgotten a statement that Usain Bolt once made on television.

He said, “I trained four years to run nine seconds.”

Simon was amazed that an athlete would be willing to train for years just to run for a few seconds. He realized that training must be very important for runners.

Simon’s parents also realized that training was very important. They thought about the proper training for Simon when he prepared to enter school in their hometown of Anni.

Father wanted Simon to attend a Seventh-day Adventist school, and he wanted a recommendation on which one was best for his son.

“Simon is 5 years old,” he told his brother. “Where do you think that I should send him to school?”

“Put Simon in our school here,” his brother said. “It’s closer to your home than the other schools.”

The school was only a 10-minute walk away from Simon’s home.

So, Simon was sent to the local Adventist school to start kindergarten.

On the first day, Simon wasn’t so sure that he wanted to go. He cried as Mother walked with him to school. He cried when she left him at the school. He felt very scared because he couldn’t see Mother anywhere in the room.

But the tears quickly dried up during morning worship. The teachers taught songs about Jesus. The principal read a story from the Bible. Simon liked the songs and the stories.

In a short time, he began making friends with the other boys and girls. He was happy to talk with them, to study with them, and to just be with them.

A year passed, and Simon entered first grade. Then he finished second, third, and fourth grades. As he studied, he learned how to be honest, kind, and helpful, just like Jesus in the Bible.

He also learned to run.

One day, a teacher told the schoolchildren, “You should run because it is good for your health.”

So, Simon decided to run every day. Instead of walking to school, he ran. Sometimes, he raced his friends to see who would arrive at school first. Sometimes, he left home late and had to run to arrive at school on time.

After school, he went to a park near his home and ran with friends. The boys ran for 5-10 minutes, rested, and then ran again for a total of 30 minutes.

When Simon first started running, it was hard work, and he got hot. But after a while, it became easier. After several months of running every day, he was hardly sweating at all. He felt very good after running. His mood improved, and he found it easier to do his homework.

Simon had learned an important principle about physical exercise. Ellen White says, “Your muscles were made for use, not to be inactive.” If you would exercise regularly, she says, “your mind would be better balanced, your thoughts would be of a purer and more elevated character, and your sleep would be more natural and healthful. ... Your thoughts upon sacred truth would be clearer, and your moral powers more vigorous” (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, p. 235).

Before Simon knew it, he had graduated from the eighth grade.

Today, Simon is a 21-year-old university student, and he said the school gave him a good start in life. He learned to run. He learned about Jesus. He received a good training.

“Through this school, God helped me to be a man of morals and dignity,” he said. 🌍

Part of this quarter’s Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help construct a new school building for the 450 children who study at the Adventist school in Anni, India. The children now study in an old building built by a German missionary who founded the school in 1976. Thank you for planning a generous offering on March 30.

By Andrew McChesney

## Story Tips

- Download photos on Facebook: [bit.ly/fb-mq](http://bit.ly/fb-mq).
- Download Mission Posts and Fast Facts from the Southern Asia Division: [bit.ly/sud-2024](http://bit.ly/sud-2024).
- This mission story illustrates the following objectives of the Seventh-day Adventist Church’s “I Will Go” strategic plan: Spiritual Growth Objective No. 5, “To disciple individuals and families into spirit-filled lives”; Spiritual Growth Objective No. 6, “To increase accession, retention, reclamation, and participation of children, youth, and young adults”; and Spiritual Growth Objective No. 7, “To help youth and young adults place God first and exemplify a biblical worldview.” For more information, go to the website: [IWillGo2020.org](http://IWillGo2020.org).

## Mission Post

- India has 4,537 churches, 4,692 companies, and 1,145,399 members. In a population of 1,241,267,000, that’s one Seventh-day Adventist for every 1,084 people.
- The territory of India, Burma, and Ceylon functioned as the India Mission from 1895, when the General Conference Mission Board sent D. A. Robinson as the first supported worker and appointed him superintendent.
- The Southern Asia Division (SUD) was first organized in 1910 as the India Union Mission, and in 1920 it became the Southern Asia Division.
- Gerald Christo became the first national division president from 1980 to 1990.
- Oriental Watchman Publishing House, the division’s only publishing house, is located in Salisbury Park in Pune, and prints material in 20 languages.

# Unexpected Education

INDIA | January 13

Abhishek



Abhishek was 3 years old when his parents began looking for a school for him in central India.

Father asked friends for a recommendation for a good school that didn't cost too much. Mother asked neighbors for ideas about a school for Abhishek. The parents were poor, but they were determined that their son would get a good education.

Someone suggested a Seventh-day Adventist school that was located near their home.

Father and Mother didn't wait.

The next day, they came searching for the school.

It was a Saturday, and they expected to find the school open.

"Please take us to the school principal," Father asked a guard standing at the school's gate.

The guard guided Father and Mother to a church located on the same compound as the school.

Father and Mother were surprised to see people worshipping inside the church. They realized that the school was closed. But they didn't want to leave.

Father and Mother went inside the church and sat down and waited.

The Sabbath worship service was in progress. There are many languages in India. But the church service was in their native tongue, and they understood everything that was said.

Soon came the time for the sermon, and the pastor stood up to speak. He preached about the Sabbath.

Father and Mother were surprised a second time. They were Christians, but they had never heard that the Bible teaches that the seventh day of the week is the Sabbath. Suddenly, they understood why the school was closed on Saturday. The school kept the biblical teaching not to work on the seventh day of the week. Father and Mother wanted to know more. After the worship service,

they asked the pastor to teach them what the Bible says about the Sabbath. The pastor invited the couple to Bible studies.

As Father and Mother studied the Bible with the pastor, Abhishek entered kindergarten at the school. He also studied the Bible in kindergarten. Every day, teachers told stories from the Bible. Abhishek especially liked the story of David and Goliath. He liked how a small boy defeated a giant with a single stone because the boy came in God's name. David said, "You come to me with a sword, with a spear, and with a javelin. But I come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel" (1 Samuel 17:45, NKJV).

Even though he was a small boy, Abhishek decided that he always wanted to go in the name of the Lord of hosts. Even though he was small, he knew that God would make him strong and give him victory over every giant in life.

As Abhishek and his parents learned from the Bible, life began to change in their home. The family started to keep the Sabbath. Then Father and Mother gave their hearts to Jesus.

As Abhishek grew older, he became involved in church activities. He was like the prophet Samuel as a child, happy to do whatever he was told for the church. He helped the deacons with their work, placing songbooks on the benches and overseeing the microphones.

Today, the family is established in their faith and growing in the Lord. Abhishek is 19 and a university student.

"I want to spread the gospel of Jesus and tell people that Jesus is coming soon," he said. 🌍

Part of this quarter's Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help construct a high school at Abhishek's school in Aurangabad, India. Thank you for planning a generous Thirteenth Sabbath Offering on March 30.

By Andrew McChesney

## Story Tips

- Know that the Adventist Church's North Maharashtra Section sponsors children and finds sponsors for many others at Abhishek's Adventist school.
- Download photos on Facebook [bit.ly/fb-mq](https://bit.ly/fb-mq).
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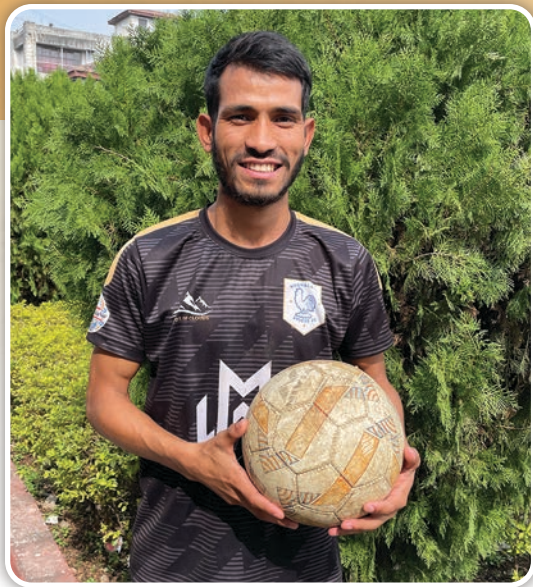
## Mission Post

- Spicer Adventist University (previously Spicer Memorial College) has been the division's main educational institution since 1937, moving from Bangalore to its current location in Pune in 1942.
- According to the 2011 census, 79.8 percent of the population of India is Hindu, 14.2 percent is Muslim, and 2.3 percent is Christian.

## Fast Facts

- A traditional costume for women in Maharashtra was the nauvari lugada (nine-yard sari). Although the *nauvari lugada* has gone out of fashion, the five-yard sari is still worn, particularly for special occasions, like weddings.

# Soccer on Sabbath



INDIA | January 20

## Cleaning

Cleaning lived for soccer. He played soccer whenever he had free time after school in his hometown in northeastern India.

When he moved to another town to prepare for state exams, he found other teens who played soccer and joined them on Saturdays.

But Cleaning was astonished to hear people singing hymns and praying to God on the other side of the soccer field as he played on Saturdays. The field was located beside the campus of a Seventh-day Adventist school and church.

Cleaning had been raised in a Christian family. He had studied at Christian schools all his life. But he had never heard of Christians worshipping on Saturday.

As he chased the ball around the field, he wondered, “Why are these people worshipping on Saturday instead of Sunday? Who are these people?”

Cleaning passed the state exams and completed 10th grade. He applied for 11th grade at a school in the town where he had prepared for the state exams, but he was

rejected. Disappointed, he asked two friends for advice. Both boys planned to study at the Adventist school beside the soccer field, and they encouraged him to join them.

Cleaning applied to the school and was accepted. He was happy.

As the months passed, he learned why people had sung hymns and prayed to God while he was playing soccer on Saturdays. At the school, he read in Genesis 2 that God had set aside the seventh day of the week, Saturday, as a holy day at the end of the Creation week. He saw in Exodus 20 that God had reminded His people about the importance of keeping the Sabbath in the Ten Commandments. He realized that Jesus Himself had faithfully kept the Sabbath while living on earth and had never changed the day of worship to Sunday.

Cleaning told his parents that he wanted to join the Adventist Church. His parents, however, balked at the idea. Not wanting to disappoint them, Cleaning reluctantly decided against baptism.

Cleaning’s hometown didn’t have an Adventist church, and he missed Sabbath worship services when he returned home for vacation. He spoke to his parents and 10 brothers and sisters about what he had learned about the Sabbath at school. But they didn’t want to listen.

“It’s good that you are a student at the Adventist school,” his mother said. “But you don’t need to become an Adventist.”

Father sounded a more ominous note.

“If you choose to become an Adventist, you



will have no part in this family,” he said. “You will be thrown out of the family.”

After graduating from 12th grade at the Adventist school, Cleaning enrolled in a non-Christian college in the same town. But he felt uncomfortable. He sensed that he didn’t belong. He longed to study in a Christian college.

While playing soccer one day, Cleaning heard from an Adventist teammate about an organization of Adventist student missionaries called the 1000 Missionary Movement. Cleaning liked the idea of being a student missionary, and he sought out the local leaders of the organization.

Before long, he joined the Adventist Church and spent eight months as a student missionary, teaching fourth-grade children.

His parents were not pleased that he had become an Adventist. But he no longer lived at home, and there was little that they could do to punish him.

Meanwhile, a desire grew in Cleaning’s heart to become a pastor, and he enrolled at Spicer Adventist University.

Today, he is a second-year theology major who is hoping to reach the hearts of young people through soccer.

“My aim is to become a pastor and also reach young people in the community through soccer,” he said. “I would like to open a soccer academy and minister to young people. As you know, many young people love soccer. Through this sport, I want to reach young people and bring them to Jesus Christ.”

He said he has found freedom in knowing and following the Bible.

He longs for his family to enjoy the same freedom.

“I strongly believe in the words of John the apostle in John 8:32, ‘And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free,’” he said. “Please, pray for me as I prepare to become a minister of the gospel.” 🌍

This quarter’s Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help build or rebuild six Seventh-

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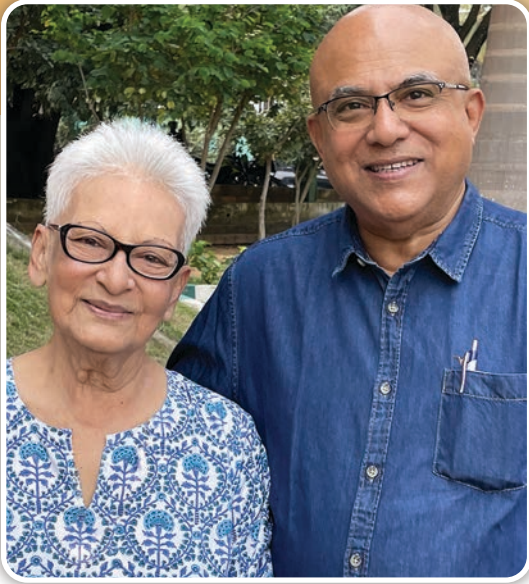
## Fast Facts

- The official languages of India are Hindi and English.
- The capital of the Indian state of Maharashtra is Mumbai, which is built on what was originally seven islands – the Isle of Bombay, Colaba, Mahim, Mazagaon, Parel, Worli, and Old Woman’s Island. Land reclamation works in the 19th century brought the islands together into one landmass.
- Cricket is the most popular spectator sport in the Indian state of Maharashtra.

day Adventist schools like the one where Cleaning first learned about the seventh-day Sabbath in India. Thank you for planning a generous Thirteenth Sabbath Offering on March 30.

By Andrew McChesney

# Gospel Goosebumps



INDIA | January 27

Shakuntala and Joy

The advertising executive felt goosebumps on her arms as strains of beautiful choir music wafted into her office.

It was not the first time that she had heard the music while at work behind her desk at the advertising agency that she ran in Bengaluru, India.

It also was not the first time that she had felt goosebumps on her arms because of the music.

But this time, she could not sit still.

Shakuntala went to the window of her second-story office to see what was going on. She could see people coming in and out of a building across the street. She wondered what was going on in the building.

She looked down at her arms and wondered why she was getting goosebumps. A strong desire filled her to walk over to the building and see with her own eyes what was happening.

Slowly, very slowly, she made her way out of her office building and across the street.

She felt a little uneasy entering the building because she didn't know anyone there.

Slowly, very slowly, she walked in the front entrance.

"Can I come in and listen to what you are doing?" she asked someone standing near the entrance.

"Come in, and sit down," the man said, kindly.

Shakuntala sat down and began listening.

The choir was no longer singing to the music of an organ. Instead, a man was singing acapella.

When he finished, Shakuntala boldly walked over to him.

"Where is the organ?" she asked. "Where are the songs that give me goosebumps?"

The man was surprised.

Shakuntala explained that she had been listening to the music from her office every Saturday for the past few weeks. She only heard the music on Saturdays.

Shakuntala returned to the church to listen to the music the next two Saturdays. As the

choir sang, she looked in a songbook that she found on one of the seats. She learned the names of the two songs that had been giving her the biggest goosebumps. They were the hymns “The Old Rugged Cross” and “Be Still My Soul.”

On the third Saturday, she not only listened to the music but also stayed for the sermon about Jesus.

Back at home, she thought, “I like what I heard about Jesus in that church. Since I liked it, why do I have pictures of other gods in my house?”

She took down all the pictures and gave them away.

She kept going to church on Sabbath, and she kept feeling goosebumps while listening to the music.

After a while, the pastor invited her to bring her family.

“Don’t worry,” she said. “They will come.”

And they came. Her son, Joy, came first, and then her grandchildren also became interested. Even her housekeeper started attending.

After Bible studies, the family gave their lives to Jesus.

Shakuntala became an active church member, and one of her grandsons now serves as the church’s youth pastor.

Today, Shakuntala is 84 years old and has retired from working in advertising.

But she remains grateful for the music that she first heard in 2005.

It led her to Jesus.

“I still get goosebumps when I hear the choir sing,” she said. 🌍

Part of this quarter’s Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help construct a new Central English Church for Shakuntala’s congregation in Bengaluru, India. Thank you for your generous offering on March 30 that will bring beautiful gospel music — and perhaps even goosebumps — to many more people in Bengaluru.

By Andrew McChesney

## Story Tips

- Pronounce Shakuntala as: shaa-kuhn-TAA-luh.
- Know that Shakuntala and her son, Joy, are active church members today.
- Download photos on Facebook: [bit.ly/fb-mq](https://bit.ly/fb-mq).
- Download Mission Posts and Fast Facts from the Southern Asia Division: [bit.ly/sud-2024](https://bit.ly/sud-2024).
- This mission story illustrates Spiritual Growth Objective No. 5 of the Seventh-day Adventist Church’s “I Will Go” strategic plan: “To disciple individuals and families into spirit-filled lives.” Shakuntala’s role in bringing her family to church illustrates Mission Objective No. 1, “To revive the concept of worldwide mission and sacrifice for mission as a way of life involving not only pastors but every church member, young and old, in the joy of witnessing for Christ and making disciples.” For more information, go to the website: [IWillGo2020.org](https://IWillGo2020.org).

## Fast Facts

- Karnataka comes from the Kannada words *karu* and *nādu*, meaning “elevated land.”
- Bengaluru (also known as Bangalore) is the capital and largest city of the Indian state of Karnataka, with a population of more than 8 million and a metropolitan population of about 11 million.
- Bengaluru is home to many vegan restaurants and vegan activism groups. It has been named as India’s most vegan-friendly city by the Indian branch of PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals).

# Home Transformers



INDIA | February 3

Twinkle and Milind

Can an interior designer be a witness for heaven?

A married couple felt so strongly that they were being called to share Jesus through interior design that they left cushy corporate careers to start a business of their own in India.

The couple, Twinkle and Milind, eagerly got to work when they signed their first contract in one of India's biggest cities, Bengaluru. Wealthy parents asked for the redesign of the bedroom of their 13-year-old son, Arnav.

As Twinkle and Milind listened to the mother's wishes for the bedroom, it seemed that she wanted more than a redesign. She was looking for a miracle. Arnav was a hyperactive boy, and she hoped that a new bedroom would calm him down. Moreover, she hadn't been able to sleep in the bedroom for six years, and she wanted to sleep there with her son sometimes.

"It's impossible for me to sleep there," she said. "I don't know why."

Twinkle and Milind didn't know what to do with the room. But they knew where to start. They knelt down and prayed to God.

"Dear God, please give us ideas about what colors to use to paint the bedroom and how we can decorate it for Your glory," Twinkle prayed.

Then the couple hauled everything out of the bedroom. They carried out the boy's bed and nightstand. They removed the bookshelves. On the shelves, they found images, and they also removed them.

Twinkle and Milind wondered what to do with the images. Arnav and his mother worshipped the images, but the father was an atheist who didn't believe in any god.

When the father saw the images being carried from the room, he said, "Why don't you just wrap those images in old newspaper and throw them away?"

Twinkle and Milind thought that was a good idea. They wrapped the images in old newspaper and threw them away.

Then they repainted the room. When they finished, they placed framed pictures of Bible verses and other inspiration quotations on the walls and nightstand. One framed picture read, “You are fearfully and wonderfully made.” The picture did not say that the quotation came from Psalm 139:14 in the Bible. Another framed picture read, “You are God’s masterpiece,” a paraphrase of Ephesians 2:10. A third picture said simply, “You are loved.”

Arnav and his parents were delighted with the new bedroom. Sometime later, the mother sent a grateful text message to Twinkle.

“We are seeing positive changes in Arnav’s behavior, and I’m able to go into his bedroom,” she wrote. “I feel peace in his room.”

She added that she was able to sleep in the room for the first time in six years.

Twinkle and her husband were thrilled with the news.

“The Bible promises, ‘My word ... shall not return to Me void,’” Twinkle said in an interview, citing Isaiah 55:11. “So every day when Arnav read a verse, it had a positive change on his character.”

Since that first bedroom, the couple have redesigned many rooms. They always pray before starting a new project, and they never leave an image in a room, even as part of the home decor. Instead, every room is filled with Bible verses. If a client asks about God, they put him or her in touch with a friend who gives Bible studies.

Twinkle said it’s good to be in business with God. “Right now, our business is a mission,” she said. “We enter into homes as home transformers. We transform homes, not just as a space, but also the people who live there. We just put up picture frames, and God does the rest.” 🌍

Part of this quarter’s Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help construct a new Central English Church for Twinkle and Milind’s congregation in Bengaluru, India. Thank you for your generous offering on March 30.

By Andrew McChesney

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## Fast Facts

- Karnataka’s smallest district, Kodagu, has produced many Indian field hockey players who have represented India at the international level. The annual Kodava Hockey Festival is the largest hockey tournament in the world.
- Society throughout India is divided into social ranks, called castes. Your caste is determined by birth, with almost no way to change it. High castes include priests, landowners, and soldiers. At the bottom of society are the “Untouchables,” who have no caste and do the most menial jobs.
- Cows are sacred in India and cannot be harmed. They are allowed to wander through city streets, which often causes traffic jams.
- Traditionally marriages in India are arranged by the older family members of the bride and groom, although non-arranged “love matches” are becoming more common in cities.



# Costly Cup of Tea

## Terrance

Terrance stayed up all night to finish a major assignment for a nursing class at Lowry Adventist University in India.

He was off campus, studying at a friend's house. He was addicted to tea, and he sipped the hot drink all night to stay awake.

Around 4:30 a.m., Terrance went to the kitchen for another cup of tea. But there was no tea left. He wondered what to do. He was struggling to stay awake, and he just had to finish the assignment.

Then he remembered that a vendor sold hot tea from a stand just down the road. He could zip over to the tea vendor on his friend's motorcycle and then zip right back to finish his assignment.

Moments later, Terrance was roaring down a major street at 55 miles per hour (85 kph). He was traveling at nearly double the speed limit of 30 miles per hour (50 kph) for motorcycles in the city of Bengaluru. He also was not wearing a helmet.

Suddenly, a car pulled up beside him. It was traveling at the same speed, and it was filled with young people who were drinking. The young people tried to bring their car closer to Terrance and his motorcycle.

Terrance tried to get away. The young people laughed and tried to steer closer.

Terrance was worried, and he honked his horn. The young people threw beer cans.

Terrance started getting upset, and he shouted at them. The young people hurled back insults.

Now Terrance completely forgot about the road. He was angry! His speed inched up to 65 miles per hour (100 kph). He didn't see what was coming up in front of him. It was a speed bump.

He hit the speed bump, and everything went black. One moment, Terrance was arguing, and the next it was like someone had turned off the light.

The next thing Terrance knew, he woke up in bed. He looked at the clock. It said 8:45 a.m. It was time to go to class to turn in his nursing assignment.

Terrance tried to get up, but his body did not respond. He tried to call friends for help, but then he realized that he wasn't in his dormitory room. He looked around, trying to get his bearings. He didn't recognize the place. He saw a calendar. He remembered that he had been working on the nursing assignment in July, but the calendar said it was August. On the wall was a picture of his parents and brother, but he only recognized his brother. He was at home, but he didn't know it.

Suddenly, his mother entered the room. Seeing Terrance was awake, she cried

and hugged him. “I’m so glad that you are awake,” she said.

Terrance could only reply, “Who are you?”

His words broke his mother’s heart.

A week passed before Terrance recognized his parents. They and other people helped him piece together what had happened.

The night of the accident, the pastor at Lowry Adventist University received a call from the police, saying, “Take the body.”

The pastor’s number had been under the seat of the borrowed motorcycle as an emergency contact number. Terrance had been so badly injured that it took time for people to realize that the body was his and not that of his friend whose motorcycle he had borrowed. No one knows what happened to the drunk people in the car.

Terrance drifted in and out of delirious consciousness for days, and he was transferred in and out of three hospitals.

His parents were shocked when they first saw him. They also didn’t have money for his hospital bills. Friends from Lowry Adventist University helped with money and prayers. The pastor visited often. Three months passed from the time of the accident until Terrance returned to the university.

Today, he is a nurse. He is grateful to God, his family, and many friends at the university for his second chance at life. He had put off giving his heart to Jesus, and he realized after the accident that he didn’t want to wait any longer. “I was supposed to be baptized a long time back, but I was kind of scared,” he said. “I felt I would have to be careful about whatever I did, so I waited for a long time. After the accident, I sensed I shouldn’t wait anymore. You never know what will happen next in life.”

He was baptized at the university.

Terrance said another lesson that he learned from the accident was to stop drinking caffeinated tea.

“If I had to give a title to my story, I would call it, ‘The Most Costly Tea of My Life,’” he said. “It was costly. It cost me a lot of things.

## Story Tips

- Download photos on Facebook: [bit.ly/fb-mq](http://bit.ly/fb-mq).
- Download Mission Posts and Fast Facts from the Southern Asia Division: [bit.ly/sud-2024](http://bit.ly/sud-2024).
- This mission story illustrates Spiritual Growth Objective No. 5 of the Seventh-day Adventist Church’s “I Will Go” strategic plan: “To disciple individuals and families into spirit-filled lives.” For more information, go to the website: [IWillGo2020.org](http://IWillGo2020.org).

## Fast Facts

- Khari Baoli in Delhi been in operation since the 17th century and is Asia’s largest wholesale spice market.

But now, when I look back, I would say it was worth it. I needed a lesson from God. I needed to be brought back on the right path.”

His advice to other people, especially young people, is simple. “God has a plan for every soul here on earth,” he said. “He is not done with you until He says so. Even if you feel that you do not have a future, remember that He says in Jeremiah 1:5, ‘Before I formed you in the womb I knew you’ [NKJV]. I kept repeating the verse to myself when I was recovering. God has plans for you to receive grace and mercy in ways that you never expected or thought of.” 🌍

Part of this quarter’s Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help construct an English church on the campus of Lowry Adventist University in Bengaluru, India. The university has never had a church building large enough for its student body in its more than 100-year history. Thank you for your generous offering on March 30.

By Andrew McChesney

# Happy, Childless Widow

NEPAL | February 17

Ratnamaya



Ratnamaya got married in Nepal when she was 13 years old.

Many years passed, and she did not have a child.

Townpeople called her unkind names. Friends and relatives looked down on her as cursed.

Her husband blamed her and drank heavily.

Ratnamaya felt very sad. She wanted more than anything in the world to have a child. She tried everything that she could to get pregnant.

But nothing helped.

When it seemed that life couldn't get worse, her husband suddenly died.

Ratnamaya's sadness multiplied. Now she had to live with the double pain of being childless and a widow. She felt so lonely. She saw other people living happily with children and grandchildren.

Then the COVID-19 pandemic struck, and she was stuck in lockdown for months. She gradually lost her will to live.

It was then that a nephew stopped by her

small house. Lockdown restrictions were easing, and he invited her to visit his church.

"Come to my church," he said. "You will hear many new things, and you can also get a gift."

The church was distributing rice and blankets to needy people during the pandemic.

Ratnamaya decided to go.

The Sabbath worship service surprised her. She had been raised in a non-Christian religion, and it was the first time that she had observed a Christian program. She was especially drawn to the hymns, and she felt peace in her heart as she listened to people sing about Jesus.

Church-goers greeted Ratnamaya and spoke with her.

She was astonished that no one called her names or looked down on her. No one said that she was to blame for being a childless widow.

Instead, everyone spoke kindly and lovingly to her.



After that Sabbath, several women from the church began to visit Ratnamaya at her home.

They taught her the Bible and prayed with her.

Ratnamaya started to go to church every Sabbath.

She felt good every time she went to church and spoke with people at church. She was especially happy to learn that Jesus loved her very much.

She stopped feeling lonely and sad. In Jesus, she found the joy that had been missing her whole life.

She felt like the happiest person in the world!

“The Lord has given me His peace in my heart,” she said. “I always will be thankful to God for His love and for everything that He has done in my life.”

Today, Ratnamaya is 65 years old and still growing in her Christian faith.

She never went to school, so she cannot read or write.

But she is studying the Bible with the women from church and by listening to a radio podcast produced by the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

“I want to grow in the Lord even more, so I ask everyone to pray for me,” she said.

One of Ratnamaya’s favorite Bible verses is Philippians 4:4, where Paul says, “Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!” (NKJV).

“I don’t have husband nor children, but I never feel lonely because I can rejoice in my Lord and Savior,” she said. “My Lord is always with me, and He loves me more than anything.” 🌍

Part of this quarter’s Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help establish an elementary school where children can learn to read and write in Nepal. Thank you for planning a generous Thirteenth Sabbath Offering on March 30.

By Andrew McChesney

## Story Tips

- Pronounce Ratnamaya as: RAT-na-maya.
- Download photos on Facebook: [bit.ly/fb-mq](https://bit.ly/fb-mq).
- Download Mission Posts and Fast Facts from the Southern Asia Division: [bit.ly/sud-2024](https://bit.ly/sud-2024).
- This mission story illustrates Spiritual Growth Objective No. 5 of the Seventh-day Adventist Church’s “I Will Go” strategic plan: “To disciple individuals and families into spirit-filled lives.” For more information, go to the website: [IWillGo2020.org](https://IWillGo2020.org).

## Mission Post

- Nepal closed its borders for many years, and Seventh-day Adventists were not allowed to enter. However, Nepalese who traveled outside of the country heard the church’s message and returned home to share it with their friends and families.
- In 1936, Kenneth Simpson and two Adventist medical missionaries visited several villages of Nepal along the border and preached to them in Hindi. It was the first time many of them had ever heard about Jesus and the Bible.
- In 1951, Nepal began opening its borders to foreigners and tourists. While handing out Voice of Prophecy Bible-study cards on the border, pastor George Vandeman was told, “You’re too late. I’m already on Lesson 30.” The person proved to be one of many people who had been studying the Adventist message in this way.
- Dr. Stanley Gordon and Mrs. Raylene Sturges founded Scheer Memorial Hospital in June 1957. Named after the Scheers, a New Jersey couple who donated money for the institution, the hospital opened in Banepa, an hour east of Nepal’s capital, Kathmandu, on May 18, 1960. It is now has 150 beds.

# Touched by Jesus

NEPAL | February 24

Rupamaya



Life was ugly for Rupamaya. Just when she thought it couldn't get uglier, it did.

Rupamaya was born into a low-caste family of “untouchables” in Nepal. The stain of her heredity meant that she would be deemed as impure for her whole life and that she would die the death of the impure. Any children whom she bore would also be impure. Nothing could remove the stigma of untouchability attached to her, and she always would be considered less than human.

As an untouchable, Rupamaya could not go to school, and she never learned to read or write.

She got married at the age of 14. In Nepal, child marriage was and is common.

Life did not improve after marriage. Rupamaya's husband did not own any land, and the two worked in other people's fields to survive. Rupamaya gave birth to seven children. She couldn't provide for them. So, when each grew old enough, she sent the child off to work and live in the homes of relatives and other people.

Then her 2-year-old son died with a high fever.

After that, two of her sons disappeared when she sent them to visit their older sister in another city. The sister was working in a hotel, and she had written home to say that she had saved up some money for the family. Rupamaya asked the two boys, who were 11 and 13 years old, to collect the money. The boys met their sister and waved good-bye from the bus as they headed back home. But they never arrived home. Someone said the bus had been in an accident. Rupamaya searched for her sons but was unable to find them.

Then tragedy struck again. Her husband didn't feel well, but the family didn't have any money for a physician. Then he died.

Being an untouchable had been difficult. Being a widow who was an untouchable was even worse. Even other untouchables looked down on her.

As years passed, Rupamaya became very

sad. Finally, she stopped working. Because she didn't work, she didn't have any food. She didn't want to eat anyway. Instead, she lay in bed, thinking about her husband and their three lost children. She regretted her life. She contemplated suicide.

"Why did my mother give birth to me?" she wondered. "Why did all these things happen to me?"

It was then that a stranger showed up at her house. Tirtha worked as a volunteer for the Seventh-day Adventist Church, and she had heard about Rupamaya from the neighbors. She brought food and medicine to the woman. She prayed for her.

"Why don't you come to my church?" she said. "We will pray for you."

Tirtha began to visit regularly. Rupamaya looked forward to the visits. She liked the food, medicine, and prayers. Hope was kindled in her heart for the first time in years. She began going to the Adventist church.

Eight years later, Rupamaya is a faithful Seventh-day Adventist. She is 65 years old and lives with one of her sons and his wife. Through her influence, the wife recently joined the Adventist church.

Rupamaya said she has lost everything but is happy because she has Jesus. She might be shunned as an untouchable by some, but she is happy because her heart has been touched by Jesus.

"My husband died, a son died, and two sons disappeared, and I don't know what happened to them even 30 years later," she said. "I have lost everything, but I have Jesus in my life. I have the great hope that one day, when Jesus comes, I will be able to see the loved ones whom I lost." 🌍

Part of this quarter's Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help establish a school where children can learn to read and write in Nepal. Thank you for planning a generous Thirteenth Sabbath Offering on March 30.

By Andrew McChesney

## Story Tips

- Pronounce Rupamaya as: RUPA-maya.
- Download photos on Facebook: [bit.ly/fb-mq](https://bit.ly/fb-mq).
- Download Mission Posts and Fast Facts from the Southern Asia Division: [bit.ly/sud-2024](https://bit.ly/sud-2024).
- This mission story illustrates Spiritual Growth Objective No. 5 of the Seventh-day Adventist Church's "I Will Go" strategic plan: "To disciple individuals and families into spirit-filled lives." For more information, go to the website: [IWillGo2020.org](https://IWillGo2020.org).

## Fast Facts

- Nepal has eight out of 10 of the world's highest mountains, including the very highest, Mount Everest, which is 29,031 feet (8,848 meters) high. Mount Everest is called Sagarmatha in Nepali and Chomolungma by the local Sherpas and Tibetans.
- Nepal is the only country in the world with a non-rectangular flag: two triangular shapes stacked on one another. It has been the official flag of Nepal since 1962, but the basic design has been used in Nepal for more than 2,000 years.
- Nepali food has a number of distinctive vegetarian cuisines. The avoidance of violence toward all forms of life in many religious orders was probably a factor in their development.
- The Sherpa are one of the Tibetan ethnic groups native to the most mountainous regions of Nepal and are highly regarded as elite mountaineers and experts in their local area, particularly for expeditions to climb Mount Everest.

# Waiting for That Day

NEPAL | March 2

## Sukamaya



Sukamaya's son was the joy of her life. The baby boy, Shyam, was born shortly after Sukamaya got married at the age of 16 in Nepal.

But when Shyam was 8 months old, he fell ill with diarrhea. Sukamaya asked her husband to call a shaman for help. There were no doctors or hospitals near their remote mountain town. Whenever someone got sick, townspeople called the shaman.

"It's because of an evil spirit," the shaman said. "He is angry with your family. You need to sacrifice a pig to make the spirit happy."

But no one had time to sacrifice a pig. As Sukamaya and her husband spoke with the shaman, the baby died on her lap.

The shock was enormous. Sukamaya fainted and remained unconscious for three days. When she awoke, she refused to eat or drink. She didn't want to live anymore.

Her husband and neighbors sought to encourage her.

"Maybe you will have another son," they said.

A year later, Sukamaya gave birth to a daughter. She named the girl Shyam, the same as her son. She was happy. She saw that she had a reason to live. She needed to live for her daughter.

However, Sukamaya's husband started drinking after the death of their son. Gradually, the family fell into financial problems because of his drinking.

Sukamaya, meanwhile, watched with loving care as Shyam grew up and got married at the age of 20. Shyam wed a distant relative who lived in the same town.

Tragedy struck when Shyam was pregnant with her first child. Complications set in one evening. She needed urgent medical assistance. The town still had no doctor or hospital, so townspeople placed Shyam onto a makeshift stretcher and carried her to the next town. There were no roads, and they carried her for four hours. At the next town, which had a road, she was loaded into an ambulance and rushed to the nearest city with a hospital. She died on the way.

The death dealt a severe blow to Sukamaya. She drank heavily with her husband for several days. It seemed like death and darkness were surrounding them. The couple wept uncontrollably at Shyam's funeral. Among the well-wishers who consoled them at the funeral was a Seventh-day Adventist pastor. He had heard about the deaths of the couple's only two children, and he offered them hope. He opened his

Bible and read the words of Jesus, “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life” (John 3:16, NKJV).

The Bible verse puzzled Sukamaya. She couldn’t understand it. She wondered, “How could somebody never die by believing in Jesus?”

Seeing her confusion, the pastor turned in his Bible to Luke 8:52 and read the words of Jesus, “Do not weep; she is not dead, but sleeping.”

Sukamaya felt comforted. Could it be that her daughter Shyam was only sleeping? She wanted to know more. Several days after the funeral, she asked the pastor to explain the verses. He began to give her Bible studies.

During one of those Bible studies, the pastor asked, “Do you want to see your children when Jesus comes?”

Sukamaya’s eyes blinked brightly. “Yes!” she exclaimed.

She gave her heart to Jesus.

Today, Sukamaya is a faithful Adventist. She tried to share her hope with her husband, but he refused to listen. His alcoholism led to his premature death.

Sukamaya now lives at home alone, but she knows that she is not really alone. She said she lives with Jesus. She is happy because she believes that Jesus will come and resurrect her son and daughter one day soon.

“I will hug them because they are my children, my heart,” she said. “One of the reasons that I became a Christian is because I hope to see them again. I’m waiting for that day.” 🌍

Part of this quarter’s Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help establish a school where children can learn about Sukamaya’s hope in Nepal. Thank you for planning a generous Thirteenth Sabbath Offering on March 30.

By Andrew McChesney

## Story Tips

- Pronounce Sukamaya as: SUKA-maya.
- Download photos on Facebook: [bit.ly/fb-mq](https://bit.ly/fb-mq).
- Download Mission Posts and Fast Facts from the Southern Asia Division: [bit.ly/sud-2024](https://bit.ly/sud-2024).
- This mission story illustrates Spiritual Growth Objective No. 5 of the Seventh-day Adventist Church’s “I Will Go” strategic plan: “To disciple individuals and families into spirit-filled lives.” For more information, go to the website: [IWillGo2020.org](https://IWillGo2020.org).

## Fast Facts

- The capital of Nepal is Kathmandu. The city has a population of 3 million, about 10 percent of Nepal’s population.
- Tradition teaches that Siddhartha Gautama, more commonly known as the Buddha, the founder of Buddhism, was born in Lumbini in modern-day Nepal in the 6th or 5th century BC.
- Nepal is home to many orchid and rhododendron species, around 40 percent of the world’s *Meconopsis* poppy, and nearly 6,000 flower species.
- Dohori (meaning “debate”) is a kind of Nepali folk music arising from courtship traditions. Two teams take part, usually boys and girls on opposite teams. Questions and answers create a musical conversation that can last for as long as a week, depending on the quick-thinking ability and wit of the players.
- The gharial (*Gavialis gangeticus*) is native to the Indian subcontinent and is the longest crocodile in the world. Measuring up to 19 feet, 8 inches (6 meters) long, it has a long, narrow snout and 110 sharp, interlocking teeth.



# A Startling Voice

Rex

A voice awoke Father from an afternoon nap in India in the early 1980s.

“If you were to die today, what would you do?” the voice asked.

Father was startled. He didn’t think that anyone was in the house with him. He looked here. He looked there. He tried to find the person who had spoken to him. But he couldn’t find anyone in the house.

Father grew worried.

“Who is talking to me?” he cried out.

No one replied.

Father’s worries grew.

He prayed, “God, I want to know who was talking to me.”

But the house remained silent.

Father wondered what to do.

About an hour and a half passed.

Then Father heard a knock on the door. Outside stood a Seventh-day Adventist literature evangelist.

Father was surprised to see him. The same man had knocked on the door several hours earlier, shortly before Father had taken his nap. Father had listened to the man talk about the Bible for a few minutes. But then he had firmly closed the door. Father

considered himself a Christian even though he had never read the Bible or even owned one. But he had had no interest in listening to the man.

After hearing the voice, however, Father was happy to see the literature evangelist. He wanted to know more about the Bible. He was ready to listen.

The literature evangelist spoke about things that were new to Father. After the man left, Father decided to find out the truth for himself. He wanted to own a Bible. Father went to his priest and bought a Bible. It wasn’t cheap. It cost Father a large amount of money.

Father began to read the Bible diligently. As he read, three questions bothered him, and he took them to the priest.

“Why do we bow to images?” he asked. “And why do we keep Sunday?”

The priest was not pleased.

“This is why we don’t give Bibles to people,” he said.

Father was not pleased. The priest’s answer didn’t satisfy him, and he stopped going to the priest’s church. Instead, he took his wife and two sons, who were 16 and 10, to another church on Sundays.

A short time later, Adventists organized evangelistic meetings in town, and Father took his family to listen. He took his three questions to the preacher and quizzed him about worshipping images and Sunday worship.

The preacher gave answers from the Bible,

and Father, Mother, and their 16-year-old son joined the Adventist Church.

Relatives and neighbors were not pleased. Father had five brothers and two sisters, and they refused to talk to the family. All the neighbors belonged to Father's former church, and they refused to speak to the family. Father was forced to quit his job because he couldn't get Sabbaths off.

For several years, life was challenging for the family. During that time, Father and Mother decided to pull their youngest son, Rex, out of public school and send him to an Adventist boarding school.

Rex entered the E. D. Thomas Memorial Higher Secondary School when he was 12. He studied there for the next six years, and he gave his heart to Jesus. Upon graduating, he went to Spicer Memorial College, now Spicer Adventist University, and became a pastor. Today, he is a leader of the Adventist Church in India, serving as Sabbath School director for the Southeast India Union of Seventh-day Adventists.

His father, who has since passed away, lived for Jesus. He opened the first Adventist church in his hometown and later worked as a Bible worker, planting additional churches and leading many people to Christ.

Rex is grateful that his father's afternoon nap was interrupted by a voice more than 40 years ago. He is glad that his parents sent him to the Adventist boarding school. He believes that the two experiences changed his life for eternity.

"I'm proud to say that I'm a graduate of the school," he said. "The school taught me the truth, and today I am a servant of God." 🌍

Part of this quarter's Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help reconstruct the dilapidated girls' dormitory at Rex's school, E. D. Thomas Memorial Higher Secondary School, in Thanjavur, India. Thank you for planning a generous Thirteenth Sabbath Offering on March 30.

By Andrew McChesney

## Story Tips

- Know that Rex's full name is Rex Sahayaraj.
- Download photos on Facebook: [bit.ly/fb-mq](https://bit.ly/fb-mq).
- Download Mission Posts and Fast Facts from the Southern Asia Division: [bit.ly/sud-2024](https://bit.ly/sud-2024).
- This mission story illustrates the following objectives of the Seventh-day Adventist Church's "I Will Go" strategic plan: Spiritual Growth Objective No. 5, "To disciple individuals and families into spirit-filled lives"; Spiritual Growth Objective No. 6, "To increase accession, retention, reclamation, and participation of children, youth, and young adults"; and Spiritual Growth Objective No. 7, "To help youth and young adults place God first and exemplify a biblical worldview." For more information, go to the website: [IWillGo2020.org](https://IWillGo2020.org).

## Fast Facts

- Bollywood is the world's largest producer of films, producing an average of 1,500 to 2,000 feature films a year.
- Indian Railways has 1.4 million employees, making it the largest employer in the world. Each day about 23 million passengers are transported on its extensive network.
- The Bengal tiger is India's national animal and was adopted as India's symbolic animal in 1972. Corbett Tiger Reserve in Uttarakhand and Bandipur National Park in Karnataka have the largest population of Bengal tigers.
- White tigers are only found among Bengal tigers.
- India is the only country in the world with both lions and tigers.



# The Missing God

## Jharendra

Everyone knew one another in the small town where Jharendra grew up near the Chinese border in northeastern India. And everyone worshiped one another's gods. The townspeople worshipped gods of stone and wood. They worshiped Jesus. They worshiped the sun and moon. Whenever a religion had a religious holiday, everyone celebrated together in a temple or in a church or on the street.

One day, 12-year-old Jharendra was browsing in one of the town's shops, and his eyes were drawn to a beautiful poster of Jesus. The large poster featured a painting of Jesus hanging on the cross. The quality of the poster was very high. Jharendra could see every detail of the painting. He wanted to take it home.

Jharendra didn't know much about Jesus. All he knew was that Jesus was a Higher Power, a God among the many gods who were worshipped in his town.

He bought the poster.

As he walked home, he wondered where he could put the beautiful poster. He remembered that the family had a special worship room. In the room, the family had

framed pictures of a number of gods. Mother went to the room every day to bow down and worship. The other family members also worshipped those gods.

But there was no picture of Jesus in the room. Jharendra decided that he would make up for that oversight by hanging his picture of Jesus on the wall.

So, when he returned home, he took a hammer and a nail that belonged to Father. He was hammering the nail into the poster on the wall of the worship room when Mother came in.

She darted over to Jharendra. Without saying a word, she slapped him on the cheek.

Jharendra felt the sharp pain shoot across his face.

"Why did you slap me?" he asked.

He wanted to know why he was being punished.

"Of course, He is God, but He is not our God," Mother said, pointing to Jesus. "Take down the picture."

Jharendra pulled the nail out of the wall and took down the picture as Mother watched. Then Mother left the room.

Jharendra didn't understand why Mother didn't want the picture of Jesus among her gods. But he was sure that he shouldn't throw the picture away or place it in a drawer. He sensed that Jesus was Someone who was worthy of worship and needed to be worshiped. He took the poster, opened the door of the worship room, and stepped outside. Looking at the



door, he decided it would be a good place to hang the beautiful picture of Jesus. He took the nail and pounded it into the top of the poster. Stepping back, he admired his work. Maybe Mother wouldn't allow him to place Jesus among the gods in the worship room, but now he would see Jesus every time he entered the room to worship. Everyone who entered the worship room would see Jesus first.

Even though Jharendra and his family saw Jesus every day after that, Jharendra himself didn't think much more about Jesus — until he grew much older. During a period of unhappiness, he started reading the Bible and visiting various churches.

A friend, a former Seventh-day Adventist, noticed his interest in Christianity and said to him, "If you want to join a church, the Seventh-day Adventist Church has the truth."

Jharendra went to an Adventist church. He was touched by the sermon and immediately asked the pastor for baptism. He felt convinced that he was in the true church when the pastor replied, "You can only be baptized after Bible studies. We don't just baptize anyone without Bible studies."

After baptism, he was ostracized by his family. But he is certain today that he made the right decision.

"I'm the first person in my family to become a Christian," he said.

A younger brother followed him many years later.

He said facts, not feelings, led him to Jesus, the God above all gods.

"If you choose Christianity or Jesus based on emotions, your journey might end when your feelings get hurt," he said. "But if you choose Jesus through logic and your principles, your journey will last." 🌍

Part of this quarter's Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help support six schools and two churches in India. Thank you for planning a generous offering on March 30.

By Andrew McChesney

## Story Tips

- Pronounce Jharendra as: ja-REN-dra.
- Download photos on Facebook: [bit.ly/fb-mq](http://bit.ly/fb-mq).
- Download Mission Posts and Fast Facts from the Southern Asia Division: [bit.ly/sud-2024](http://bit.ly/sud-2024).
- This mission story shows how the Holy Spirit leads gospel work around the world. It illustrates the Holy Spirit Objective of the Seventh-day Adventist Church's "I Will Go" strategic plan: "To be defined as the Holy Spirit leads." For more information, go to the website: [IWillGo2020.org](http://IWillGo2020.org).

## Fast Facts

- Kolkata (also known as Calcutta), on the eastern bank of the Hooghly River, is the capital of the Indian state of West Bengal.
- When India gained independence in 1947, Bengal was split in two along religious lines. India took the western part, and it was named West Bengal. Pakistan took the eastern part, East Bengal, which became the independent nation of Bangladesh in 1971.
- The Sundarbans National Park is devoted to conserving the endangered Bengal tiger as well as other endangered species such as the Gangetic dolphin, river terrapin, and estuarine crocodile.
- In September 2017, West Bengal became 100 percent electrified after electricity finally reached remote villages in the Sunderbans.
- The state's official languages are Bengali and English.

# Glad to Be Alive

INDIA | March 23

Shiva



Shiva only prayed to traditional gods and goddesses in India. For him, there was no other way of life.

He was surprised when his adult daughter, Arati, decided to believe in another God named Jesus. Shiva was suspicious about this new God.

But he stopped worrying when he saw that positive changes occurred in Arati's life as she prayed to Jesus.

Still, he only prayed to his gods and goddesses. He was an old man, and he didn't see any need for this new God.

Then Shiva took a bad fall at home. His daughter rushed him to the hospital and, after a few days, brought him back home to care for him. When she talked with friends on the phone, Shiva could hear her pray for his health.

After three months, Shiva fully recovered. He kept praying to his gods and goddesses.

Then he took another bad fall. This time he

was hospitalized for 15 days. He had suffered a hairline rib fracture, and the physician recommended total bedrest.

When he returned home, his health started deteriorating.

His daughter, Arati, was worried, and she took him to a Seventh-day Adventist lifestyle center.

Under the care of an Adventist physician, Shiva slowly began to regain his strength. A young man named Mark cared for Shiva in his room. Shiva was especially appreciative of Mark. He was very kind and very caring. Through Mark, Shiva gained a sense of Jesus' love for the first time. He saw Jesus through Mark's kindness.

Shiva went to church worship services every Saturday for the four months that he stayed at the center. He learned about Jesus. He learned about the Sabbath. He learned about the importance of good nutrition.

One day, a visiting preacher gave a sermon

that touched Shiva's heart. Shiva felt a strong desire to give his heart to Jesus.

But then family issues diverted Shiva's attention from spiritual matters. He forgot about his desire to live for Jesus. His health began to deteriorate again.

With the help of the Adventist physician and Mark, Shiva managed to get his strength back.

It was then that Shiva noticed a pattern. Every time he went away from Jesus, he appeared to suffer health challenges. Every time he went his own way, he fell or faced other struggles.

He sensed that Jesus didn't want him to go his own way. It seemed like Jesus was calling him to stay nearby.

Shiva decided at that moment to give his heart to Jesus.

He called his daughter.

"Before I die tomorrow, it would be better to accept Jesus as my personal Savior today," he said.

Exactly 10 months after Shiva took his first bad fall, he gave his heart to Jesus. His old life was washed away in the waters of repentance. The 78-year-old man emerged from the waters of an Indian river as a new child of Christ.

Today, Shiva no longer prays to the gods and goddesses.

He prays only to the God of heaven.

"Jesus has helped me to stop smoking and drinking black tea," he said. "I am better and feel healthy and pray three times a day."

He thanks Jesus for keeping him alive even today.

"I'm grateful to Jesus that my daughter took me to that lifestyle center," he said. "Otherwise, I wouldn't have known Jesus and gotten a chance to accept Him as my personal Savior." 🌍

Thank you for your Sabbath School mission offerings that help share Jesus' love with people in India and around the world. Thank you for your Thirteenth Sabbath Offering that will specifically go to projects in

## Story Tips

- Pronounce Shiva as: SHEE-va.
- Pronounce Arati as: ahr-TEE.
- Download photos on Facebook: [bit.ly/fb-mq](http://bit.ly/fb-mq).
- Download Mission Posts and Fast Facts from the Southern Asia Division: [bit.ly/sud-2024](http://bit.ly/sud-2024).
- This mission story illustrates Spiritual Growth Objective No. 5 of the Seventh-day Adventist Church's "I Will Go" strategic plan: "To disciple individuals and families into spirit-filled lives." For more information, go to the website: [IWillGo2020.org](http://IWillGo2020.org).

## Fast Fact

- Rabindranath Tagore (1861–1941) was a Bengali poet, writer, playwright, composer, philosopher, social reformer, and painter who, in 1913, became the first non-European and the first lyricist to win the Nobel Prize in Literature. Two of his compositions became the national anthems of India and Bangladesh.
- The capital of India is New Delhi, with a population of 249,998, although the greater urban area of Delhi has a population of 28,514,000.
- The sari is said to date back to at least 3000 BC. Sari wearers often choose the color of their garment based on the occasion; red is often worn by brides to symbolize fertility and prosperity.
- The game of chess is said to have originated in India 1,500 years ago, based on the 7th-century war game called chaturanga from northwestern India.

India and Nepal on March 30.

By Andrew McChesney

# Teen With a Mission

13<sup>th</sup> SABBATH | March 30

Nathan



Nathan was 6 years old when his family returned home to India after serving as missionaries in Lebanon. He was a small boy and didn't have any interest in missionaries or mission work.

But things changed when Nathan was 12. He became fascinated by the children's mission stories that he heard Sabbath after Sabbath in church. Soon he began to read old copies of the Children's Mission quarterly and sometimes even the youth and adult Mission quarterly. As he read the stories, he longed to do something for God.

He thought, "If God can use children the same age as me and even younger, why can't He use me as a mission?"

A year passed. Two years passed. Three years passed. Nathan was 15, and he still felt like he hadn't done anything for God in mission.

Then the COVID-19 pandemic shut down India for months. Nathan's father was a pastor and, at the request of parents, organized an online Bible study group for teens stuck at home during the lockdown.

The online group quickly grew to 15 teens, and a number of little children under 10 also joined in.

Then Nathan heard his father tell his mother, "The smaller ones aren't fitting in. The group has two distinct levels of learning."

As Nathan lay in bed that night, he felt impressed to start a Bible group for the younger children.

At breakfast, he shared his thoughts with his parents. They welcomed the idea and encouraged him to start right away. Nathan excitedly looked through the home library for materials. He decided that each meeting he would read a Bible story from Arthur Maxwell's *The Bible Story* and lead a short Bible study from Linda Koh's *God Loves Me 28 Ways*.

God blessed the efforts. Soon children were joining the Bible group from around the neighborhood and even other parts of India. Up to 12 children joined each weekly meeting.

## Doing More

Nathan enjoyed leading the Bible group. He

felt like God was finally using him for mission. But he longed to do something more.

As COVID-19 restrictions were being lifted about a year later, he heard a sermon about a terminally ill girl who prayed for friends, neighbors, and even missionaries in faraway lands. The preacher said the girl prayed for only three months before she died, but her prayers made a big difference in many lives.

Nathan thought, “I also should pray. I can pray for my classmates, friends, and the teens in my neighborhood.”

Classes were resuming at the Seventh-day Adventist where Nathan studied, and many of his classmates belonged to non-Christian religions.

Nathan wondered who to pray for. He decided to pray for those who seemed to be the most open to Christianity. They seemed to be more fertile soil.

Nathan noticed that one boy, Arun, enjoyed singing at morning worship and listened attentively to worship talks. He began praying for Arun.

One day, he said to Arun, “I’m happy that you are interested in Christian things.”

Arun smiled broadly.

“I love singing these songs,” he said. “Long ago, I accepted Jesus as one of my gods.”

Nathan wanted to know more.

“Why did your parents choose this Christian school for you?” he asked.

“We live on a farm out in the country,” he said. “The only school bus that comes close to our house is the Adventist school bus.”

The conversation started a special friendship between Nathan and Arun. Whenever possible, Nathan told him about his love for Jesus. He prayed that those seeds would bear fruit.

## Hopeless Case?

While Nathan spoke about Jesus with Arun, another boy named Jai was enthusiastically telling classmates about the power and goodness of the gods that he worshipped. Jai was zealous for his family’s faith, and he wore ritual markings on his

## Story Tips

- Pronounce Arun as: ah-ROON.
- Pronounce Jai as: jay.
- The narrator doesn’t need to memorize the story, but he or she should be familiar enough with the material so as not to have to read it. Alternatively, the story could be acted out.
- Before or after the story, use a map to show the two countries in the Southern Asia Division — India and Nepal — that will receive the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering. You can download a mission map with the projects on Facebook at [bit.ly/fb-mq](https://bit.ly/fb-mq).
- Download photos to accompany this story on Facebook: [bit.ly/fb-mq](https://bit.ly/fb-mq).
- Download Mission Posts and Fast Facts from the Southern Asia Division: [bit.ly/sud-2024](https://bit.ly/sud-2024).
- This mission story illustrates the following objectives of the Seventh-day Adventist Church’s “I Will Go” strategic plan: Spiritual Growth Objective No. 5, “To disciple individuals and families into spirit-filled lives”; Spiritual Growth Objective No. 6, “To increase accession, retention, reclamation, and participation of children, youth, and young adults”; and Spiritual Growth Objective No. 7, “To help youth and young adults place God first and exemplify a biblical worldview.” For more information, go to the website: [IWillGo2020.org](https://IWillGo2020.org).

forehead every day. Jai even spoke to Nathan about his gods. Nathan decided not to pray for Jai.

Then one day, Nathan played the keyboard at worship, and Jai was impressed with his skill. He praised Nathan and asked if he would play a song from his own religion on the keyboard.

Politely, Nathan said, “I’m sorry. I only play Christian music.”

Jai didn’t say anything more to Nathan for several months. Nathan kept praying for his other classmates and rejoiced as he saw God touching hearts.

Then one day, Jai came over to Nathan and abruptly said, “Teach me the Lord’s Prayer.”

Nathan couldn’t believe his ears. Jai hadn’t seemed like fertile soil worth praying for. But here he was, asking to learn the Lord’s Prayer.

Nathan began sharing his love for Jesus with Jai. As time passed, he noticed that Jai stopped talking about his gods. Sometimes, he even came to school without the markings on his forehead.

“Our Lord has moved Jai from being an opposer to a searcher of truth,” Nathan said. “I believe that it won’t be long before Jai finds the truth and surely the truth will set him free.”

Nathan is confident that God is using

## Mission Post

- West Bengal and Himachal Pradesh are in the Northern India Union Section, which has 476 churches, 1,501 companies, and 163,690 members. In a population of 716,496,000, that’s one Seventh-day Adventist for every 4,377 people.

him for mission, and he is praying to do even more. 🌍

Thank you for your Sabbath School mission offering today that will help spread the gospel in India and Nepal. Seven of the 10 Thirteenth Sabbath projects involve Adventist schools like the one where Nathan studies. Thank you for your generous offering.

By Andrew McChesney

## Future 13th Sabbath Projects

The Thirteenth Sabbath Offering next quarter will support five projects in the Euro-Asia Division:

- Center of influence for families, Yerevan, Armenia
- Center of influence for youth, Minsk, Belarus
- Health center, Tskaltubo, Georgia
- Spiritual and social center, Salekhard, Russia
- Elementary school, Tashkent, Uzbekistan

# Leader's Resources

Be sure to download your free Mission Spotlight video, featuring video reports from around the Southern Asia Division and beyond. Download or stream from the Adventist Mission website at [bit.ly/missionspotlight](http://bit.ly/missionspotlight).

## Online Information

Following are sources of information that may be helpful in preparing for the mission segment of Sabbath School. For more information on the cultures and history of the countries featured in this quarterly, visit:

## Websites

Nepal: government website	<a href="http://bit.ly/GovtNepal">bit.ly/GovtNepal</a>
Lonely Planet	<a href="http://bit.ly/LP_Nepal">bit.ly/LP_Nepal</a>
National Geographic Travel	<a href="http://bit.ly/NatGeo_Nepal">bit.ly/NatGeo_Nepal</a>
India: government website	<a href="http://bit.ly/GovtIndia">bit.ly/GovtIndia</a>
CNN Travel	<a href="http://bit.ly/CNN_India">bit.ly/CNN_India</a>
National Geographic Travel	<a href="http://bit.ly/NatGeo_India">bit.ly/NatGeo_India</a>
West Bengal	
Rough Guide	<a href="http://bit.ly/RG_WBengal">bit.ly/RG_WBengal</a>
Himachal Pradesh	
Himachal Tourism Official Website	<a href="http://bit.ly/HimachalTourism">bit.ly/HimachalTourism</a>
Karnataka	
Karnataka Tourism Official Website	<a href="http://bit.ly/KarnatakaTourism">bit.ly/KarnatakaTourism</a>
Maharashtra	
Lonely Planet	<a href="http://bit.ly/LP_Maharashtra">bit.ly/LP_Maharashtra</a>

## Seventh-day Adventist

ADRA Nepal	<a href="http://bit.ly/ADRANepal">bit.ly/ADRANepal</a>
Oriental Watchman Publishing House	<a href="http://bit.ly/FB_OWPH">bit.ly/FB_OWPH</a>
Spicer Adventist University	<a href="http://bit.ly/SDA_SpicerAU">bit.ly/SDA_SpicerAU</a>
Pune Adventist Hospital	<a href="http://bit.ly/SDA_PuneAH">bit.ly/SDA_PuneAH</a>
Adventist Media Centre-India	<a href="http://bit.ly/SDA_AMCAWR">bit.ly/SDA_AMCAWR</a>

An offering goal device will help focus attention on world missions and increase weekly mission giving. Determine a goal for your class's weekly mission offering. Multiply it by 14, allowing a double goal for the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering, which will be collected on March 30. Remind church members that their regular weekly mission offerings help the missionary work of the world church, and that one-quarter of the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will go directly to the projects in the Southern Asia Division. On March 23, report on mission giving during the quarter. Encourage church members to double or triple their normal mission giving on the upcoming Thirteenth Sabbath. Count the offering and record the amount given at the end of Sabbath School.

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# YOUTH & ADULT MISSION

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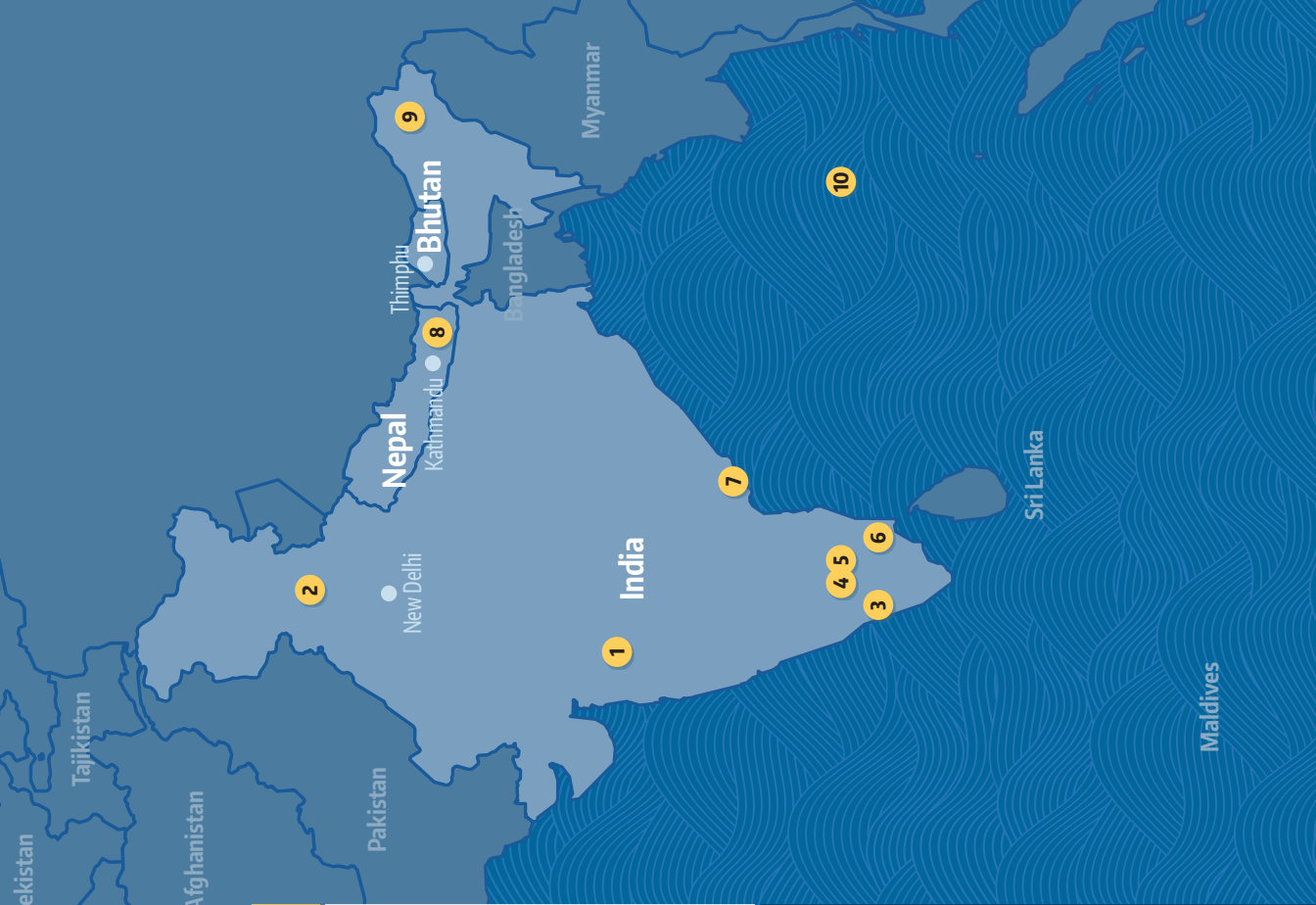
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## SOUTHERN ASIA DIVISION

UNIONS	CHURCHES	MEMBERSHIP	POPULATION
East-Central India	2,595	575,200	132,275,131
Northeast India	224	54,065	49,974,819
Northern India	474	161,389	819,854,211
South-Central India	256	65,588	73,613,446
Southeast India	488	131,838	81,938,520
Southwest India	240	37,551	32,250,759
Western India	257	107,177	202,668,440
<b>ATTACHED FIELDS</b>			
Andaman and Nicobar Island Region	1	295	434,675
East Himalayan Field	14	893	756,000
Himalayan Section	26	9,350	30,369,000
Maldives (not included in any field)	0	0	543,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4,575</b>	<b>1,143,346</b>	<b>1,424,678,000</b>

## PROJECTS

- 1 High school, Aurangabad, India
- 2 School, Anni, India
- 3 School, Palakkad, India
- 4 English church, Lowry Adventist College, Bengaluru, India
- 5 Central English Church, Bengaluru, India
- 6 School, Thanjavur, India
- 7 Youth training center, Manginapudi, India
- 8 School, Gadhi Rural Municipality, Udayapur, Nepal
- 9 School, Pasighat, India
- 10 School, Namunaghar, Andaman Islands, India