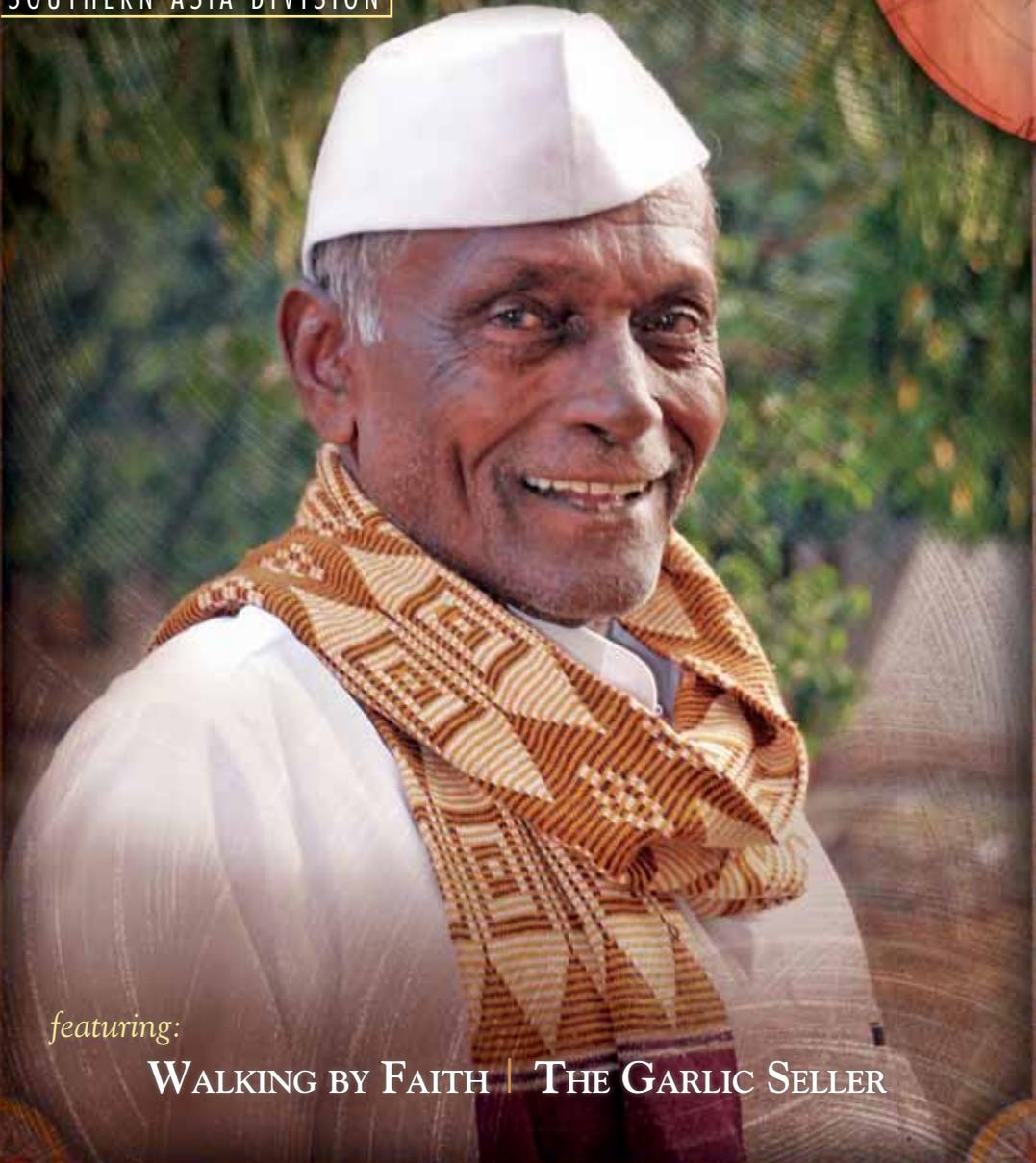


ADVENTIST
MISSION

YOUTH AND ADULT
MAGAZINE

QUARTER 1
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SOUTHERN ASIA DIVISION



featuring:

WALKING BY FAITH | THE GARLIC SELLER

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 = stories of special interest to teens

Dear Sabbath School Leader,

This quarter features the Southern Asia Division, which includes the countries of Bhutan, India, and Nepal, plus the islands of the Maldives.

The Challenges

With a population of 1.2 billion people and more than 1.4 million Seventh-day Adventists, the Southern Asia Division has one Adventist for every 820 people. Most of this growth has occurred in the past 16 years. In 1995 the division had a membership of fewer than 200,000.

The foundation for this tremendous growth was laid over the past 100-plus years as Adventist schools were established throughout the region. Thousands of non-Christian students enrolled in Adventist schools, where they could study in English, one of the official languages of India. They learned far more than just their classroom lessons. Many of these children were baptized while studying in Adventist schools. And many more

thousands who were not baptized were influenced by the Christian values that were introduced to them while they studied in Adventist schools.

Today Adventist schools continue to have a reputation for academic excellence and a caring and safe environment for children. Student applications continue to exceed enrollment capacities. Enlarging three schools in India will help more children receive excellent educations while they learn how much Jesus loves them.

Churches in India fulfill the adage “Build it and they will come.” On any given day some 3,000 congregations of believers need a church in which to worship. As quickly as a church is built, it’s filled with those wanting to know about Jesus. Other congregations continue to form as evangelism spreads across the division, and more simple churches are needed to house them.

Often in southern Asia a congregation without a church is ridiculed or shunned by their neighbors. “You say your God is so mighty; why can’t He build you a church?” they ask. And they point in any direction to temples made for gods of stone. But when the congregation completes even a simple church, those same people come to hear the message of God’s love.

Yours for the kingdom,



Charlotte Ishkanian
Editor, *Mission*

OPPORTUNITIES

This quarter’s Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help provide

- classroom blocks at three Adventist boarding schools in western, southern, and southeastern India
- churches for existing congregations in all eight regions of Southern Asia Division.



WALKING BY FAITH

January 1 | Rex Samuel Raj

Rex lay in bed, unable to move his legs. The doctor's words hung in the air like smoke that choked out hope. "You will never walk again," he'd said.

Rex stared at the ceiling. What would happen to his family? He had resisted his family's pleas to spend Sabbaths worshipping with them, saying that he couldn't afford to miss work. Now the doctor said he might never walk again.

Where is God in all this? Rex wondered. What will happen to us?

Rex had plenty of time to think as he lay helpless. He knew that it was his own stubbornness that had put him where he was.

Stubborn Man

Rex was proud of his family and his ability to provide for them. When his uncle had visited two years earlier, he had invited Rex to enroll his daughters in the Adventist school. He even offered to help pay the girls' school fees. So Rex agreed and enrolled the girls in the Adventist school. They loved it!

The girls wanted to attend Sabbath School, so his wife took them. She

urged Rex to go with them, but he always had an excuse—he had to work. When the pastor invited Rex to attend the monthly day of fasting and prayer on Sundays, Rex agreed. He enjoyed the service and became convinced that what the pastor taught at these meetings was the truth.

The pastor urged Rex to act on what he knew was the truth and let God provide for him and his family. But still Rex hesitated. He smoked and he drank, and he wasn't sure he could quit. However, when a retired pastor offered to study the Bible with him during his lunch hour, Rex agreed.

Rex's wife wanted to be baptized and asked her husband to make the commitment with her. But he didn't feel ready. He told her to go ahead and be baptized, that he would follow one day. "Just trust God," she urged him. "He'll take care of the details." But Rex resisted.

After studying for months with the retired pastor, Rex finally agreed to be baptized. He knew it was the right thing to do, and he hoped that baptism would change him. But it didn't. He

found that he was the same man he had been before, still more concerned about providing for his family than about letting God rule his life.

Time to Think

Then the accident changed everything. Now he had no choice but to rest—every day. Rex thought about how he had tried to solve his family’s financial problems by dishonoring God and not keeping the Sabbath.

The pastor and church members visited Rex and encouraged him to trust God. Rex prayed that God would forgive him for his unfaithfulness. He surrendered his life to God, and this time he meant it. He asked God for healing, but he promised that no matter what, he would put his faith in God and attend church with his family as soon as he was able.

After weeks in the hospital, he was discharged to await surgery. He had no money to pay the surgeon, and there was no assurance that the surgery would allow him to walk again. But when his uncle offered to pay for the surgery, Rex felt a surge of hope.

Surgery eased the pain Rex had experienced from the injury to his back, but he was still bedridden. He wondered whether he would ever walk again. As he spent hours in prayer and Bible reading, he grew spiritually. Slowly his body responded, and he was able to pull himself to a sitting position. Then a year after the accident, Rex took his first wobbly steps.

A Promise Kept

Rex kept his promise and began attending church with his family. He praised God for every degree of healing. Eighteen months after the accident that had paralyzed him, Rex could walk without pain.

He realized that God, indeed, had supplied all the family’s needs. He found work. His new job paid less than his former job had, but the money went further. The family returns tithes faithfully and, because of God’s blessings, still manages to pay their bills.

“The accident that crippled me brought healing to my soul,” Rex says. “I’m grateful that God provided the Adventist school that helped bring my family the message of truth and salvation in Jesus.”

Our mission offerings support schools, medical clinics, and many other outreach services in India and around the world. Thank you for giving to mission. 🌍

FAST FACTS

- India is the seventh-largest country in area and has one sixth of the world’s population, more than a billion people. Only China has a higher population.
- India has 10,000 large cities, including 50 with a population of more than a million people. Yet many still live in the country’s more than 600,000 towns and villages.
- Although India’s economy is growing fast, many people still live below the poverty level. Almost half the people in India cannot read and write. Many suffer from disease and poor-quality food.



THE STUBBORN STUDENT

January 8 | Rajesh

Rajesh paced his bedroom floor trying to decide what to do. *There must be a way around this*, he thought to himself. *But how?*

The day before, the director at the school at which he was studying had refused to allow him to miss classes on Saturdays. And when Rajesh had appealed to his parents for help with the situation, they demanded that he attend classes. “As long as we’re paying your tuition, you go to your classes—all of them—or else.”

A Burning Desire

Rajesh had attended church with his mother since he was a child, but he felt that something was missing.

Then one day he saw an announcement advertising some Bible meetings. He attended and marked every passage in the Bible that the pastor-speaker read. He discovered that God’s love was reflected in the Ten Commandments. When Rajesh told his mother what he was learning, she refused to accept it, but Rajesh felt sure that he had found what he had been searching for.

Rajesh accepted the Sabbath and gave his heart completely to Christ. But his

faith came at a price. Now that he knew the truth, he had to obey.

Sabbath Problems

After Rajesh had finished tenth grade he enrolled in a technical school to study electronics. But when classes started, Rajesh realized that the school held classes on Sabbath. He spoke to the school’s director, but the man refused to make an exception for him. Rajesh asked his parents for help, but they refused to let him skip classes for any reason. “As long as we’re paying your tuition, you go to your classes—or else.”

Not knowing what else to do, Rajesh attended class the next Saturday. But Rajesh wanted to be in church worshipping God, not in class ignoring the teacher. And what would he do if an exam was scheduled for a Sabbath? Rajesh knew what he must do. The next Sabbath he went to church instead of to class.

Rajesh’s mother learned what he’d done and took him to see her pastor, who told him that the Ten Commandments were a burden that Christ had freed His followers from. Rajesh thought for a moment and

then asked, “Does that mean I can kill someone and it will be OK?” The pastor refused to answer Rajesh.

Another Option

Rajesh went back to school, no closer to a solution. His parents insisted he attend Saturday classes, but he refused. The school director offered to give him a letter of transfer, but he refused to refund the tuition Rajesh’s father had paid. The boy’s father tried to convince him to stay in the school, but Rajesh refused. “Jesus is coming,” he told his father. “I must be ready. I must be faithful now.” Angrily Rajesh’s father stomped out of the school.

Rajesh wondered whether he would lose a whole year of studies because of his faith. He asked his pastor what to do, and the pastor suggested that he apply at the Adventist higher

secondary school. They have a science curriculum,” the pastor said. “But I don’t know whether they have an opening.” Rajesh wondered whether the Adventist school would accept a new student in mid-semester. Rajesh *had* to try.

Rajesh’s father finally agreed to take the boy to the Adventist school and try to enroll him. When they arrived, the principal of the school spoke to the father and son. Rajesh asked about the science track, and father and son learned that the only opening in the school was in the very classes Rajesh wished to study. Rajesh is sure that God was blessing him because he wanted to be faithful to his convictions.

Standing Firm for Faith

Rajesh continues to have conflicts with his parents over the Sabbath sometimes. When his father told him to attend a religious festival with him that fell on Sabbath, Rajesh politely refused. His father found him and tried to force him to leave the worship service to go to the religious festival.

Rajesh stands firm. He understands that God has led him to the truth he was craving. And when he ran into problems with keeping the Sabbath, God led him to the Adventist school, where Sabbath keeping is a priority.

Rajesh hopes that someday his parents will understand why his faith is so important to him. For now he’s grateful to study in a school that encourages his religious faith and doesn’t try to destroy it.

Our mission offerings help thousands of children in India study in Adventist schools. Thank you for making it possible for so many to learn of God’s great gift of salvation while they are still young. 🌍

MISSION POST

- India has a population of about 1.2 billion people. The Adventist Church there has a membership of about 1.4 million. This represents about one percent of the population.
- Adventist schools have played a big part in the church’s growth in India. Many children from non-Christian homes have attended Adventist schools in order to receive a quality education in English.
- Part of our Thirteenth Sabbath Offering this quarter will help enlarge and upgrade three high schools in India so that even more students can study there and learn of God’s great love.



SOBANA'S PASSION

January 15 | Sobana Raju

Sobana [SO-bah-nah] walked quickly along the street beside her husband. She loved it when he could go with her as she shared God's love with people in her town. Sobana's husband, a student at the Adventist seminary, joined her as she visited people door-to-door whenever he didn't have classes.

This day Sobana, a lay evangelist, was meeting with a small group in the home of Darwin, a man whom she had met during her visits. Darwin was excited about what Sobana was teaching him and often invited friends to join them for Bible studies in his home. Soon a small group was meeting regularly in his home. Sobana was thrilled! She could hardly wait to see what God had planned for these people.

The Temple Priest's Discovery

Darwin had invited Kishore to the small group Bible study. Kishore was a respected priest in several temples in the city, so the Bible study group was new to him. His eyes shone with interest and curiosity.

That day Kishore seemed especially eager to speak. After the group opened

the meeting with prayer, Kishore spoke. "I've read in our holy books about a holy man who was highly praised. He is referred to as a man who was inflicted with five wounds. Who is this person?"

Sobana looked at her husband. He opened his Bible and read several verses about the crucifixion. "The man who received five wounds is Jesus," he said. "He was crucified on a cross to save us from our sins that separate us from God. Nails pierced his hands and feet, and a sword pierced his side. Those were his five wounds. He died on the cross to save us," he said reverently.

"Kishore's eyes lit up. "I read another passage from a holy book. It says: 'Praise God for He who walked on water.' Is this another reference to Jesus?" he asked eagerly.

Sobana smiled and told the story of Jesus walking on the water. Kishore's interest grew stronger as he listened and put pieces of holy writings together to form a picture of this Jesus whom he was getting to know.

As Sobana talked about the Ten Commandments, Kishore listened intently as she read each one. Although

Kishore's religion included many gods, he nodded as he heard the commandment that forbids worship of any other gods. With each commandment he nodded. He understood.

A Costly Decision

The group grew, in part because Kishore invited several others to attend with him. Eventually Kishore took his stand for Christ and asked to become a Christian. Nine others followed his example and accepted Jesus as their Savior. Eventually all 10 were baptized. But it wasn't an easy decision. When Kishore left the priesthood in the temple, his wife left him and took their daughter with her. The rest of his family disowned him. Old friends no longer speak to him.

Alone in his now-empty home, Kishore battled his emotions. His decision to follow Christ had come with a high price, but Kishore knew the cost was worth it. He wanted to share his new love for Christ with others.

Sobana has trained the members of this small group to give Bible studies, and Kishore and Darwin now share God's love with others. Jesus is so precious to them, so much more important than the ancient rituals they once practiced. They've learned how to give Bible studies to others and are sharing what they know with those who will listen. A pastor has been assigned to nurture this group.

Moving On

Sobana knew it was time to begin work in another area of the region where people hadn't yet had a chance to hear the story of Jesus. But where should

she go? The couple prayed together for God's direction, and God laid a new location on Sobana's heart.

The area God showed her was three miles beyond the city's bus routes. Sobana must walk from the last bus stop to reach the only Adventist home in the area. But God is blessing, and already 12 people are gathering to study together.

Sobana is passionate about teaching these new believers that Jesus loves them. "I love what I'm doing, fulfilling my mission by teaching people about Christ," she says. "This is God's work, and I'm content to do it as long as He needs me."

"The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few" (Luke 10:2, NIV). Our mission offerings help make it possible for Global Mission to send hundreds of lay evangelists such as Sobana wherever Jesus' name has yet to be proclaimed. Thank you for sharing so that others may hear of God's love. 🌍

MISSION POST

- The Adventist Church has worked in southern Asia for more than 100 years. Just 16 years ago church membership was less than 200,000. Today it numbers more than 1.4 *million*—a seven-fold increase. One out of every 820 people in India is now a Seventh-day Adventist.
- Global Mission and other lay evangelistic programs have contributed heavily to this growth in church membership. Our mission offerings help support Global Mission work in India and around the world.



CHAPEL IN THE FOREST

January 22 | Kerala church

The car turned onto a dusty road leading out of the city. The road curled into the hills where trees hid the simple mud-brick or tin-roofed homes from view. The driver stopped the car and opened his door.

The passengers stepped out of the car and looked around. A narrow trail led to a simple mud-and-thatch building that stood near the top of a hill nearby. The little group walked toward the simple building. A row of decorative concrete blocks served as windows, and palm leaves lay on a blue tarp that helped protect the people inside from tropical storms.

Two men appeared in the doorway and greeted the visitors. Inside the building light filtering through crisscrossed wooden slats that served as windows revealed several other people sitting inside. The little group began singing a familiar hymn in their mother tongue. They didn't seem bothered that they had no musical instrument to accompany them.

Young children sat on their mothers' or grandmothers' laps and stared shyly at the visitors. Several had come from other villages some distance away while others

live within earshot of the simple chapel.

Faithful Believers

Sheeba first learned about Adventists just after she completed high school. She suffered when she took her stand for Christ and joined the church. Today she and her husband have two children. Her husband works as a tailor. It is honest work, but the couple struggles to provide for their children. Sheeba and her husband work hard to have a proper church where others can come to worship and learn about God's wonderful truths.

As George read his Bible he discovered that the Ten Commandments forbid idol worship. George had been taught to pray to statues, and this commandment troubled him. His priest refused to answer his questions about praying to statues, so George stopped attending that church.

George attended some evangelistic meetings and was baptized into the Adventist Church, along with several others. The new believers built a simple mud shed with a thatched roof in which to worship. The original building has been rebuilt several times, for members

can't afford a more permanent house of worship worthy of their great God. Every family in the church struggles for their daily needs, and there's never any money for their prayed-for church. George, now the head elder, prays especially hard for a church. He knows that many in the neighborhood will come to worship if they have a better church in which to worship.

Jacob is an old man who works as a rubber farmer. He taps rubber trees and sells the sap to earn a living. Several years ago he prayed that God would send someone to teach him. His prayer was answered, and a pastor came to study the Bible with Jacob and several other families. Following Bible studies, 45 of them were baptized. They have remained faithful, worshipping in the mud shed and repairing the thatched roof when it leaks. Jacob lives seven miles away and walks through the forest to worship in the little church. He doesn't wish for a nicer home or more comfortable sleeping mat. He wants a church in his village where people will come to worship God.

Thirteenth Sabbath Hope

After a short worship together the visitors and church leaders walk to the top of the hill where the members have cleared away trees and marked out the foundation for their new church. They pray that God will help them build a simple temple to God that will honor His majesty and lift up His name among the people in the hill country of southern India. They thank God together when they learn that this quarter part of the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help provide the materials

they need to build their church. They are eager to begin working, for they know many of their neighbors still haven't heard the message of salvation in Jesus.

This quarter our Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help several congregations scattered across India build simple churches in which to worship. Many who aren't Christians feel that any god who doesn't have a lovely temple isn't important enough to worship. We can help provide simple churches that will attract others who can learn that our God is mighty and loves them.

As the visitors prepare to leave the hillside, the church members ask them to relay a message to believers around the world. "Tell them thank you. Thank you. Thank you," they say through smiles as the children cling to them and smile shyly. 🌍

K. J. Varghese is Sabbath School and personal ministries director in the Southwest India Union Section located in the state of Kerala.

MISSION POST

- As many as 3,000 congregations in southern Asia have no decent place in which to worship. When churches are built, the membership increases rapidly.
- Part of our Thirteenth Sabbath Offering this quarter will help build eight churches for existing congregations in Southern Asia Division, one in each union.
- For more information on the church featured in today's story, watch the feature on the Adventist Mission DVD. Go to www.AdventistMission.org and click on DVD.



THE POWER OF FAITH

January 29 | Shrikanth Shendkay

[Ask a young man to present this first-person report.]

I come from an influential family in central India and grew up worshipping the same gods my parents did. My parents wanted to send me to the best secondary school in town, so they enrolled me in an Adventist secondary school. We didn't know what "Adventist" meant.

"What's the Sabbath?"

I liked my new school and made friends quickly. One friend, Amith [AH-math], invited me to his home one Saturday soon after school started. I was surprised to find that no one was watching television; they were just talking.

I tried to follow the conversation as they talked about something called "the Sabbath," but I didn't understand. I whispered to Amith, "What is this 'Sabbath' they're talking about?"

"Come to church with me next Saturday," Amith whispered back. "You'll see what it's about." I was curious, so I accepted his invitation.

The next Saturday I went to church with Amith and his family. I recognized

people from school, and everyone was really friendly. And guess what: the sermon that day was on the Sabbath. The pastor read Bible texts and explained why the Sabbath was so special. I didn't know Christ, but by the time we left church I understood the Sabbath.

I began attending church with Amith every week. I loved the worship service, and the hymns they sang brought me peace. The Bible lessons were simple but profound. Christianity was so different from my family's religion.

Attending church helped me appreciate what I was learning at the Adventist school. I realized that Adventists have a whole different way of living; the teachings I was learning touched every aspect of life.

Discovering Faith for Myself

But when Amith went away to college, I stopped attending church. Then Archana [ARCH-na], a girl at the school, invited me to return, so I did. I often visited her home and took part in her family's worship. It was so beautiful.

They read from the Bible in my mother tongue so I could understand what it said better than I could in English.

Their worships and their explanations of Bible texts made me want to read the Bible for myself. I started at the beginning and came face-to-face with the Creation story. It was so different from what I had been taught in the public school I had attended. I began to realize that the Bible really is God's Word, and His truth.

I no longer believed in the gods my parents worshipped. But they didn't want to hear what I tried to tell them about my new faith.

The Pilgrimage

One day my parents asked me to go with them on a religious pilgrimage—to carry their luggage, they said. But once we were on the train, they told me that they expected me to take part in the religious rituals at the temple they would visit. I couldn't do that, and I knew my parents wouldn't accept my refusal. So I went to the door of the train and waited for the train to slow down. Then I jumped off and walked to the nearest station and took a bus back home.

When my parents returned, they questioned me about why I had jumped from the train. Again I tried to explain my new faith to them. It wasn't easy to get them to listen. Finally one day they agreed to sit and listen as I explained my faith from the beginning. We sat together for five hours as I talked to them about God, Creation, Jesus' life and death, and His second coming. Finally my parents nodded. They understood at least part of what I believed, and from then on they've not troubled me about following their faith.

Giving Back

I graduated from the Adventist secondary school and went on to study in a university. I shared my faith with classmates from all backgrounds. Some of my teachers gave me a hard time about my faith in the Bible, but they allowed me an hour to defend my faith in Creation before the class. It was such a good experience!

I thank God for leading me to the Adventist high school. It changed my life. I now teach young people knowing that they can share their faith with their families. It's my way of giving back.

This quarter several Adventist schools will receive part of the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering to help build classroom blocks. Give generously so that more youth will encounter Christ as I did. 🌍

FAST FACTS

- Adventist schools have played a big part in the church's growth in India over the past 100 years. Many children from non-Christian homes have attended Adventist schools in order to receive a quality education in English.
- Part of our Thirteenth Sabbath Offering this quarter will help provide classroom blocks at three secondary schools in India: James Memorial Higher Secondary School in Tamil Nadu (southwestern India), Kottarakara Higher Secondary School in Kerala (southernmost India), and Lasalgaoon Higher Secondary School in Maharashtra (western India). These enlarged and improved facilities will enable even more students to learn of God's great love.



GOD IS OUR PROVIDER

February 5 | Amulya and Sunanda

[Ask a young woman to present this first-person report.]

I took a deep breath to calm my nerves. I had never applied for a job before, and I hoped that my nervousness didn't show.

When my father died, relatives helped my sister and me finish college. Now I needed work to help my mother and youngest sister, who was still in school. The door opened, and the hospital superintendent, a medical doctor, called me into his office.

"Do you know God?" he asked when I had taken a seat.

"Yes, a little," I stammered, surprised at his question. "A classmate told me about God and invited me to attend her church. I can't go often, but I like it," I explained. "My father's relatives would never permit it."

The doctor and I spoke for several minutes, and then before I left he prayed for my family and me.

The Invitation

I waited several days to hear from the doctor about a job. When no word came, I went to his home to speak to

him in person. My heart pounded in my chest as I knocked on the doctor's door. An older woman answered the door and invited me in. She told me that the doctor was busy. After she invited me to sit down, she asked the same strange question the doctor had asked: "Do you know God?"

"I know a little about God," I answered. "I have a friend, a classmate, who told me about God and invited me to visit her church. I go when I can." Then I summoned the courage to ask the question, "Why do you ask? Did you see me at church?"

"No, my dear," the woman said. "I go to church on Saturday." I had never heard of Christians who attended church on Saturday.

"Do you read the Bible," the woman asked gently. I told her that I had heard some stories from the Bible, but I didn't own a Bible of my own.

We talked for a few more minutes, and I learned that she was the doctor's mother. The doctor was still busy, so his mother invited me to return again.

“Perhaps we could study the Bible together,” she suggested. I thanked her and left.

I got the job working for the Adventist doctor at the hospital. A few days later I went to visit the doctor’s mother. This time I took my two sisters. We talked about God and the truths He reveals in the Bible. Then the kind woman gave us two Bibles so we could read on our own between visits.

A few weeks later the doctor’s mother invited us to attend church with the doctor and her. We accepted her invitation. We hoped that our relatives wouldn’t learn about our interest in Christianity, but they did. One day my uncle came to visit. He scolded my sisters and me for taking off our traditional jewelry. He reminded us that another uncle was a temple priest, and we had a duty to be faithful to the religion of our dead father.

MISSION POST

- More than 80 percent of the people in India are Hindus, a religion that began in India. Other religions in India include Islam (Muslim; 13 percent), Christianity (2 to 3 percent), Sikhs (almost 2 percent), and Buddhists (less than 1 percent).
- Hindus don’t have a set of beliefs as Christians do. Each follower is encouraged to find their own spiritual or moral truth. Hindus often worship a variety of gods and don’t designate one as superior to another. There is no savior, no single God to be worshipped, as there is in Christianity.

The Escape

One day my father’s brother came to see my mother. He told her that he had arranged a husband for me. He pulled a picture from his pocket and showed it to her. “This man will make sure that your daughter follows our family’s faith,” he said. I felt dizzy as I listened to my uncle’s words. *Marriage? To an unbeliever?* I thought. I didn’t dare object, but I knew that I didn’t want to marry this man. But how could I escape such a fate?

The next day I told the doctor about my uncle’s visit. He listened sympathetically and promised to do what he could to help me. A few days later he told me that he’d arranged for my sister and me to travel to another city where we could work in an Adventist home and school. Gratefully I accepted, and soon we started new lives in a safer place.

Recently I learned that my father’s relatives are harassing my mother and youngest sister. The kind doctor has arranged for them to leave town too. Soon we will be reunited at another Adventist secondary school, where my sister and I can teach and my youngest sister can study. We will be safe there.

I’m amazed at God’s great love as expressed through people such as the doctor and his mother. And I’m grateful that God has led us to an Adventist school to teach and to study. There we can be safe and learn more about God’s will for our lives.

Thank you for your mission offerings that help support Adventist schools and medical outreach around the world. 🌍



CALLED TO SERVE

February 12 | Jeetendra More

From his childhood Jeetendra [jee-TEHN-dra] has felt God's call to be a pastor. So when his family couldn't afford to pay to continue his education, Jeetendra applied to become a Global Mission pioneer. While still in his teens he was sent to work in a village near his parents' home in western India.

Praveen

One day a couple came to Jeetendra to find help for their son, Praveen. Praveen was bright and a good student in school. After he completed high school, Praveen's uncle invited him to Mumbai to work.

The boy arrived in Mumbai and visited several temples, making offerings and praying to the gods as he began his search for work. He applied for work as a medical sales representative and was invited for an interview. On the way to the interview he stopped at his favorite temple to ask for special blessings. The interview went well, and he was offered the job. Praveen was sure that the gods were happy with him.

Frightening Illness

For the first three months Praveen's

work went well. Then one day he developed a severe headache. He took some painkillers he had in his medical case. Almost immediately he began having hallucinations. Praveen wondered if he was losing his mind.

Praveen's uncle hesitated to take Praveen to the doctor because he was afraid that the doctor would send him to a mental asylum. So the boy's uncle sent him back home to his village for rest.

Praveen's parents feared that an evil spirit had caught their son. They did everything they could for their son, calling the village witch doctors to cast spells and make the demon flee. But Praveen's condition remained unchanged. Nothing seemed to help, and Praveen remained ill for more than a year.

Driving Out the Devil

Then someone suggested that the family ask Christians to pray for Praveen. The boy's parents found Jeetendra, the Global Mission pioneer, and told him of their son's affliction. Jeetendra agreed to pray for the boy and asked permission to invite some other believers to join him as they prayed for Praveen. The parents agreed.

The believers gathered at Praveen's parents' home, where they read promises from the Bible to the family. Praveen sat quietly and listened to God's words. When the believers prayed for the boy, he bowed his head.

The believers returned regularly to read from the Bible and pray for Praveen. The boy's parents noticed that whenever the Christians came, their son quieted.

For three months the believers visited and prayed for Praveen. The boy's behavior and thinking returned to normal, and the entire family accepted Jesus as their Lord. Praveen was baptized and is once more working. But he stays far from the temples in the city. He knows that only one God has power to change people's lives, and that is Jesus Christ.

Barren Family

For five years 26-year-old Manisha had tried to have a child. At first her in-laws

took her to nearby temples and shrines to pray for a male child, but as time passed by they stopped wasting their money. Time was running out; if she didn't become pregnant soon, her husband would put her away to marry another. In her culture a barren woman is of no value to her husband or to her community.

Manisha's husband, Ruhan [ROO-hahn], works as a repair person in the village. One day Ruhan was asked to make some repairs in the house in which Jeetendra, the Global Mission pioneer, lived. As Ruhan worked, the two men talked. Jeetendra learned of the couple's desire to have a child. He understood their longing and offered to pray that God would give them a child.

Jeetendra visited the couple and prayed that Manisha would conceive. He read promises from the Bible to encourage Ruhan and Manisha to be patient, that with God nothing is impossible if they believe. Jeetendra read the story of Abraham and Sarah to the couple. The young couple agreed to read Bible promises and pray with Jeetendra.

Before long Manisha discovered that she was pregnant. The couple threw their idols into the river and accepted Jesus as their Lord. As they trust in God for every blessing, they have become a light of faith to their family and to the entire village.

Growing Faith

God is blessing Jeetendra's work in this small village. Today he leads a small group of 25 people, 10 of whom have been baptized.

The mission offerings you give help support the work of Global Mission and other efforts to spread God's love around the world. Thank you. 🌍

MISSION POST

- More than a million people in India have become Adventist Christians in the past 20 years. Often entire Adventist congregations have been formed as people learned of the power and love of God. But many new believers have no church in which to worship. Many worship in private homes or under a tree.
- Part of this quarter's Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help build eight churches for congregations that don't have a place to worship.
- Watch the Adventist Mission DVD to learn more about the need for churches in India.



A PASSION FOR PEOPLE

February 19 | Eswaar

Eswar [EE-shwar] answered the door and smiled at the friendly looking man standing there. The man introduced himself as a Christian pastor, and Eswar invited him in. Eswar was a Christian, and he was always glad to speak to other Christians. He invited the pastor to return, and the two studied the Bible together. Eagerly Eswar accepted the new Bible truths he was learning, and before long he joined the Adventist Church.

Eswar felt a fire burning in him to share with others the new truths he was learning about God. He quit his job in a factory and became a Global Mission pioneer.

Eswar enjoys people. Often he sits near the village temple and visits with people who pass by. He looks for ways to tell them stories about Jesus. He shares their grief when a loved one dies and their joy at marriages and births.

Trouble and Testimony

Some people weren't happy with Eswar when people in the village became Christians. One day a young man heard him talking of Jesus. He

grabbed Eswar by the collar and tried to drag him away. "You don't have to drag me," he told the man gently. "I can walk with you wherever you want to go." The man wouldn't let Eswar go. The man led Eswar to a group of angry men who demanded that he stop trying to convert them to Christianity. Eswar said he couldn't force anyone to change their faith.

Eswar grabbed his Bible and followed the people to the funeral site, praying that God would give him words to say.

Then they took him to the village elders, who asked him why he had come to their village. "I've come to tell the people about Jesus," Eswar said simply. The elders sat back and listened as Eswar spoke, starting with Genesis and leading the men through the Bible. "This same Jesus is coming back soon," Eswar finished. "I must tell everyone who will listen so they can be ready when Jesus comes."

When Eswar finished, the elders

said, “Your religion is good. We cannot accept Jesus, but you can convert our children.”

The men who had taken Eswar to the local elders were surprised and angry, but they could do nothing to stop Eswar from speaking to people about Christ. They stopped harassing him, and some even went to him privately to ask for prayer for their loved ones. Several now allow their children to hear stories of Jesus too.

Pray for Our Dog

One man came to Eswar and asked him to come quickly and pray for their beloved family dog that had just died. Eswar was uncomfortable praying for a dog and tried to put the family off. But they insisted that he come and pray. Finally Eswar went to the house and prayed, not for the dog, but for the

family. The grateful family invited Eswar to return and tell them about Jesus.

The Temple Priest’s Funeral

A temple priest often listened to his radio while working in the village temple. He found a Christian station and heard about Jesus. One day as Eswar walked by this man’s house, the priest called to him and asked what he was doing in the village. “You’re a priest of the temple gods,” Eswar said smiling. “I’m a priest of Jesus Christ.” The priest nodded and chuckled.

Eswar visited him several times. Then one day he learned that the priest had died. The man’s family gathered for the funeral, but they couldn’t find a priest to bury the man. The priest’s family asked Eswar to speak at the funeral. Eswar grabbed his Bible and followed the people to the funeral site, praying that God would give him words to say. He knew that some of those who had fought his ministry would be at the funeral.

The family asked Eswar to perform a Christian funeral for the temple priest. Eswar sang a song that spoke of the hope of resurrection in Jesus. Then he read promises of Jesus’ second coming from the Bible. After the funeral several people came to Eswar and asked to know more about Jesus.

Eswar continues to make friends for Jesus. His friendship evangelism in this village has helped lead 75 people to Christ so far.

Our weekly mission offerings help support the work of mission, including Global Mission, around the world. Thank you for sharing so others can learn of God’s infinite love. 🌍

MISSION POST

- Many people in southern Asia are hungry for a God who loves them. New congregations form quickly, but few groups can afford to build a church. Giving believers in southern Asia a church ensures that congregations will continue to grow.
- Learn more about the work of Global Mission pioneers in India on the Adventist Mission DVD. To watch or download a segment from the DVD, go to www.AdventistMission.org. Click on “Resources” and on “Adventist Mission DVD” in the right column. Scroll down and select one of the DVD’s programs from the menu.



THE SWORD AND THE SPIRIT

February 26 | Joseph and Ruby Rehman

Joseph felt his heart pounding as the mob of angry men pushed and jostled him. Their angry voices rose as they accused him of stirring up trouble by introducing a new God to the village. “Let’s beat him!” said some. “Kill him!” yelled others.

A Zeal for Christ

Joseph had not been a Christian long. In his zeal to share his new faith with others, he had come to this village as a Global Mission pioneer to teach others about Christ. He’d found a man who wanted to know about Christ, and the two men studied the Bible together. Soon the villager had given his heart to God.

But others in the village were angry that a Christian had come to stir up the people. They had marched toward the home where Joseph was visiting and demanded that he come out of the house.

Joseph prayed silently as the mob pressed around him. Then he stepped toward the leader, who stood brandishing a sword. Gently Joseph put his hand on the man’s shoulder and spoke to him. “Brother, I’ve come in

peace and in the name of Jesus, who is my God and my friend. He wants to be your God and friend, too.”

The leader looked into Joseph’s eyes and grew calm. The crowd quieted a bit. Then the leader challenged Joseph.

The Challenge

“I have a daughter,” he said. She’s 10 years old and has been paralyzed for six years. She can’t move, and she can’t speak. Come and ask your God to heal my daughter. If He heals her, then we will leave you alone. But if she isn’t healed, then we will kill you.” The man touched the sword at his side in a threatening manner.

The man turned to walk to his home, and the mob made sure that Joseph followed him. When they reached the leader’s home, the mob stayed outside while Joseph and the leader entered the house.

The leader pointed to his little girl, Kamala. Joseph realized that only a miracle would save her life—and his. He knelt by the bed and prayed. He asked God to forgive his sins, and then he asked that if it was God’s will, little Kamala be healed. “Help those in this

room to understand that You are the all-powerful God who made the earth and everything that lives here,” he prayed.

Seeing God’s Power

Joseph finished his prayer and stood to his feet. The girl’s father nodded to two men who stood in the room with them. They tied Joseph up to be certain that he didn’t escape. Joseph continued to pray for the child, and within minutes he saw a slight movement.

Had he imagined it? No. Kamala moved again. She stretched out her leg! Joseph encouraged her to keep moving, and the girl stretched her other leg and then her arms. Joseph praised God as he encouraged the girl to move.

Slowly Kamala sat up. Then as the family watched, speechless with joy, Kamala slowly pulled herself up on her once-withered legs and took a step. And then another.

FAST FACTS

- The people of southern Asia are quite diverse. While Hindi and English are the two official national languages, the people of India speak hundreds of languages and dialects.
- All the world’s major religions are practiced in southern Asia, including Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, and Buddhism. Hinduism and Buddhism originated in India. Hinduism is practiced by about 80 percent of the population. Islam is second with about 13 percent. Christianity is practiced by about 2 to 3 percent of the population of India. Buddhism is practiced by fewer than 1 percent of the population.

“My daughter!” Kamala’s mother whispered. The girl smiled and walked slowly toward her mother. Tears filled the father’s eyes as he hugged Joseph. The men who had tied Joseph up stood silently as Kamala walked around the room. Her hands straightened out and grew strong as they watched.

Opening the Door of Faith

The door behind them opened, and Joseph’s wife entered. Her face reflected her confusion. “What happened?” she whispered. “I was told terrorists planned to kill you.” She looked at Joseph, still tied up, and then at the joyful faces of those surrounding him.

“I’ll tell you later,” he told her. “But God has just revealed His mighty power to these unbelievers.”

The leader of the mob untied Joseph and apologized for causing him trouble. “I want to know about your God, who has restored my daughter to health,” he said.

Joseph spoke to the crowd who waited outside the man’s house. Several asked to know more about the God Joseph worships. Within a year 15 people in the village were baptized, and Joseph and his wife are working with others who want to know about God.

The leader of the mob who had planned to kill Joseph now works with him to teach others about the living God.

Our mission offerings help support the work of men and women such as Joseph who work as Global Mission pioneers in unentered areas of India and around the world. Thank you for having a part in the work of God through your offerings. 🌍



MOTHER'S SEARCHING FAITH

March 5 | Trilok Nadar

[Ask a young man to present this first-person report.]

When I was just a boy, my father traveled to the Middle East to work. He wasn't a Christian, but my mother was. So while Father was away, we went to church with Mother on Sundays. Mother taught us what she knew about God and read us Bible stories. I learned to love Jesus.

My father came home just once a year to visit. While my brother and I enjoyed his visits, we felt that we hardly knew him. He wasn't happy when he learned that we were going to church; and when I told him that I wanted to become a Christian, he was angry. But soon Father left us again, and Mother's values ruled the house. Soon I gave my life to God.

Thirsty for Knowledge

My older brother went far from home to study, so I stayed at home with Mom while I studied. God became a bigger part of my mother's life—and mine as well. She spent a lot of time reading her Bible and had lots of questions to ask. She visited several churches but couldn't find one where the people could answer her questions.

Then Mother got a job cleaning for a family. After work the family invited her to stay and join their small group worship. She stayed and prayed with them and enjoyed the prayer meeting.

Mother was impressed by the way the people studied the Bible to find answers to questions.

Mother had been to a lot of different churches and had heard many pastors speak. But something about this small group seemed different. She was impressed by the way the people studied the Bible to find answers to questions. And the pastor who sometimes led the group gladly answered her questions, usually by quoting Bible texts.

From that day on, Mother attended the small group every week. She learned that her new employers were Seventh-day Adventists and taught straight from the Bible. She learned that this church has members in almost every country of the world.

Mom invited me to attend the small group meetings with her. I was busy with school, but I made the time to go and I enjoyed the meetings. There was no Adventist church nearby, so we joined a small group that met on Friday nights and Sabbaths.

Dad's Surprise Announcement

At first my mother was nervous about telling my father about the new group she was worshipping with. But when Dad called home one evening, she told him. She expected him to be really angry, but he wasn't. Instead he wanted to know more about the church that was making her so happy. So she told him all she knew.

Little by little, as Mother talked to him about what she was discovering in her Bible study time, Father's heart softened. Mother sent him a Bible, and

he read it every day. He found a small Adventist church in the country where he worked, and he attended services every Sabbath. He too began to rely on God for his needs.

Mother and I told my brother about what we were learning. When he came home during college break, he saw the changes in our lives. He studied the Bible with us and went to the Adventist meetings with us.

In time, the three of us—my mother, my brother, and I—were baptized together. We were sad that Father wasn't there to share it with us. But he was happy for us, and that was something to rejoice over.

United Family

Father has decided that he wants to be baptized as well. At last, after years of wandering from church to church and searching for the truth, we are a family united in Christ. We find joy in our faith and are excited to share the gospel with people we know.

I share my faith with my friends and relatives. Wherever God leads me, I am willing to go. My brother has completed his education and is sharing the message of God's love with his colleagues at work. He has a boss who wants him to work on Sabbath, and that's a problem. But my brother sees God working out his Sabbath issues, and that gives him hope and faith.

My family knows that it is a great privilege to do our part in spreading the everlasting gospel in India, especially in the huge city of Mumbai. We all can help spread God's love through telling others what Jesus means to us and by giving our mission offerings so that others can hear God's message of love. 🌐

FAST FACTS

- Mumbai, on the west coast of India, is India's largest city, with more than 14 million people. It is one of the largest cities in the world.
- Mumbai has a diverse population that speaks a number of Indian languages. This diversity includes religious beliefs as well. While most of the people in Mumbai are Hindu, the city is home to a large number of Muslims, Christians, and several other religions as well.
- The Adventist Church is focusing evangelism efforts on India's largest cities, where millions live with no real knowledge of who Jesus is or that He died to save them.



BROTHERS IN FAITH

March 12 | Sailesh and Vaj

Sailesh [SI-lesh] and his brother Vaj were successful pastors in far western India. The brothers' churches were in villages about 6 miles [10 kilometers] apart. The brothers enjoyed working for God, and together they had brought about 700 members to their churches.

Life-changing Visits

Then one day some visitors came to Sailesh's home. He greeted them warmly and invited them in. After serving them some food, the men sat down together to talk. Sailesh learned that the three men were Global Mission Pioneers, volunteers working with the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Sailesh was always interested in studying about God, so he was happy that the men offered to spend time with him in God's Word.

Soon the four were deep into a discussion about what God says about Creation, the Ten Commandments, and Jesus' sacrifice on the cross. Sailesh listened eagerly as the men explained that God had never set aside any of the Ten Commandments. Just as God forbids killing or stealing, so He commands His children to keep the Sabbath day holy.

Sailesh had never thought about the Sabbath commandment before. He had assumed that all Christians worship on Sunday as he did.

When the men stood to leave, Sailesh invited them to return the next week and study the Bible with him again.

Sharing the Message

The men did return and studied with Sailesh. The young pastor shared each new Bible truth he was learning with his church congregation. Before long many in his church were also convinced that what their pastor was teaching them was the truth. Before long nearly everyone chose to worship on Sabbath instead of Sunday.

When the Global Mission Pioneers announced that evangelistic meetings would be held in the village, Sailesh invited Vaj and many other relatives to attend. Vaj traveled to the village and attended the meetings. When the meetings ended, the brothers, their parents, and some 30 other family members were baptized.

Sailesh and Vaj continued to share their new faith with others, and within six months more than 1,000 people

took their stand to follow God's way, including nearly all of Sailesh's and Vaj's church members.

Test of Faith

But not everyone was happy that so many in the region were becoming Christians. Some people were angry that a new brand of Christianity was sweeping the area. One day as Vaj held a Bible study in a village near his home, a large group of people approached the house, brandishing sticks and swords. They broke up the Bible study and grabbed Vaj and carried him to another house, where they locked him inside. The mob chanted and shouted outside, and Vaj could hear some threaten to burn down the house with him inside.

Terrified, Vaj knelt and prayed for the people, asking that God would be honored no matter what happened.

FAST FACTS

- India is a family-centered culture. Often three generations live in the same house or in neighboring homes. Grandparents often care for children while parents work, either in the fields or in offices. The senior generation usually exercises authority in the family.
- Especially among Hindus, worship is generally observed in the home, where a room or an alcove may contain statues of the family's god or gods.
- The Adventist Church is working to provide church buildings for as many congregations as possible. Even simple church buildings build credibility in the community and encourage people to investigate the church's teachings.

He prayed for the people who held him captive. "Show them that You are the living God," Vaj begged. For hours he prayed as the heat rose in the closed-up house.

Surprising Defender

Then he heard someone fumbling with the lock on the door. He looked up and saw the door open a crack. *Is the end near?* he wondered. The crowd quieted as a man began to talk.

"The man inside this house has done nothing wrong," the man outside said. "He talks about his religion, and you don't have to listen to him. But don't hurt yourselves by taking his life."

A moment later, the man who had been speaking opened the door and invited Vaj to walk out. Vaj realized that the man who had defended him was one of the village leaders. He stayed close to Vaj as they walked through the mob and walked beside him all the way back to Vaj's house in a nearby village.

Vaj was shaken by the experience and considered giving up his work as a pastor. But the Global Mission Pioneers urged him to stay strong. "God has great plans for you, they said. "You will lead hundreds to Christ if you remain faithful."

Vaj continued sharing God's Word, and today the small village has a congregation of 300 new believers, including some of those who had threatened Vaj.

Sailesh and Vaj became Global Mission Pioneers together. Today they serve God together as Adventist pastors, leading many to the feet of Jesus. Our mission offerings help reach thousands in India and around the world and help support the work of Global Mission Pioneers. 🌐



THE GARLIC SELLER

March 19 | Usha Rohidas (r) and her neighbor, Auntie Kalawati

Usha returned home after a long day selling garlic on the streets of the slum in which she lived. She placed her basket of garlic on the dirt floor inside the family's one-room home. She sighed as she noticed that the box where she kept the family's few clothes was open, its contents strewn about. She knew that her husband had been searching for something to sell so he could buy alcohol.

She glanced quickly around the bare room and saw that nothing else was missing. Her husband had already sold everything the family had—a chair, a blanket, her decent cooking pot. She bent over and folded the remaining clothes and replaced the box top.

Life of Bitter Hopelessness

Like many poor people in Mumbai, India, Usha was just 12 when she married her husband, who was 16. She dreamed of a better future, but her young husband began drinking, and those dreams turned to ashes.

Usha worked long hours to buy rice and a few vegetables to feed her growing family that eventually included three children. Her husband worked as a

day laborer, but his earnings went to buy alcohol. And when that wasn't enough to satisfy him, he took Usha's earnings as well. Then he began selling the family's few pieces of furniture and Usha's saris. If she tried to stop him, he'd beat her.

Usha supplemented her earnings by collecting old newspapers, metal, and plastic to sell. Her life turned into one of desperation and hopelessness.

She Heard Singing

One day as she stirred the boiling rice she heard music—joyful singing—coming from a neighbor's home. The music gave her a sense of peace, and she smiled. The next day she heard the singing again and wondered what was happening. But she was too shy to go to her neighbor's house to see. So she listened from her yard as she prepared dinner.

The next time she heard the singing, Usha's curiosity overcame her shyness. She stood and followed the music to the neighbor's house. She walked through the open door and sat down on the floor to listen.

A group of women were singing songs about someone called Jesus. *I wonder*

who this God is, Usha thought.

When the singing ended, a man stood to talk. Usha learned that he was a pastor from an Adventist church. As the man spoke, she felt a peace settle over her; her burdens were lifted, and she felt light.

She returned the next day and the next to hear more about Jesus. She found hope and faith amid the despair of her life. As she listened to the pastor's words about the Savior who loved her, her heart warmed. In time she accepted Jesus as her Redeemer. Life still was difficult at home, but at last her heart was at peace.

Hope Amid Despair

Then Usha's husband became sick and couldn't work. But he still drank. He was hospitalized for treatment, but he couldn't live without alcohol, so he returned home. He died a month later, leaving Usha and three small children

to fend for themselves. In spite of the comfort Jesus brought her and the words of peace and faith that her friends whispered to her, she felt alone and helpless.

Send Them to School

The pastor visited her and spoke to her about her children. "They need to go to school," he said. But Usha could hardly feed them. How could she pay school fees for them?

The pastor revealed a plan. "If you can pay half of your children's tuition, we will find sponsors to help pay the rest," he said. When he told her what it would cost her each month, Usha allowed her heart to hope that her children might indeed have a future after all. Now that no one was taking her money for liquor, perhaps she could earn enough to send her two oldest children to Lasalgaon [LAH-sahl-gaon] Adventist School.

The pastor arranged to take the children to the school and enroll them. She misses her children while they are away, and she continues to struggle to pay their school fees. But she is glad that they are learning in a safe environment, preparing their lives to serve God and have a better life, as she once dreamed.

Often she sacrifices her own food to pay the children's tuition. But she has hope, and she knows that God is looking out for her.

This quarter part of the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help provide new classroom blocks at Lasalgaon Adventist School so that more children can prepare themselves for a life of service in India. 

MISSION POST

- Believers such as Usha, who live in poverty, cannot afford to send their children to a Christian school. But Adventists in India and around the world help make Christian education possible for even the poorest children. Children in Adventist boarding schools live and study in peace and safety.
- Three such schools will receive part of this quarter's Thirteenth Sabbath Offering to build much-needed classroom blocks so that the schools can teach even more children to be servants of Christ today and in the future.

THIRTEENTH SABBATH PROGRAM

OPENING SONG	“Far and Near the Fields Are Teeming,” <i>The Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal</i> , No. 358
WELCOME	Superintendent or Sabbath School teacher
PRAYER	
PROGRAM	“The Future is Now”
OFFERING	While the offering is being taken, ask the children to sing <i>Jesus Loves Me</i> in one or more of the languages of India.
CLOSING SONG	“In the Heart of Jesus,” <i>The Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal</i> , No. 577
CLOSING PRAYER	

The Future is Now

Participants: Three speakers and a narrator, including, if possible, at least one teen. If your group is small, two speakers can give the reports. *[Note: participants do not need to memorize their parts, but they should be familiar enough with the material that they do not have to read everything from the script. Practice so that participants can feel comfortable adding inflection where appropriate.]*

Narrator: The Southern Asia Division covers three countries, Bhutan, India, and Nepal, plus a number of islands. India, the most populous country in the division, has more than 1.2 billion people. It’s the second-largest country in the world.

About 80 percent of the people in India follow Hindu beliefs. Muslims number about 10 percent, and Christians come in third at about 2 to 3 percent of the population. About 1.4 million people, just over

1 percent of the population, are Seventh-day Adventists.

For the past 100 years Adventist education has laid the foundation for evangelism. Our schools are highly respected throughout the country, and many who aren’t Christians send their children to Adventist schools so that they will have the advantage of a quality education. Other parents are invited to enroll their children in an Adventist school by a friend or relative. But when children learn the stories of

God's love, they share them with their families, and lives change.

Reporter 1: Alisha is from a non-Christian home. When her parents allowed her to study in an Adventist boarding school in India, they didn't know that the school was Christian. Alisha arrived knowing little about Jesus. She didn't understand English, the language in which classes are taught. But slowly she learned.

At first she wasn't sure what the daily worships in the school dormitory were about. But little by little Alisha learned about Jesus and began to love Him. She discovered that worshipping God was at the heart of her new school.

Often Alisha's friends talked with her about God. Alisha knew that if she became a Christian, her parents might disown her. In spite of this, Alicia and one of her friends took their stand for Christ and were secretly baptized.

When the girls go home for school holidays, they meet together to talk about God and share what they've read in their Bibles. They're careful to speak in English so their families won't know what they're talking about. Alisha hides her Bible so her parents won't see it.

Alisha knows that she will face many challenges in the future because of her decision to become a Christian. But she knows that God will lead her. She thanks God for leading her and her friend to a school where they could learn about the living God and His precious Son, Jesus.

Narrator: Adventist students have many opportunities to share their faith with their classmates. Recently some students faced a Sabbath challenge,

even while studying in an Adventist school. Their faithfulness helped many others see that God does answer prayers.

Reporter 2: Jincy [Jin-see], Cibin [see-BEEN], and Remya [REM-yah] are students in southern India. At the end of the tenth grade, students who want to continue their studies must take a government-administered exam.

The government exam date was on Sabbath, and the principal worked hard to get an alternate date. It looked hopeless, but the three students insisted that even if they had to repeat the year they would not dishonor the Sabbath. The principal went to court on behalf of the students, and finally the judge agreed that the students could take the exams after the Sabbath.

On the date of the exam, while non-Adventist students entered the classroom where the exam was to be given, Jincy, Cibin, and Remya went to church. After church the three students were placed in a classroom so they couldn't talk with students who had already taken the exam. The three students spent the afternoon singing, praying, and reading their Bible. "It was the best Sabbath I've ever had," said one of the students. "We felt God's presence with us, and we knew He was with us."

Then, after sundown, the three students filed into the exam room to take the test. They should have been tired, but they felt refreshed as they completed the exams. When the exam results were issued, the three faithful students learned that they had scored higher than the other students who had taken the exam earlier in the day.

God blessed these students'

faithfulness. The local newspaper printed a story about the three faithful students, and many people learned about the Sabbath who might otherwise have never heard of God's command to keep the Sabbath holy. Some people have asked them why the Sabbath is so special, and the three young people can explain the precious blessings of the Sabbath to them.

"My parents supported my decision to keep the Sabbath," Remya said. "They promised to pray for me during the exam. As a result, we all did well, and the outcome was honorable to God."

The school plans to build a classroom block on their campus that can accommodate the special government program in which these students are enrolled. Then all Adventist students in the program can take their exams on days other than Sabbath. Part of our Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help build this classroom block.

Narrator: Outreach in southern Asia

is moving forward at an amazing rate, thanks to lay evangelism and Christian education. These two evangelistic efforts account for much of the growth in this division.

Our weekly mission offerings help people around the world learn of Jesus, people who might never hear if we don't help them hear. But today, on Thirteenth Sabbath, we have an opportunity to help one area of the world—Southern Asia Division—strengthen its members to reach out to others. Today our offering will help build classrooms at three schools so that more students can study there and learn of God's love for them. It also will help build churches in each region of the division. Let's do all we can to help lift up the arms of our brothers and sisters throughout the Southern Asia Division today. Let's give generously so that more can hear the gospel for the first time in their lives.

[Offering]

YOUR OFFERINGS AT WORK

Children line up eagerly to tour the new boys' dormitory at Raymond Memorial Higher Secondary School in northern India. This dormitory was one of more than 20 projects that your Thirteenth Sabbath Offering to Southern Asia Division in 2008 helped to make a reality. Thank you!



LEADER'S RESOURCES

For more information on the culture and history of Bhutan, India, and Nepal, look in the travel section of a local library or online. Type the name of the country you wish to study into your search engine.

Visit our website for additional photos, recipes, language pages, puzzles, and other activities that you can download and print to make mission more fun for children. Go to www.AdventistMission.org. Click on "Resources" and "Children's Activities" in the pop-up menu. Go to first quarter and select the activity you want.

Adventist Mission DVD is a free video that features stories from the featured countries as well as the worldwide mission of the Adventist Church. Ask your Sabbath School superintendent to make you a copy of it to share with the children. Or go online at www.AdventistMission.org to download one of the DVD programs.

Embassies and Tourism Offices sometimes can provide interesting information on their country. In North America, contact:

Embassy of India, 2536 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20008. Phone 202-939-9839. Or contact the Government of India Tourist Office, 30 Rockefeller Plaza, Suite 15, North Mezzanine, New York, NY 10112. Phone: 212-586-4901.

Remind members also that the ongoing work of the world church depends on the weekly Sabbath School mission offerings. On the twelfth Sabbath, report on mission giving during the quarter. Explain that one quarter of the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering is dedicated to the special projects featured this quarter. The remaining three quarters goes into the world mission fund with the weekly mission offerings.

Future Thirteenth Sabbath Projects

Next quarter the Euro-Asia Division will be featured. Special projects include:

- churches for existing congregations in Tomsk and Krasnoyarsk in Siberia, Russia
- a church for an existing congregation in Baku, Azerbaijan
- children's project: Sabbath School lesson materials in Azeri, Georgian, and Armenian.

ADVENTIST MISSION

FIRST QUARTER 2011
SOUTHERN ASIA DIVISION

EDITORIAL

Charlotte Ishkanian Editor
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Esther Lipscomb
Hans Olson Managing Editor
Emily Harding Layout and Design

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Gary Krause Director
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COMMUNICATION STAFF

Laurie Falvo Projects Manager
Charlotte Ishkanian Mission Editor
Hans Olson Projects Manager
Daniel Weber Video Producer
Andrew King Video Producer

Website: www.AdventistMission.org

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SOUTHERN ASIA DIVISION



UNIONS	CHURCHES	COMPANY	MEMBERSHIP	POPULATION
East - Central India	2,241	1,664	874,797	125,240,000
Northeast India	181	318	51,809	43,170,000
Northern India	368	1,706	204,068	668,810,000
South - Central India	242	280	72,910	60,840,000
Southeast India	403	832	120,707	69,100,000
Southwest India	219	135	34,738	34,844,000
Western India	232	461	124,863	168,623,000
Attached Fields	22	54	8,873	28,350,000

TOTALS
(as of 1/1/10) 3,908 5,450 1,492,765 1,198,977,000

- PROJECTS:**
- ① Classroom blocks for three K-12 schools in India
 - ② Eight simple churches for existing congregations throughout southern Asia