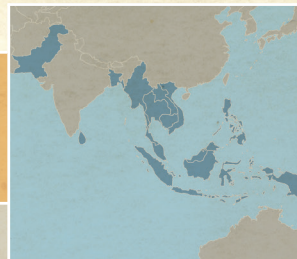




# YOUTH & ADULT MISSION

2022 • **QUARTER 1** • SOUTHERN ASIA-PACIFIC DIVISION




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**On the Cover:** Zelindo Joao Lay, a 42-year-old shop owner, prayed to God for a no-smoking bus in Timor-Leste. God answered with a miracle bus. Story, p. 18.





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 = stories of special interest to teens

## Your Offerings at Work



Thank you for your Thirteenth Sabbath Offering three years ago that helped the Adventist International Mission School-Korat expand into a high school and to construct a complex of classrooms and other buildings at a new site in Korat, Thailand. Read related stories on pages 24-30.



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This quarter we feature the Southern Asia-Pacific Division, which oversees the Seventh-day Adventist Church's work in 14 countries: Bangladesh, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Timor-Leste, and Vietnam, as well as Pakistan.

The region is home to 1.1 billion people, including 1.7 million Adventists. That's a ratio of one Adventist for every 636 people.

This quarter's four Thirteenth Sabbath projects are in four countries: Pakistan, Laos, Vietnam, and Timor-Leste. See the sidebar for more information.

If you want to make your Sabbath School class come alive this quarter, we offer photos and other materials to accompany each mission story. More information is provided in the sidebar with each story. For photos of scenes from the featured countries, try a free photo bank such as [pixabay.com](https://pixabay.com) and [unsplash.com](https://unsplash.com).

In addition, you can download a PDF of facts and activities from the Southern Asia-Pacific Division at [bit.ly/ssd-2022](https://bit.ly/ssd-2022).

Follow us at [facebook.com/missionquarterlies](https://facebook.com/missionquarterlies).

You can download the PDF version of the youth and adult Mission magazine at [bit.ly/adultmission](https://bit.ly/adultmission) and the Children's Mission magazine at [bit.ly/childrensmission](https://bit.ly/childrensmission). The Mission Spotlight videos are available at [bit.ly/missionspotlight](https://bit.ly/missionspotlight). A printable mission bank image, which the children can color, can be downloaded at [bit.ly/bank-coloring-page](https://bit.ly/bank-coloring-page).

If I can be of assistance, contact me at [mcchesneya@gc.adventist.org](mailto:mcchesneya@gc.adventist.org).

Thank you for encouraging others to be mission-minded!

## Opportunities

The Thirteenth Sabbath Offering this quarter will help to open:

- Health center in northern Pakistan
- Elementary school in Luang Namtha, Laos
- Children's learning center in Long Thanh, Vietnam
- Student dormitory at Timor-Leste Adventist International School in Dili, Timor-Leste

# Finding the True Way



TIMOR-LESTE | January 1

Mario da Costa, 44

Many events were staged around town to celebrate a big religious holiday in Timor-Leste, and I decided to go to the horse races.

To reach the horse-racing track, I had to walk past a Seventh-day Adventist church. As I passed, a Bible worker, Mariano, saw me and chased after me.

“If you have time, would you like to study the Bible together?” he asked.

I had studied with Adventists in their homes a few times, but I had stopped meeting with them because they seemed to teach the same things as my own church. Still, when the Bible worker ran after me, I felt a deep desire to know more about the Bible.

“I would like to study the Bible,” I said.

“You don’t need to come to my house,” Mariano said. “I’ll go to your house. After the horse races end, we can go there.”

We went to my house right after the races and started studying the Bible. We

studied together for four months, and I agreed to go to the Adventist church with the Bible worker every Sabbath. I still went to my church on Sundays. I didn’t see anything wrong with worshiping on Saturdays and Sundays.

After some time, an Adventist evangelist arrived, I studied Daniel and Revelation with him. In Daniel 7:25, we read, “He shall speak pompous words against the Most High, shall persecute the saints of the Most High, and shall intend to change times and law” (NKJV).

At home, I opened my Bible and read the verse again and again. “He shall speak pompous words against the Most High, shall persecute the saints of the Most High, and shall intend to change times and law.”

I said to myself, “It turns out that what I have believed for years is not true.”

I closed my Bible and tried to sleep. I wondered whether the Adventists were trying to deceive me. Maybe they had intentionally showed me the verse to convince me to join their church.

Getting up, I turned on the light and read, “He shall speak pompous words against the Most High, shall persecute the saints of the Most High, and shall intend to change times and law.” As I read, I felt impressed that my church had changed the time of the Sabbath and the law that declares the seventh day is the Sabbath.



Later, I realized that the Holy Spirit was convicting my heart.

Immediately, I decided to fast, and I prayed, “Is Saturday or Sunday the true Sabbath? Is my church or the Adventist Church the true church?”

After fasting and praying for a week, a thought spoke to me, “You had better follow what is written in the Bible.”

I determined to follow God’s will as expressed in Scripture.

Although I attended church every Sabbath, the pastor never invited me to be baptized. After worship services, he and I usually ate together and discussed the Bible.

One Sabbath, between Sabbath School and church, I asked the pastor, “When will there be a baptism for the new people who want to be baptized?”

“It depends on the person who wants to be baptized,” he said. “We can arrange a baptism for him or her whenever they are ready.”

At that moment I made up my mind.

“If there is baptism, I want to be baptized,” I said.

Immediately, the pastor hugged me. Adults and children saw our joy and came over to shake my hand and embrace me.

“You have been called by God,” they told me.

When I heard those words, I wept. I had found God’s true way. 🌍

Today, Mario is a Bible worker and has led many people to God’s true way through Bible studies and the power of the Holy Spirit. We will read about several of those people over the next few weeks.

Your Thirteenth Sabbath Offering six years ago helped open the first and only

Seventh-day Adventist school in Timor-Leste. This quarter’s offering will help construct a dormitory at the school so that children from faraway villages, such as those where Mario serves as a Bible worker, can study at the school. Thank you for planning a generous offering.

By Mario da Costa

## Story Tips

- Ask a man to share this first-person account.
- Pronounce Timor-Leste as: TEE-mohr LEHSH-tay.
- Download photos on Facebook: [bit.ly/fb-mq](http://bit.ly/fb-mq).
- Download Mission Posts and Fast Facts from the Northern Asia-Pacific Division: [bit.ly/ssd-2022](http://bit.ly/ssd-2022).
- This mission story illustrates the following components of the Seventh-day Adventist Church’s “I Will Go” strategic plan: Mission Objective No. 2, “To strengthen and diversify Adventist outreach ... among unreached and under-reached people groups”; and Spiritual Growth Objective No. 5, “To disciple individuals and families into spirit-filled lives.” The construction of a dormitory at Timor-Leste Adventist International School will help fulfill Mission Objective No. 4, “To strengthen Seventh-day Adventist institutions in upholding freedom, wholistic health, and hope through Jesus, and restoring in people the image of God.” Learn more about the strategic plan at [IWillGo2020.org](http://IWillGo2020.org).

## Mission Post

- Timor-Leste Mission was organized in 2009 and is attached directly to the Southern Asia-Pacific Division. There are 696 members worshipping in one church and two companies. In a population of 1,318,000, that’s 1,874 people for each Adventist.



# Tending God's Garden

Mario da Costa, 44

A vegetable garden is a good place to teach the Word of God. It is in the garden that seeds of truth can take root.

Many people in Timor-Leste have vegetable gardens near their homes. The crops are needed for food, and extra produce is sold to earn money. Essential crops in a family garden include corn, cassava, and sweet potatoes. Many gardens also grow leafy greens, pumpkins, papayas, bananas, and peanuts.

I was working in my own garden when a Seventh-day Adventist leader stopped by my home. “We are organizing a three-month program to train Bible workers,” he said. “You should join us.”

I liked the idea. I was eager to share my newfound love for Jesus after recently being baptized.

After completing the training program, all the students met at an Adventist church in Timor-Leste’s capital, Dili, to learn who would serve where. I was not chosen. We had more Bible workers than positions.

I returned to my home village to tend

my garden. I also became an active member of the church.

Several years passed, and another church leader called me from Dili. “I have an idea,” he said. “Why don’t you serve as a Bible worker in your own province?”

I liked the idea. A short time later, I arrived in Kodo village, and I introduced myself to Adolfo, one of the villagers. I told him that I lived some distance away and had been sent to his village as a Bible worker with the Seventh-day Adventist Church. He had never heard of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, and he was curious to learn more.

I told Adolfo about how I had learned the biblical truth about the seventh-day Sabbath and decided to join the Seventh-day Adventist Church. I opened my Bible and spoke about the true Lord’s Day being on Saturday, not Sunday.

I could see that our conversation moved Adolfo deeply, and I prayed for the Holy Spirit to convict his heart.

Three days later, I returned to Adolfo’s house and invited him to join me in working in the garden of a neighbor, Angelo. I had found that the villagers welcomed my help in their gardens and, while we worked, I could teach them from the Bible. As Adolfo and I helped Angelo in his garden, I shared the Word of God.



I could see that Adolfo and Angelo were enjoying the conversation. When we finished our work late in the afternoon, Adolfo came up to me. “Could you give me Bible studies?” he asked.

He and I began to meet at night for Bible studies. Since there was no electricity in the village, I had to provide kerosene for a lamp. During the day, I taught the Bible to other villagers as I helped them in their gardens.

Adolfo became the first villager to join the Adventist Church. Then Angelo asked for Bible studies. He had led a local church congregation for 12 years, and many villagers became angry when they saw that he was studying the Bible with me. I heard that they planned to beat me.

Angelo was worried about his and my safety. He suggested stopping Bible studies.

At the time, he and I were collecting and eating dry and peeled coconuts in his garden. I noticed that one of the dry coconuts had begun to sprout. It was unusual for a dead coconut to sprout.

“Let’s plant this coconut and make a deal with God,” I told Angelo. “If God’s work will live in this land, then this coconut also will live. But if God’s work will end quickly or die in this land, then this coconut also will die.”

Ten years passed, and the dead coconut grew into a healthy tree. Angelo took notice. On a recent visit to the village, I saw Angelo, and he declared that he wanted to be baptized.

I hope that many souls will be brought to the Lord in the garden that God has given me to tend in Timor-Leste. 🌱

Your Thirteenth Sabbath Offering six years ago helped open the first and only

## Story Tips

- Ask a man to share this first-person account.
- Pronounce Timor-Leste as: TEE-mohr LEHSH-tay.
- Read more about Mario last week and next week.
- Download photos on Facebook: [bit.ly/fb-mq](https://bit.ly/fb-mq).
- Download Mission Posts and Fast Facts from the Southern Asia-Pacific Division: [bit.ly/ssd-2022](https://bit.ly/ssd-2022).
- This mission story illustrates the following components of the Seventh-day Adventist Church’s “I Will Go” strategic plan: 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”; Mission Objective No. 2, “To strengthen and diversify Adventist outreach ... among unreached and under-reached people groups”; and Spiritual Growth Objective No. 5, “To disciple individuals and families into spirit-filled lives.” The construction of a dormitory at Timor-Leste Adventist International School will help fulfill Mission Objective No. 4, “To strengthen Seventh-day Adventist institutions in upholding freedom, wholistic health, and hope through Jesus, and restoring in people the image of God.” Learn more about the strategic plan at [IWillGo2020.org](https://IWillGo2020.org).

Seventh-day Adventist school in Timor-Leste’s capital, Dili. Part of this quarter’s offering will help construct a dormitory at the school so that children from faraway mountain villages like Kodo can study at the school. Thank you for planning a generous offering.

By Mario da Costa

TIMOR-LESTE | January 15



# Taking the New Path

Adolfo Monteiro, 40

I loved my church in Kodo village in Timor-Leste. I attended worship services every Sunday. I went to every prayer meeting. I participated in every church activity.

Then Mario came to my village.

Visiting my home, Mario told me that he lived in a faraway village but had been sent to my village as a volunteer Bible worker with the Seventh-day Adventist Church. I had never heard of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Mario told me about how he had found the biblical truth regarding the seventh-day Sabbath and decided to join the Seventh-day Adventist Church. He opened his Bible and spoke about the true Lord's Day. He said the Lord's Day actually is on Saturday, not Sunday. I saw evidence in the Bible that Saturday is the seventh day and that Sunday is the first day.

I began to pray earnestly to God. I asked Him whether I should continue in my old way and keep the first day as holy, or should I go the new way and keep the

seventh day as holy.

"Lord," I prayed, "is the old way good or the new way good?"

I prayed for three days in a row. Then I had a dream as I slept at night. Ahead of me were two paths: an old path and a new path. Someone stood in front of me and said, "It is better if you follow the new path and leave the old path."

In the morning, I woke up and thought about the dream. It seemed so real.

That day, Mario came to my house again and invited me to work with him in the garden of my friend Angelo. As we worked, Mario shared the Word of God with Angelo. Mario always spoke about the Bible while he helped villagers in their gardens, and we enjoyed listening to him. But his words touched my heart in a special way on this particular day. I asked him for Bible studies.

After I got baptized a few months later, I taught my wife about the Bible. She was baptized, together with members of two other families in my village.



Life hasn't been easy since we joined the Adventist Church. Several years after my wife's baptism, her brother, a leader in our former church, demanded that we renounce our faith. He even beat my wife in my presence.

"Only your husband can convert to that religion," he said. "You cannot follow him."

My wife declared that she intended to follow the new path.

"I already am married and have a family," she said. "My husband is the head of the family. If he is on the path that I have to go, I will go with him even to the end of the world."

As we have faced heavy pressure from our relatives, God has been very good to us. My wife and I have prayed for our relatives, and my mother and two of my siblings have joined the Adventist Church.

I don't have much money to support the gospel through my job as a security guard, but I have the energy to share the truth with others. Bringing souls to Jesus is my duty and responsibility because I know that every soul is very precious in God's eyes. I tell every person whom I meet that Jesus really loves them and wants to save them. 🌍

Please pray for the Adventists in Kodo village. Pray that they will be able to share the gospel with neighboring villages. Pray for the only church school in Timor-Leste's faraway capital, Dili, where village children will be able to study while staying in a dormitory constructed with the help of this quarter's Thirteenth Sabbath Offering.

By Adolfo Monteiro

## Story Tips

- Ask a man to share this first-person account.
- Pronounce Timor-Leste as: TEE-mohr LEHSH-tay.
- Read Mario's story about meeting Adolfo last week and about another man reached through his ministry next week.
- Download photos on Facebook: [bit.ly/fb-mq](https://bit.ly/fb-mq).
- Download Mission Posts and Fast Facts from the Southern Asia-Pacific Division: [bit.ly/ssd-2022](https://bit.ly/ssd-2022).
- This mission story illustrates the following component 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." The construction of a dormitory at Timor-Leste Adventist International School will help fulfill Mission Objective No. 4, "To strengthen Seventh-day Adventist institutions in upholding freedom, wholistic health, and hope through Jesus, and restoring in people the image of God." Learn more at [IWillGo2020.org](https://IWillGo2020.org).

## Fast Facts

- About 60 percent of the people in Timor-Leste live in rural areas and most work as farmers, growing cassava, coconuts, coffee, corn, rice, and sweet potatoes.
- Most of the people are of Papuan, Malayan, and Polynesian origin and nearly all the population is Roman Catholic, with tiny Protestant and Muslim minorities. There are about 40 different Papuan and Malayan languages or dialects spoken in the country, but the two official languages are Tetum, spoken by most people, and Portuguese, which is only spoken by small percentage. English and Indonesian are "working" languages.

# Bible Only for Priests



TIMOR-LESTE | January 22

Angelo Pereira, 43

My heart longed to study the Bible, but my church leader told me that the Bible was only for priests.

Let me tell you what happened.

I grew up in a Christian family and always was active in my church in Kodo village in Timor-Leste.

When I was 23, I began to help lead the church's youth group. At the age of 27, I joined a mission initiative to go outside the village. Church leaders saw my enthusiasm and, when I was 31, asked me to lead one of my village's congregations. For 12 years, I led the congregation and preached every Sunday from a book of church teachings.

Then a Seventh-day Adventist Bible worker named Mario showed up in my village. He approached me as I was working in my garden and volunteered to help. As we worked side by side, he told me truths from the Bible that I had never heard before. I wanted to learn more.

My opportunity came at a large meeting of leaders from my church. When we were given a chance to speak, I suggested that

each of us receive Bible lessons and a Bible to use in teaching our congregations.

"Sir," the presiding bishop replied, "we cannot teach you about the Bible because the Bible can only be studied by priests. We only can offer you a short lesson on our doctrines so that you can teach them to your congregation."

When the meeting ended, my heart was restless.

"Why can't I study the Bible?" I wondered.

Praying, I asked the Lord, "Who is the true God? I need to know so I can teach my congregation about Him."

Returning home, my heart remained uneasy, and I sought out the Adventist Bible worker.

"Can you give me Bible lessons?" I asked. "I am ready to study the Bible with you for a whole year."

Mario and I opened his Bible, and we studied the 28 Fundamental Beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

When we finished several months later, he said, "Now you know the pure truth. Please do not continue to teach false truths to your congregation because, if you teach that which is not true, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven."

I knew that Mario spoke the truth. I



had read Jesus' words to His disciples, "Therefore whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:19; ESV).

I wanted to be called great in the kingdom of heaven, and I felt sad and guilty about my past. I immediately stepped down as the leader of the congregation, but it didn't seem possible to leave the church. For six years I struggled, praying, "Lord, when will I be able to join Your people?"

One day, as I was passing my uncle's house, I saw him talking with Mario. An irresistible desire filled me to be baptized into the life of the Savior whom I had befriended in the Bible studies.

"When will there be another baptism?" I asked Mario. "Can I get baptized?"

Mario straightaway contacted an Adventist pastor and, after they made special arrangements because of COVID-19 restrictions, I was baptized, together with my wife's parents, in 2020.

I am very happy to be a member of the Seventh-day Adventist worldwide church. Please pray that my wife and children also will want to follow God's truth. 🌍

Part of the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering six years ago helped open the first Seventh-day Adventist school in Timor-Leste. Part of this quarter's offering will help construct a dormitory at the school so that children from faraway villages like Angelo's can study at the school. Thank you for planning a generous offering.

By Angelo Pereira

## Story Tips

- Ask a man to share this first-person account.
- Pronounce Timor-Leste as: TEE-mohr LEHSH-tay.
- Read about another man reached through Mario's ministry last week.
- Download photos on Facebook: [bit.ly/fb-mq](https://bit.ly/fb-mq).
- Download Mission Posts and Fast Facts from the Southern Asia-Pacific Division: [bit.ly/ssd-2022](https://bit.ly/ssd-2022).
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## Fast Facts

- Dutch and Portuguese traders were the first Europeans to arrive in Timor, around 1500, and both countries struggled for dominance in the area until 1906, when they decided to divide the island, with the western half going to the Netherlands, and the eastern half going to Portugal. Although the Japanese occupied the country during World War II, it again became a Portuguese colony after the war. In 1974, Portugal pulled out of East Timor and, shortly after, soldiers arrived from neighboring Indonesia. The country wrestled with conflict until, in 1999, an Australia peacekeeping force arrived. East Timor became an independent country, Timor-Leste, in 2002, and has been rebuilding its infrastructure since then.



# Angels Among Us

Lusio and Yelri Dias

Lusio and his wife, Yelri, never expected to see stones thrown at them for proclaiming Jesus' soon coming to an unreached people group in Timor-Leste. They also never expected to see angels.

The Global Mission pioneers were dispatched to the mountains to reach out to speakers of the Fataluku language, one of 30 languages spoken by the 1.3 million people of country. The couple had an advantage: Fataluku was Lusio's mother tongue. Not knowing where to start, the couple embarked on daily prayer walks in the four villages of their district. After some time, they decided to offer after-school tutoring in math and English in their rented house.

The after-school classes soared in popularity, with an initial 12 children swelling to 57 in weeks. Each afternoon, the classes opened with a Bible lesson and prayer. After two months, children began telling their friends that Jesus is coming soon and asking whether they wanted to go to heaven. Several children wanted to join the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Lusio and Yelri felt hopeful.

But things changed in the third month. Children who did not attend the classes began to disrupt the proceedings by threatening and interrogating the students. Before long, only four to six children were

showing up for tutoring in the afternoons.

Finally, the landlord of the rented house told Lusio and Yelri that they had to leave.

The couple moved to a smaller house where they could no longer tutor children.

Later, Lusio organized evangelistic meetings in one of the four villages after several villagers expressed a desire for baptism. By the end of the meetings, nearly everyone in the village was attending. Lusio and Yelri felt hopeful.

But then Lusio was stopped by a woman as he went to the watering hole to fill his three-container limit for the week. "Don't distribute your papers to my people and try to convert them," she said.

"What do you mean?" he asked.

"I know you and your motives," she said. "Don't you mess with me. You are trying to convince my people to go to your church by offering money."

It was a false accusation. No money had been offered to anyone.

Abruptly, the teacher struck Lusio with her hand. Her adult son, who was standing nearby, punched Lusio. Then the mother and son picked up stones and threw them at the Global Mission pioneer. None of the stones hit him. As a crowd gathered, someone threatened to shoot Lusio and ran home to get a rifle. Friendly villagers shielded Lusio as he fled the village.

Two months later, an Adventist leader



arrived to speak at evangelistic meetings in another of the four villages. The crowd grew daily, and Lusio and Yelri felt hopeful.

But one night, several men began hurling stones in the meeting tent. One stone struck the head of a volunteer nurse, causing blood to stream down his face. The meeting was suspended for the night.

More flying stones awaited people as they left in a church-rented truck for the ride up the mountain to their homes. The villagers were afraid. Suddenly, seven tall men in bright shining clothes appeared. The strangers were seen only by three astonished young men, who watched them walk away from the site, becoming smaller and smaller until they disappeared up the mountain. No more stones were thrown.

Upon hearing about the seven shining men, the villagers had no doubt that God sent His angels to protect His people. “The angel of the Lord encamps all around those who fear Him, and delivers them” (Psalm 34:7, NKJV).

The next Sabbath, 13 young people surrendered their lives to Jesus and were baptized. Among them were two young men who had seen the angels.

Despite extraordinary challenges, Lusio and Yelri remain hopeful. They know God saves. 🌍

Your Thirteenth Sabbath Offering six years ago helped open the first and only Seventh-day Adventist school in Timor-Leste’s capital, Dili. Part of this quarter’s offering will help construct a dormitory at the school so that children from faraway mountain villages can study at the school. Thank you for planning a generous offering.

By Raymond House

## Story Tip

- Know that the photo shows the three young men who saw the angels together with Raymond House, president of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Timor-Leste.
- Pronounce Lucio as: loo-SEE-o.
- Pronounce Yelri as: yell-REE.
- Pronounce Timor-Leste as: TEE-mohr LEHSH-tay.
- Download photos of Thirteenth Sabbath projects: [bit.ly/eud-2020-projects](http://bit.ly/eud-2020-projects).
- Recognize that Global Mission pioneers are laypeople who work for at least a year to establish a congregation in an unentered area within their own culture. They have the advantage of knowing the culture, speaking the language, blending with the local people.
- Download photos on Facebook: [bit.ly/fb-mq](http://bit.ly/fb-mq).
- Download Mission Posts and Fast Facts from the Southern Asia-Pacific Division: [bit.ly/ssd-2022](http://bit.ly/ssd-2022).
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## Mission Post

- Timor-Leste’s industrial sector produces clothing and bottled water, and there are reserves of oil and natural gas offshore.

# Beatings Strengthen Faith



TIMOR-LESTE | February 5

Elizita Da Silva, 37

**M**y younger sister called me excitedly one day.

“Sister,” she said, “I am studying the Bible, and the lessons are very good. Come, and we can study together with the missionaries.”

Hearing the enthusiasm in my sister’s voice, my curiosity was aroused, and I met with her and a married couple, Yuliana and Luis, who were Bible workers.

“Please, teach me about the Bible,” I asked them.

I was studying at a university in Dili, the capital of Timor-Leste. My sister, Ermelinda, was studying at a high school in the same city. We both came from a small rural village.

I studied the Bible with the couple almost every day. The Bible lessons fascinated me. I learned about God’s great love for me. I learned that one way that I could show my love to God was by honoring Him with my body, including by eating clean foods. I learned that a big way to love God was by keeping His commandments. Jesus said, “If you love Me, keep My commandments” (John 14:15, NKJV). I was especially interested in reading the Ten Commandments. I had never heard the fourth commandment,

which begins, “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy” (Exodus 20:8).

When I realized that God had never changed His holy day to Sunday, I asked the couple where I could worship on the seventh-day Sabbath.

“I want to keep the Sabbath day, but where I can go to church?” I said.

“We have a church in Dili,” Luis said.

“You can go to there every Sabbath,” Yuliana said.

Ermelinda and I went to church together. After attending church for two weeks, we decided to get baptized and join the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Our older brothers were furious when they found out that I had left our family’s church. They threatened me and beat me.

“You will not study here anymore,” one brother said.

“We will bring you back home to the village,” said another.

My brothers forced me to leave my studies and return with them to the village. They made me eat pork and go to church with them on Sundays. I felt so sad. I had to lock myself in the bathroom to read the Bible and pray. But the threats and beatings strengthened my faith. I



resolved to love God with all my heart and keep His commandments.

The threats and beatings went on for a month.

My younger sister, fortunately, was able to stay in the capital. She called to tell me that the Adventist Church was organizing a two-month training program for Bible workers.

I wanted to be a Bible worker more than anything. I wanted to be like Yuliana and Luis, who had taught me about the Bible. I wanted to teach others about God. One day, I ran away from home without telling anyone.

After two months of training, I became a Bible worker. I loved my work, and I threw myself into it. I prayed daily for my family and especially my brothers.

Two years passed, and I married my husband, Reinaldo, who is an Adventist. No one from my family attended the wedding.

Thanks be to God, my family has started talking to me again. I am also grateful to God for three children who are now studying at the only Adventist school in Timor-Leste.

Please pray for my brothers and the rest of my family. Please pray that the school will be able to teach many children about Jesus and His Word. 🌍

Your Thirteenth Sabbath Offering six years ago helped open the Seventh-day Adventist school in Timor-Leste. Part of this quarter's offering will help construct a dormitory at the school so that children from faraway villages like Elizita's can study at the school. Thank you for planning a generous offering.

By Elizita Da Silva

## Story Tips

- Ask a woman to share this first-hand account.
- Pronounce Timor-Leste as: TEE-mohr LEHSH-tay.
- The photo shows Elizita with her husband, Reinaldo.
- Download photos on Facebook: [bit.ly/fb-mq](https://bit.ly/fb-mq).
- Download Mission Posts and Fast Facts from the Southern Asia-Pacific Division: [bit.ly/ssd-2022](https://bit.ly/ssd-2022).
- This mission story illustrates the following component 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." The construction of a dormitory at Timor-Leste Adventist International School will help fulfill Mission Objective No. 4, "To strengthen Seventh-day Adventist institutions in upholding freedom, wholistic health, and hope through Jesus, and restoring in people the image of God." Learn more about the strategic plan at [IWillGo2020.org](https://IWillGo2020.org).

## Fast Facts

- East Timor became an independent country, Timor-Leste, in 2002. Although the violence of the conflict destroyed much of the country's infrastructure, it has been slowly rebuilding.
- Timor-Leste is mainly mountainous and dry. In hilly areas, sandalwood trees grow, and in the lowlands, coconut palms, and eucalyptus trees can be found. Wildlife includes civet cats, crocodiles, deer, monkeys, and snakes, as well as marsupials called cuscuses.
- The official name of the country is the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste, and it is a semi-presidential republic. The capital is Dili.



# Tina's Test

Tina Alves, 39

Money was tight for Tina, her husband, and their four children in Timor-Leste. Tina worked as an accountant and receptionist, and her husband worked as a mechanic. Somehow, they managed to make ends meet until they sent their son to an Adventist boarding school in neighboring Indonesia. There was no Adventist high school in Timor-Leste. The boy's tuition was expensive, and Tina and her husband fell behind on payments when unexpected bills piled up from family funerals and an extended family crisis.

Tina was desperate. She applied to work on a strawberry farm in Australia. Church members reminded her that she had a one-year-old child, but she was determined to work as a seasonal laborer in Australia. She hoped to pay off the debt and return with some savings after six months.

Tina went to work on a farm in Tasmania. During her first week, the farm supervisor announced double pay for working on Saturdays. On Saturday morning, her roommate, who also was from Timor-Leste, headed to the strawberry fields. Tina, however, stayed in her room.

For two months she worshiped in her room on Sabbath. But one Sabbath she decided to look for the Seventh-day Adventist church in the nearest city, Launceston. She was unfamiliar with the city, and she quickly got lost. Everything was so unlike Timor-Leste, with hardly anyone on the streets, not even children. Worried, she tried to find her way back to the farm. After walking for two hours, she saw a man cleaning his yard.

"Good morning, sir," she said. "Can you help me, please? Where is the bus station?"

"Where are you from, and where are you going?" he asked.

"I'm from Timor-Leste, and I want to go to the Adventist church," she said.

"Oh! My wife is Adventist, but she is not going to church," the man said. "But I know some other church members."

The man took Tina to a church member's house, and Tina started worshiping at the Adventist church from that Sabbath.

Church members welcomed her warmly, showering her with food, clothes, and even kitchen supplies. Her roommate and other workers grew angry when they saw her return on Saturday nights with her arms filled with gifts.

"What's the real reason that you came to Australia?" asked one worker.

"I came to earn money," Tina said.

"But why don't you work on Saturdays



then? You know Saturday is double pay,” said another.

“You are only having fun,” said a third.

Tina was saddened by the false accusations. “I have six days in the week to earn money and only one day for God,” she said. “I know that God will provide even though I do not receive double pay.”

The workers demanded that the farm supervisor compel her to work Saturdays. Speaking with the supervisor, Tina said she had informed the farm owner during the job interview process that she was a Seventh-day Adventist and could not work on Saturdays. The owner had replied that Australia is a free country where people can worship on whatever day they choose. “I am sorry,” Tina said to the supervisor, “but no matter what happens to me, I will never work on Saturdays. You can send me back to Timor-Leste.”

Tina was allowed to have Sabbaths off.

As time passed, four or five other workers began to show an interest in Tina’s faith, and they went to church with her on Sabbath.

At the end of the six months, Tina wondered whether she had made the right decision. The money that she had earned was barely enough to pay off the school debt. But when she flew back to Timor-Leste, she had more money than her friends who had worked on Saturdays. What happened?

On her last Sabbath in Australia, church members presented her with a parting gift, a pile of envelopes. In the church bathroom, Tina opened the envelopes and found money. It was more money than she would have earned if she had worked for double pay every Saturday.

Tears filled her eyes as she knelt down

## Story Tips

- Know that the photo shows Tina with her husband and youngest child.
- Ask a woman to share this first-hand account.
- Pronounce Timor-Leste as: TEE-mohr LEHSH-tay.
- Pronounce Launceston as: LON-ses-tin.
- Download photos on Facebook: [bit.ly/fb-mq](http://bit.ly/fb-mq).
- Download Mission Posts and Fast Facts from the Southern Asia-Pacific Division: [bit.ly/ssd-2022](http://bit.ly/ssd-2022).
- This mission story illustrates the following component 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.” The construction of a dormitory at Timor-Leste Adventist International School will help fulfill Mission Objective No. 4, “To strengthen Seventh-day Adventist institutions in upholding ... hope through Jesus, and restoring in people the image of God.” Learn more: [IWillGo2020.org](http://IWillGo2020.org).

in the bathroom. “Thank You, God, for this amazing blessing,” she prayed. “It’s so amazing. I never expected to receive this kind of blessing without working. But God prepared everything for me. It is just as Jesus said in Luke 18:27, ‘The things which are impossible with men are possible with God’” (NKJV). 🌍

Part of the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering six years ago helped open the first Seventh-day Adventist school, where Tina’s children attend, in Timor-Leste. Part of this quarter’s offering will help construct a dormitory at the school. Thank you for planning a generous offering.

By Raymond House



# Miracle Bus

Zelindo Joao Lay, 42

Zelindo, a 42-year-old shop owner in Timor-Leste, prayed to God for a no-smoking bus on the Indian Ocean island.

“Lord, I quit smoking, drinking, and eating unclean foods,” he said. “I don’t sell cigarettes, alcohol, coffee, or tea. But people are still smoking and drinking. Please help me. I want to buy a no-smoking bus so people can travel without smoke.”

Zelindo contacted his sister in the Indonesian city of Surabaya to ask about the price of a bus. She texted back that buses usually cost U.S.\$35,000 but she had found a bus on sale for \$31,500.

Zelindo excitedly told his brother, Fernando, about the bus, and Fernando offered to contribute \$10,000.

Zelindo needed to pay a deposit of \$15,000, so he transferred that amount from his savings. Three months later, he sent another \$6,500.

He planned to use his brother’s \$10,000 to pay off the rest when the bus arrived by

ship in Dili, the capital of Timor-Leste.

On a Sunday morning, Zelindo received the phone call that the bus had arrived at the port and he could collect it the next day. He needed to bring the \$10,000 with him. He wasn’t worried because his brother had promised the money.

That evening, Zelindo and his wife counted their shop’s income from the previous week. Usually, the amount was \$10,000 to \$13,000, but this time they counted \$28,000.

Zelindo and his wife looked at each other. “What is going on?” he asked.

In the morning, Zelindo went to his brother to collect the promised money. But Fernando said, “I meant to call you, but I forgot. I wanted to say I can’t help you with the \$10,000.”

Zelindo smiled. He was happy because he realized that God had already helped him. He had enough money from his shop to pay for the bus.



The bus, which is named Salvation, has become well known across the island and is especially popular with pregnant women and mothers with children. Not only is smoking banned, but worship music is played as the bus travels between towns. A large sign on the side of the bus proclaims the three angels' messages of Revelation 14 that Jesus is coming soon.

"People love the bus," Zelindo said. "They love it because no one is allowed to smoke."

Even the police have endorsed it. One day, a church member called Zelindo from Timor-Leste's second-largest city, Baucau, to say that the police had come to the main bus terminal and told the drivers,

"You have to be like this Salvation bus. They don't allow anyone to smoke on the bus. You must follow their example."

People have asked Zelindo to expand his bus service to other districts. Zelindo replies that he is praying to the Lord for help to buy a second bus.

Through Zelindo's influence, five people were preparing to be baptized.

"God is blessing my business," he said. "I praise God that I can lead people to Him through the bus and my shops." 🌐

Part of a 2015 Thirteenth Sabbath Offering helped build the first Seventh-day Adventist school in Timor-Leste's capital, Dili. Part of this quarter's Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help construct a dormitory at the school. Only about 700 Adventists live on the island of 1.3 million people, and the school — like Zelindo's bus — plays an important role in sharing Jesus.

By Andrew McChesney

## Story Tips

- Pronounce Zelindo as: ZE-lind-o.
- Pronounce Timor-Leste as: TEE-mohr LEHSH-tay.
- Download photos on Facebook: [bit.ly/fb-mq](https://bit.ly/fb-mq).
- Download Mission Posts and Fast Facts from the Southern Asia-Pacific Division: [bit.ly/ssd-2022](https://bit.ly/ssd-2022).
- This mission story illustrates the following components of the Seventh-day Adventist Church's "I Will Go" strategic plan: 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"; Mission Objective No. 2, "To strengthen and diversify Adventist outreach ... among unreached and under-reached people groups"; and Spiritual Growth Objective No. 5, "To disciple individuals and families into spirit-filled lives." The construction of a dormitory at Timor-Leste Adventist International School will help fulfill Mission Objective No. 4, "To strengthen Seventh-day Adventist institutions in upholding freedom, wholistic health, and hope through Jesus, and restoring in people the image of God." Learn more about the strategic plan at [IWillGo2020.org](https://IWillGo2020.org).

## Fast Facts

- Timor-Leste covers the eastern half of the island of Timor, an area called Oecusse (on the northwestern coast of Timor), and two small islands, Atauro and Jaco. The western side of the island is part of Indonesia. The total area of Timor-Leste is 5,743 square miles (14,874 square kilometers).

# Persecuted for Faith



LAOS | February 26

Kina, 14

Kina, panting and sweating, ran up to the Seventh-day Adventist pastor's house and pounded on the door in a village in Laos. The 14-year-old girl had managed to untie the ropes that her parents had used to bind her hands.

Kina's parents beat her, and her older brother punched her in the face and kicked her body.

Her crime?

The girl's life was turned upside down because she had decided to be baptized into Jesus Christ and had joined the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Her once loving and caring parents turned against her and started to beat her in an attempt to force her to return to their traditional religion.

Kina, however, stood firm and refused to give up her faith.

Her calm courage in the face of suffering was astonishing. Her new Adventist friends did not offer her any special

privileges. They were a small group of believers, mostly women, comprised of impoverished peasants, gardeners, and laborers struggling to make ends meet.

Perhaps Kina was touched by their love. Perhaps Jesus through the Holy Spirit blessed her with an inner peace and hope that gave her strength to stand boldly against the pressure and persecution from her own flesh and blood. Something about Jesus impressed her so much that she was willing to risk everything for Him.

But how long could the girl hang on? How long would she be able to endure the beatings and abuse from the hands of her parents and brother? Where could she go for help and shelter?

Kina had nowhere to go and was too afraid to return home. She couldn't go to other relatives for help because they also thought that she should give up her faith in Jesus and return to animism. She couldn't go to the authorities because the village chief also was a relative and thought that she, as the daughter, should obey her parents in all things.

Obedying one's parents is a good and sensible thing to do. It is the normal thing to do in Laos and is even biblical. Ephesians 6:1 says, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right"



(NKJV). But to what extent should a child obey his or her parents?

With her body covered in ugly black-and-blue bruises, Kina fled to the pastor's home. But she could not stay there long. The pastor quickly sent her away to stay with one of his trusted relatives before her parents came looking for her.

Five days later, Kina was still hiding from her parents. She could not go back home. She was afraid to return because her family members had beaten her so many times. The last time, her father even took out a gun and fired a loud shot over her head.

Although bruised physically, the impact of the threats and beatings on Kina's state of mind remain unclear.

Pray for Kina. Pray that she will have the strength to endure the hardships brought on by her own family. Pray that she will be protected by the angels of the Lord and be safe from severe injury. Pray for her parents and other family members, that their hearts will be softened and that they will see the light of the gospel, or that they at least will allow their daughter to have the freedom to follow her conscience. Pray also that church members will be able to find a way of escape for this girl. Perhaps she will be able to get a passport and study at an Adventist boarding school outside the country. Pray for wisdom so that church members can deal with these tragic situations with wisdom. 🌍

Part of this quarter's Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help open a school where girls like Kina can study in Laos. Thank you for your Sabbath School mission offerings that help spread the gospel around the world.

By Andrew McChesney

## Story Tips

- Kina is a pseudonym.
- Download photos on Facebook: [bit.ly/fb-mq](https://bit.ly/fb-mq).
- Download Mission Posts and Fast Facts from the Southern Asia-Pacific Division: [bit.ly/ssd-2022](https://bit.ly/ssd-2022).
- This mission story illustrates the following components of the Seventh-day Adventist Church's "I Will Go" strategic plan: Mission Objective No. 2, "To strengthen and diversify Adventist outreach ... among unreached and under-reached people groups, and to non-Christian religions"; Mission Objective No. 3, "To make developing resources for mission to non-Christian religions and belief systems a high priority"; and Mission Objective No. 4, "To strengthen Seventh-day Adventist institutions in upholding freedom, wholistic health, and hope through Jesus, and restoring in people the image of God." Learn more at [IWillGo2020.org](https://IWillGo2020.org).

## Mission Post

- The territory of Laos is a part of the Southeast Asia Union Mission in the Southern Asia-Pacific Division. The first Seventh-day Adventist mission station was opened by Richard C. Hall and his family in 1957 at Nam Tha, in one of the northwestern provinces. A short time later, Nai Mun Lansri and Abel Pangan and his wife joined them, and by 1961 a church with 44 members, mostly from the Maeo people group, had been organized. In 1962, all mission personnel were evacuated from Laos because of war. Shortly after the missionaries left, military forces overran Nam Tha, and the mission buildings were destroyed.
- Laos Region has 1,908 church members worshipping in two churches and three companies. With a population of 7,242,000, there are 3,796 people for each Seventh-day Adventist.

# Widow of Oudomxay

LAOS | March 5

Sadua Lee, 33



Sadua didn't want to move to northern Laos. The pastor offered many excuses when church leaders asked him to share the gospel in Oudomxay, one of Laos' last provinces without a Seventh-day Adventist presence. But finally, he and his wife accepted the call, and they moved into their rented house in mid-winter.

It was not a typical winter. The local temperature dropped below freezing for the first time in recorded history. Animals and plants died.

The rented house was empty, with no bed, refrigerator, or blankets. Only a roof, walls, and floor offered protection from the winter chill. Sympathetic neighbors brought over blankets.

But the weather was the least of Sadua's worries. It was not easy to begin work in a region where people were opposed to the gospel. For the first time, he and his wife had to worship without fellow church members. They felt lonely, and the loneliness turned into frustration. They

did not know how to share the gospel. Before long, the authorities opened an investigation into their arrival. Frustration turned into fear.

Sadua called a church leader for help. The church leader did not know what to suggest other than to pray for wisdom.

"Start a prayer walk and ask the Lord to show you what to do," the leader said.

That was what Pastor Lee did. He walked around the village and prayed. He knelt down on a hill overlooking the village and prayed.

Soon he began to visit villagers on Sabbath afternoons. During those visits, he learned about a woman who was demon possessed and went to take a look. Sure enough, the woman was chained to a post in her own house. The mother of five had been bound to the post for two months, naked and with an unsound mind. She lived like a dog. Sadua learned that she had become demon possessed shortly after the death of her husband.

He asked the village elders for permission to pray for the widow. They



agreed. They had tried to cure her with all kinds of treatments, but nothing had helped. Sadua laid his hand on her head and prayed. He returned the next day, and the next, to pray. A week passed, and the woman began to eat and drink normally and hold short conversations.

One day, she gave her heart to Jesus, and the demons left her.

Finally, the village chief unchained her, and she was given clothes to wear. But family members were afraid that the demons would return. The widow, together with her five children, moved into Sadua's home until relatives deemed her safe to return home.

After Bible studies, the widow and her two oldest children, who were teenagers, were baptized into the Lord. The family was among the first Adventists in the province.

News about what Jesus had done for the widow of Oudomxay spread far and wide. Many villagers came to Sadua for help and healing. Many embraced the gospel message and accepted Jesus as their personal Savior.

Today, the widow of Oudomxay is making a living by helping neighbors plant rice in exchange for some rice for her own family. She has no land to cultivate, no stable job, and five children to feed.

Please pray for the widow and her children. Pray for the precious people of Laos. 🌍

Part of this quarter's Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help open a school in Laos. Thank you for your Sabbath School mission offerings that help spread the gospel around the world.

By Andrew McChesney

## Story Tips

- Pronounce Sadua as: sad-OO-a.
- Pronounce Oudomxay as: OO-dom-SIGH.
- Know that Pastor Sadua Lee, pictured praying for the village, succumbed to cancer in 2019, but his labor continues to bear fruit in Laos.
- Download photos on Facebook: [bit.ly/fb-mq](https://bit.ly/fb-mq).
- Download Mission Posts and Fast Facts from the Southern Asia-Pacific Division: [bit.ly/ssd-2022](https://bit.ly/ssd-2022).
- This mission story illustrates Mission Objective No. 2 of the Seventh-day Adventist Church's "I Will Go" strategic plan: "To strengthen and diversify Adventist outreach ... among unreached and under-reached people groups, and to non-Christian religions." Learn more at [IWillGo2020.org](https://IWillGo2020.org).

## Mission Post

- Work was reopened in Laos in 1968 when A. G. Biton, a Filipino missionary, and his family were called there, but in 1975, because of Communist advances in Southeast Asia, all Adventist contact with Laos was cut off until 1984, when the border with Thailand was reopened. Two churches were still worshiping, despite having been cut off for nearly 10 years.

## Fast Facts

- The Laos flag is striped horizontally; red represents the blood of Laotians who fought for freedom and independence, blue represents prosperity and the Mekong River, and the white circle in the middle is an homage to Japan's flag, as the Japanese encouraged the Lao independence movement in the World War II.

# Forgiving Mother Part 1



THAILAND | March 12

Charmaine Ku, 38

When I surrendered my life to Jesus, the Holy Spirit convicted my heart about a sin that I had been struggling with for many years. This particular sin breaks one of the Ten Commandments: “Honor your father and your mother” (Exodus 20:12, NKJV).

I realized the sin as I prayed the prayer of David, “Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my anxieties; and see if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting” (Psalms 139:23-24).

Perhaps the trouble started when I dated a non-Christian man in my homeland of Malaysia. Mother did not like my boyfriend, and she made no secret about it. She sometimes ignored him when he greeted her with a “hello.” She seemed to roll her eyes every time she saw him. This terrible tension went on for the eight years that I dated him.

I also am hard-headed. I never took my

mother’s opinion into consideration, and I enjoyed giving her a hard time. It got to the point that I rarely came home except to sleep because I didn’t want to spend time with my mother.

I began to pray to God for forgiveness, and I asked Him to help me to keep the Fifth Commandment. But I failed daily for the next two years. I prayed in the morning, and the very moment I walked out of my bedroom and started talking to Mother, anger filled me. Mother and I just did not see eye to eye, and she really annoyed me. I prayed harder, but I began to even dislike the sound of her knocking on my door and telling me that the food was ready.

I was a very disrespectful daughter, and I just could not seem to help it. I stopped speaking to Mother for a couple months. When she tried to start a conversation with me, I completely ignored her. I did not know how to speak with her. Apparently, I would not be able to forgive her.

I prayed even more.

God answered me through the Bible. One morning, I read Jesus’ words in Matthew 6:14-15, “For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your



Father forgive your trespasses.” Then I read in *Steps to Christ* by Ellen G. White, “The warfare against self is the greatest battle that was ever fought. The yielding of self, surrendering all to the will of God, requires a struggle; but the soul must submit to God before it can be renewed in holiness” (page 43).

I realized that I was clinging to a dangerous sin. I had to learn to forgive Mother, but I really could not do it because I could not humble myself to accept and forgive her.

God continued working on my heart, and He helped me to start talking to Mother again. Praise God! It was a start. But I knew that I had a long way to go. Even though we were talking, our conversations lacked love and patience. In my human wisdom, I could list many reasons why she deserved to be treated rudely. Many times, I thought that she needed to be taught a lesson because our broken relationship was not all my fault.

I prayed for the Holy Spirit to change me but, if that was not possible, to change Mother. I remembered a well-known quotation from an unknown author, “Sometimes God doesn’t change your situation because He wants to change your heart.” I grew certain that God wanted to change me. But how? 🌍

Today Charmaine is a kindergarten teacher at the Adventist International Mission School in Korat, Thailand. Before she joined the school, she finally was able to make peace with her mother. Find out more next week.

Thank you for your Thirteenth Sabbath Offering three years ago that helped Charmaine’s school, Adventist International Mission School, expand

## Story Tips

- Ask a woman to share this first-person account.
- Download photos on Facebook: [bit.ly/fb-mq](http://bit.ly/fb-mq).
- Download Mission Posts and Fast Facts from the Southern Asia-Pacific Division: [bit.ly/ssd-2022](http://bit.ly/ssd-2022).
- Through the Holy Spirit’s leading in Charmaine’s life, this mission story illustrates the Holy Spirit Objectives of the Seventh-day Adventist Church’s “I Will Go” strategic plan: “To be defined as the Holy Spirit leads.” The mission school in Thailand illustrates Mission Objective No. 2, “To strengthen and diversify Adventist outreach in large cities, across the 10/40 Window, among unreached and under-reached people groups, and to non-Christian religions.” Learn more at [IWillGo2020.org](http://IWillGo2020.org).

## Mission Post

- The first Adventist to visit Thailand was R. A. Caldwell, who canvassed in Bangkok for a few weeks in late 1906 or early 1907. More than 10 years later, colporteurs from the Singapore mission school, working in Bangkok with Chinese books, reported discovering a group of Sabbath-keepers. This led to a permanent mission being established in 1919; E. L. Longway, Forrest A. Pratt, and Tan Thiam Tsua, who had accepted church teachings in China, settled in Bangkok.
- The first Thai convert was a young man who was baptized by Forrest A. Pratt in 1925 and later became the assistant business manager of the Bangkok Sanitarium and Hospital.

into a high school and to construct classrooms and other buildings on a new piece of land.

By Charmaine Ku

# Forgiving Mother Part 2



THAILAND | March 19

Charmaine Ku, 38

morning devotional book. I found the letter the next morning. Luther wrote:

It is with a heavy heart that I am writing this letter. I give thanks and praise to God that you have learned many truths and that have brought a positive change to your life. It is indeed a joy to see my sister walking in the path of ministry, something that I am proud of and look up to when I look at you. Glory and praise to Him!

After praying and contemplating in my sinful and imperfect state, I managed to muster up some courage to write to you from my heart regarding your dealings and relationship with our mother.

I understand that our mother is imperfect. She can be unreasonable at times, and she gets on our nerves. Yet, she is the mother that our perfect God has given to us, to love, to treat with respect, and to obey. I know it well that our mother has her flaws, but her intent is always as a mother toward a child whom she cares for. Perhaps we may never have the privilege of understanding fully why she does what she does. I fear that you do not realize that you have an impulsive attitude toward our mother that can be unreasonable and show fruits of impatience, ego, and pride. I fear also that this could be a potential stumbling block for people around you when they see

*From last week: After Charmaine surrendered her life to Christ in Malaysia, she realized that she needed to honor her mother as instructed by the Fifth Commandment. But how?*

I prayed fervently for two long years about this sin of mine, and sometimes I even questioned God.

“O Lord, how are you going to change me?” I prayed. “Please do something!”

My two younger siblings returned home to Malaysia for a big family reunion in late 2018. My sister and her husband arrived from the United States, and my little brother came from Thailand. It was a rare occasion to have the whole family together because we lived so far apart.

My brother, Luther, who is 11 years younger than me, noticed my conflict with Mother. On the day that he flew back to Thailand, he left a letter for me in my



how you treat and speak of our mother.

Again, I write this with a heavy heart, and with the intention of reprimanding my sister whom I love and care for. I may not have delivered this well, but I trust and pray that the Holy Spirit will personally speak to your heart and give you the spirit of reconciliation. Take care.

Much love and prayer,  
Your baby brother.

After reading the letter, I wept for more than an hour, pleading with God for forgiveness and at the same time praising Him for speaking to me through my brother. While my carnal self still wants to dishonor my mother, I have not been able to raise my voice at Mother since that day. God answered my prayers! As He promised, “Then I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within them, and take the stony heart out of their flesh, and give them a heart of flesh” (Ezekiel 11:19, NKJV).

My broken relationship with Mother was restored through the power of the Holy Spirit. I praise God for mending our relationship before I left home. Just six days after receiving my brother’s letter, I flew to western Malaysia to attend a church-organized Bible training school. Mother took me to the airport, and I gave her a big good-bye hug. It was the first hug that I had given her in more than 10 years. Six months later, I moved to Thailand and started working as a kindergarten teacher at the Adventist International Mission School in the city of Korat.

No one probably would have blamed me if I had left home without resolving the conflict with Mother. But God did

## Story Tips

- Ask a woman to share this first-person account.
- Know that next Sabbath we will hear about how Charmaine gave her heart to Jesus.
- Download photos on Facebook: [bit.ly/fb-mq](http://bit.ly/fb-mq).
- Download Mission Posts and Fast Facts from the Southern Asia-Pacific Division: [bit.ly/ssd-2022](http://bit.ly/ssd-2022).
- Through the Holy Spirit’s leading in Charmaine’s life, this mission story 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.” The mission school in Thailand illustrates Mission Objective No. 2, “To strengthen and diversify Adventist outreach in large cities, across the 10/40 Window, among unreached and under-reached people groups, and to non-Christian religions.” Learn more at [IWillGo2020.org](http://IWillGo2020.org).

not allow my cherished sin to prevail. God, in His perfect time, worked a miracle in my life and allowed this sin to be completely cleansed from me before I moved to Thailand. 🌐

Thank you for your Thirteenth Sabbath Offering three years ago that helped Charmaine’s fast-expanding school, Adventist International Mission School, expand into a high school and to construct a complex of classrooms and other buildings at a new site in Korat. Thank you for your prayers for the schoolchildren and for Charmaine and the other teachers.

By Charmaine Ku

# Last Chance for God



13<sup>th</sup> SABBATH: THAILAND | March 26

## Charmaine Ku, 38

*For the past two Sabbaths, we have heard about how God helped Charmaine to learn how to honor her mother. Today, we will hear how she gave her heart to Jesus.*

I challenged God with a bold prayer. “Dear God, I am giving You one last chance,” I prayed. “I’ve attended so many church events in the past, but none has changed my life. I still keep falling, so what’s the point? Isn’t it better to stay down than to get up and try to return to You again and again? I have a two-week vacation coming up, and I just want to stay away from home. So, I will go to a Bible training school. Lord, this is Your last chance. If this doesn’t work, I promise You that You will lose me forever!”

Growing up in a Seventh-day Adventist family in Malaysia, I went to church and participated in worship services from early childhood. But I found no joy in spiritual things. I enjoyed dating a non-Christian man for eight years. I enjoyed my well-paying job as a music teacher at an international school. But I lacked peace, so I prayed and went to the church-organized Bible school.

We spent two weeks studying the sanctuary. I didn’t know anything about the sanctuary. I didn’t grow up reading the Bible, and going to church was just a routine. Church members told me how to act as an Adventist, but I never had a personal relationship with God.

At the Bible school, I read Ezekiel 37:4-5, which says, “Again He said to me, ‘Prophesy to these bones, and say to them, ‘O dry bones, hear the word of the Lord!’ Thus says the Lord God to these bones: ‘Surely I will cause breath to enter into you, and you shall live!’” (NKJV). The vision of the dry bones taught me that true revival can only come by hearing the Word of God and the presence of His breath, which is the Holy Spirit. I needed a personal, direct connection with God partnered with a prayerful life of consistently asking for the Holy Spirit.

In studying the sanctuary, I learned about God’s sacrificial love. I learned that He has the power to forgive all my sins and that His deepest desire is to live with me forever.

God’s love completely embraced all the emptiness and brokenness in my life. I gave my heart to Jesus, and He began to



work boldly in my life.

Something unexpected happened when I returned to my work as music teacher to 5- to 6-year-old children. At the school, I was expected to incorporate worldly celebrations involving Santa Claus, elves, fairies, and witches into the music lessons. One day, I presented a lesson on listening and asked the children to match the recorded sounds that I was playing with pictures of a ticking grandfather clock, flapping bats, and rattling skeletons in a haunted castle.

To my surprise, my two best students, Ethan and Lucas, would not participate. They covered their ears while I played the noises and later refused to participate in a sing-along about the haunted castle.

At the end of the class, I confronted them.

“What’s wrong with you two today?” I demanded. “Why aren’t you doing what you’re supposed to?”

Ethan turned to me and said, “I’m a Christian. I cannot listen to this.” Then the poor boy burst into tears. Lucas turned to me and nodded his head solemnly.

It was one of the biggest rebukes I have received in my life. God spoke to me powerfully through those little boys. I thought, “Why am I teaching children about the things of the devil?”

On my next two-week vacation, I returned to the Bible school, where we studied about how Daniel and his three friends had purposed in their hearts to be faithful to God before King Nebuchadnezzar. I remembered how Ethan and Lucas had purposed in their hearts to be faithful to God before me.

I felt convicted that God wanted me to quit my job, but I could not leave on my own strength. I shared my story with a Bible school leader.

## Story Tips

- Ask a woman to share this first-person account.
- Download photos on Facebook: [bit.ly/fb-mq](http://bit.ly/fb-mq).
- Download Mission Posts and Fast Facts from the Southern Asia-Pacific Division: [bit.ly/ssd-2022](http://bit.ly/ssd-2022).
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## Fast Facts

- Thailand means “land of the free” and was known as Siam until 1939. Thailand is the only Southeast Asian country never to have been colonized by a European power. In 1932, a revolution led to a constitutional monarchy, where the king is the head of state, but a prime minister is chosen from among members of the House of Representatives and appointed by the king.

“You have a very powerful testimony,” he said. “But the problem is there is no action.”

Around that same time, God spoke to me through my morning devotions. I read in Ellen White’s book *Christ’s Object Lessons*, “When the appeals of the Holy Spirit come to the heart, our only safety lies in responding to them without delay. When the call comes, ‘Go work today in My vineyard,’ do not refuse the invitation. ‘Today if ye will hear His voice, harden

not your hearts.’ Hebrews 4:7. It is unsafe to delay obedience. You may never hear the invitation again” (p. 280).

With a fully surrendered heart to God, I managed to write and hand in my resignation letter.

I returned to the Bible school for the next five months, but an internal struggle erupted between my will and God’s will. My teaching job had paid well, and I could not imagine being without money. My desire to be self-sufficient took over, and I found a job that offered even more pay than the previous one. However, I would have to work on Sabbath sometimes.

When I sought the advice of a pastor at the Bible school, he boldly told me, “You just got yourself out of your previous job, and now you want to get in again?”

No matter how big the battle, God is bigger, and He never allowed me to face a temptation that I could not overcome with His help. At the very last minute, God opened an unexpected door. I was offered a job teaching kindergarten at the Adventist International Mission School in Korat, Thailand.

I was so surprised at His timing! Then I remembered His words, “For My

thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways,” says the Lord. “For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts” (Isaiah 55:8-9).

God is good, and He has answered my prayers to continue teaching music. After two years as a kindergarten teacher, I became the director of the music department at the mission school. I have never been so much at peace or so full of joy. God has won my heart, and now it is my desire to bring lost souls to the beauty of His love. 🌍

Thank you for your Thirteenth Sabbath Offering three years ago that helped Charmaine’s school, the Adventist International Mission School, expand into a high school and to construct a complex of classrooms and other buildings at a new site in Korat, Thailand. Today, we will gather a Thirteenth Sabbath Offering to help spread the gospel throughout the Southern Pacific-Asia Division. Thank you for your generous Thirteenth Sabbath Offering.

By Charmaine Ku

## Future Thirteenth Sabbath Projects

The Thirteenth Sabbath Offering next quarter will help the Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division to establish:

- Church and elementary school, Belize, Angola
- Men’s dormitory, Adventist University of Angola, Huambo, Angola
- Domestic violence and counseling center, Lombe, Angola
- Sequele elementary school, Luanda, Angola
- Community outreach and leadership development center at Mzuzu campus of Malawi Adventist University, Malawi
- Better Living Center and FM radio station, Mayotte



# Leader's Resources

Be sure to download your free Mission Spotlight video, featuring video reports from around the Southern Asia-Pacific 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

Laos: government website  
Trip Advisor  
Lonely Planet

[bit.ly/GovtLaos](http://bit.ly/GovtLaos)  
[bit.ly/LaosTripAdv](http://bit.ly/LaosTripAdv)  
[bit.ly/36iPEUP](http://bit.ly/36iPEUP)

Thailand: government website  
Amazing Thailand  
Indie Traveller

[bit.ly/GovtThai](http://bit.ly/GovtThai)  
[bit.ly/ThaiTourism](http://bit.ly/ThaiTourism)  
[bit.ly/ThaiIndie](http://bit.ly/ThaiIndie)

Timor-Leste: government website  
Wikitravel  
Lonely Planet

[bit.ly/GovtTimor](http://bit.ly/GovtTimor)  
[bit.ly/TLWikiTravel](http://bit.ly/TLWikiTravel)  
[bit.ly/TLLonelyPlanet](http://bit.ly/TLLonelyPlanet)

### Seventh-day Adventist

Southern Asia-Pacific Division  
Southeast Asia Union Mission  
Laos Region  
Thailand Mission  
AIIAS  
Asia-Pacific International University

[bit.ly/SDA-SSD](http://bit.ly/SDA-SSD)  
[bit.ly/SDA-SAUM](http://bit.ly/SDA-SAUM)  
[bit.ly/SDA-LaosMiss](http://bit.ly/SDA-LaosMiss)  
[bit.ly/SDA-ThaiMiss](http://bit.ly/SDA-ThaiMiss)  
[bit.ly/SDA-AIIAS](http://bit.ly/SDA-AIIAS)  
[bit.ly/SDA-APIU](http://bit.ly/SDA-APIU)

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. Remind your Sabbath School members that their regular weekly mission offerings will 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-Pacific Division. On the twelfth Sabbath, report on mission giving during the quarter. Encourage members to double or triple their normal mission giving on Thirteenth Sabbath. Count the offering and record the amount given at the end of Sabbath School.

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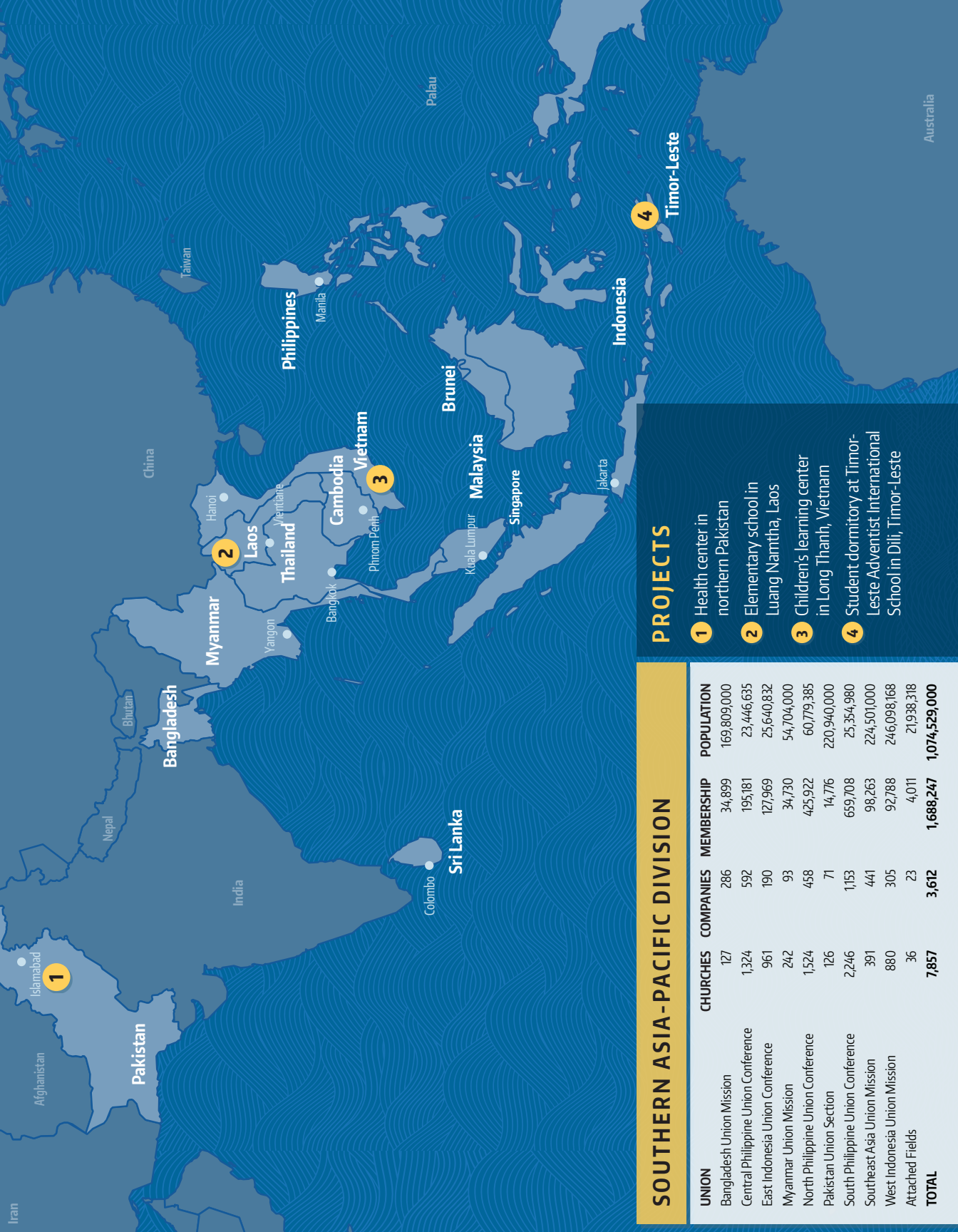
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## SOUTHERN ASIA-PACIFIC DIVISION

UNION	CHURCHES	COMPANIES	MEMBERSHIP	POPULATION
Bangladesh Union Mission	127	286	34,899	169,809,000
Central Philippine Union Conference	1,324	592	195,181	23,446,635
East Indonesia Union Conference	961	190	127,969	25,640,832
Myanmar Union Mission	242	93	34,730	54,704,000
North Philippine Union Conference	1,524	458	425,922	60,779,385
Pakistan Union Section	126	71	14,776	220,940,000
South Philippine Union Conference	2,246	1,153	659,708	25,354,980
Southeast Asia Union Mission	391	441	98,263	224,501,000
West Indonesia Union Mission	880	305	92,788	246,098,168
Attached Fields	36	23	4,011	21,938,318
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>7,857</b>	<b>3,612</b>	<b>1,688,247</b>	<b>1,074,529,000</b>

## PROJECTS

- 1 Health center in northern Pakistan
- 2 Elementary school in Luang Namtha, Laos
- 3 Children's learning center in Long Thanh, Vietnam
- 4 Student dormitory at Timor-Leste Adventist International School in Dili, Timor-Leste