

Mission

Lee

**Southern Asia Division
Fourth Quarter 2007**



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Check the box beside the story when used.

Mission Teen

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making missions meaningful

Leader's Planner

Southern Asia Division

The Challenge

The Southern Asia Division contains some of the poorest regions in the world.

India has a land mass one third the size of the United States but is the world's second most populous country. While Christians in India represent less than 3 percent of the population, the Adventist Church is growing rapidly there. Thousands of new believers have no church facilities.

The Adventist educational system in southern Asia serves as a training ground for future leaders and an evangelistic tool to draw young people to the Savior. The Ongole region in Andhra Pradesh is a newly opened area. A much-needed boarding school will train future leaders, stabilize the infant church, and reach young people for God.

The Opportunities

This quarter's Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help provide:

- A boy's dormitory for Raymond Memorial Higher Secondary School in West Bengal, India.
- A new boarding school in the newly entered area of Ongole, Andhra Pradesh, India.
- Twenty chapels for existing congregations in Orissa State, India.
- Twenty chapels for existing congregations throughout southern Asia.

GraceLink Connections

Mission reports relating to the Sabbath School GraceLink dynamics can be found on the following pages:

Community	11, 15, 19, 21
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The Southern Asia Division includes the countries of Bhutan, India, Nepal, the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, and the Maldivian Islands. From the snowcapped Himalayas of northern India, Nepal, and Bhutan, to the lush tropics of southern India, the Southern Asia Division faces many challenges to evangelism.

India

India is one of the world's most densely populated areas. More than 1 billion people live in an area roughly one third the size of the United States. It is estimated that by the year 2010 India's population will overtake the current world population leader, China.

India also is one of the most ethnically diverse countries in the world. The country has more than 4,600 distinct people groups and more than 1,600 identified languages. English and Hindi are the dominant languages, and 14 other languages are official languages within specific regions.

The country ranks in the lower fourth of the world's nations in economic status. While the educated and skilled citizens are finding quality work in technological and industrial

applications, millions continue to live below the poverty level. As many as 70 percent of the people are subsistence farmers.

Christians account for less than 3 percent of the population in southern Asia. Roughly 80 percent of the people living in the Southern Asia Division are Hindu, and 10 to 12 percent are Muslims. The Adventist membership has almost tripled in the past six years, from 350,000 in 2000 to more than a million in 2005 (the last date for which complete statistics are available), or from a ratio of about one Adventist for every 3,000 people in 2000 to one Adventist in every 1,000 today.

Nepal, Bhutan

Nepal, Bhutan, and the island groups of Andaman and Nicobar and the Maldives also fall within the Southern Asia Division.

Nepal is 90 percent Hindu; Bhutan is 70 percent Buddhist with a 24-percent Hindu minority. Andaman and Nicobar Islands are predominantly Hindu, but have a sizable Christian population. The only recognized religion of the tiny island republic of Maldives is Islam.

Literacy rates for the Southern

Asia Division range from less than 50 percent in Bhutan and Nepal to 93 percent in the Maldives. India's literacy rate is officially 59 percent, but functional literacy is much lower. Lack of literacy makes evangelism more difficult, but also provides opportunities to reach people through literacy programs among the most deprived groups, such as the poor and women.

The economy of India impacts the church's work and resources. More than 600 million Indians live in deep poverty. Considering the country's current population

growth, soon India will no longer be able to maintain adequate food production to support its population.

What does this mean for the Adventist Church in India? If new believers do not earn enough or grow enough food to maintain themselves and their families, they will not be able to contribute significantly to the construction of churches. The church members, therefore, must look outside the country for financial help.

The one consistently strong evangelism tool in India is its Christian schools. This

quarter's Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help build desperately needed projects, including school buildings and dormitories and churches.

Future Thirteenth Sabbath Projects

First quarter 2008 will feature the Euro-Asia Division. Special projects there include churches in Moldova, Belarus, and Russia; a health center in western Russia; and a college in Kyrgyzstan.

During second quarter 2008 the Inter-American Division will be featured.

Resources

For more information on the cultures and history of southern Asia, visit the travel and children's sections of your local library. Travel agencies may be able to provide brochures that could enhance promotion of missions in these countries.

National Geographic:

National Geographic has featured several interesting articles on India. See the issues dated January 2002, May 1997, March 1995, September 1993, May 1992, May 1991, May 1990, and November 1988.

For pictures and articles on Nepal and the Himalayas, see December 1993, December 1992, September 1989, and November 1988. Bhutan was featured in an article in May 1991.

Internet: Search for the countries by name. Each country has at least one Web page, with links to other sources of useful and interesting information.

Video: The Adventist Mission DVD, produced by the General Conference Office of Adventist Mission, features a number of two to 10-minute segments

that highlight the projects and mission stories in the Southern Asia Division as well as mission outreach activities around the world. The video stories vary in length, so they are suitable for Sabbath School, church, or between services. Check with your Sabbath School superintendent for your church's copy of the DVD, or contact Adventist Mission at www.AdventistMission.org/DVD.

Language skills can add interest to the mission segment of Sabbath School. Words and phrases in Hindi and Nepali are featured in the *Children's Mission* this quarter. Use some of these phrases to greet Sabbath School members and add flavor to mission presentations.

Recipes from the Southern Asia Division appear on pages 6, 8, and 10 of *Children's Mission*. Plan an all-church mission potluck during the quarter to emphasize the cultures of this region.

Embassies: Embassies and tourist bureaus can sometimes provide information on their countries. In North America write

to the following:

Government of India Tourist Office, 30 Rockefeller Plaza, Suite 15, North Mezzanine, New York, NY 10112 (212-586-4901), or the Embassy of India, 2536 Massachusetts Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20008 (202-939-9839). On the Internet, contact www.indianembassy.org/embassy/services.htm. Include your full name and address, and allow two weeks for delivery. For general information on India, see their Web site at www.indianembassy.org.

For information on Nepal contact the Royal Nepalese Embassy at 2131 Leroy Place NW, Washington, DC, 20008 (202-667-4550).

Bhutan and the Maldives do not maintain embassies in the United States. Information on these countries is available on the Internet. For background and culture information, go to www.lonelyplanet.com/dest/ind/bhu.htm. For the Maldives, check www.lonelyplanet.com/dest/ind/mal.htm or www.lonelyplanet.com/worldguide/destinations/asia/maldives.

GraceLink Connection: Grace.

A borrowed book opens the door to a new life for a poor girl living in India.



Vanitha

Vanitha's Stubborn Faith

John Wesley

Vanitha [vah-NEE-tah] wiped the sweat from her eyes as she stirred the boiling rice. Life in her village in southern India was difficult. Her father, too poor to own his own land, labored long hours in another man's rice field to earn a few rupees to feed his family. Her mother wandered aimlessly through the village streets, possessed by a demon.

Vanitha's one joy was reading. A book could transport her out of the dusty village to a different world, where people lived happily-ever-after lives.

The New Book

Vanitha's friend Priya shared her love of stories, and the girls often shared their books. One day Vanitha saw Priya reading a new book. "What are you reading now?" Vanitha asked. "Did you find a new romance story?"

"Someone gave me this book," Priya said. "It is called the Bible, and it has interesting stories in it." Then she whispered, "But don't tell my parents, or they will take it away from me." Vanitha nodded.

Books were too precious to lose even one. And this book looked like a book worth keeping.

"What is the story about?" Vanitha asked.

"It is the story of Jesus, the Christians' God," Vanitha whispered.

Vanitha had heard of Jesus, but she thought He was one more of the many gods that people in India worshipped. Her eyes fell on the book in Priya's hand. "May I borrow it when you finish reading it?" Vanitha asked hopefully.

Priya whispered, "It's not safe. If your father finds it, he might destroy it. You can come here and read it." Vanitha nodded. She would do anything to read this exciting new book!

A Different Love Story

Vanitha went to Priya's house to read the Bible whenever she could. It was a different kind of love story, the story of the God of heaven who loved people so much that He sent His son to die for them. *Wow*, Vanitha thought. *A God would actually die for*

people? The gods she knew cared little for humans.

Priya and Vanitha talked often about Jesus. Vanitha wanted to follow Jesus, but she did not know how. One night she had a dream in which some men lifted her high into the sky and then released her. She floated gently back to earth, coming to rest near the little Christian church outside her village. Vanitha was sure that this dream was an answer to her desire to follow Jesus. She knew the little church, for it was near the home of the tailor who was teaching her to become a seamstress. Vanitha asked the tailor about the church, and the man told her he was an Adventist Christian and a member of the church. He invited her to attend. Eagerly Vanitha accepted his invitation.

But Vanitha's father did not want her to go near the Christian church. Vanitha wanted to obey her father, but she felt that she must find this Jesus, the God who loves all people. So on Sabbath morning she slipped out of the fields and walked down the dusty

road to the church.

Vanitha loved the worship service. She loved the songs of hope that she heard and the peace that she felt. She tried to tell her father what she learned, but he refused to listen. He tried to stop her from going to the church, but Vanitha was not willing to give up what she had found—hope and peace in Jesus.

Stubborn Daughter

One Sabbath Vanitha slipped out of the house and hurried to the church. As she sat with the other worshippers, she heard an angry voice outside. She turned to see her father marching toward her. He pulled her from the church and forced her to return home. He punished her for disobeying. But her father's scoldings could not stop Vanitha from worshipping God.

Vanitha invited Priya to come to church and learn more about Jesus. But Priya's eyes filled with sadness. "I cannot go," she said. Then she picked up the Bible the girls had shared and gave it to Vanitha. "Take this," she said. "You will use it more than I."

Vanitha stared at the Bible, then at her friend. "But you told me about Jesus," Vanitha whispered. "I know," Priya said. "But I cannot follow Him—not now." She gently pushed the Bible into Vanitha's hands.

Vanitha held the Bible tightly in her arms. It had become a precious book to her, and she would keep it.

Vanitha's stubborn desire to follow Jesus soon drew the attention of others in her village. Almost everyone tried to stop her from becoming a Christian. But Vanitha would not be stopped.

She endured shame, ridicule, beatings, but she held on to Jesus. "Jesus died for me," she says. "Maybe I must die for Him, but I will not let my father—or anyone else—keep me from Jesus. I must tell others about God, even if they will not listen."

One man Vanitha told about Jesus often teased her about her foolish faith. But now he and his wife attend the little Adventist church and soon will be baptized.

Vanitha prays for others—for those who persecute her and for her family. She prays for her mother and sees signs of improvement in her. Vanitha is confident that God will restore her mother in answer to her prayers.

Vanitha had to sneak away from the village in order to share her story with *Mission*. She knew that her father probably would beat her when she returned, but she is not afraid. Jesus was beaten too. Vanitha's greatest desire is to tell others about Jesus, the God who understands and cares, even for a poor farm girl in India. 🇮🇳

Vanitha lives in a small village in southern India. **John Wesley** is a pastor in Thanjavur, India.

Let's talk

? God used a personal approach to teach Vanitha about Jesus. What was it? *[She loved to read books, and God provided her with a Bible through her friend. Then she had a dream that led her to the Adventist church in the village.]*

Imagine that you know nothing about Jesus. How might God grab your attention so He could introduce you to Jesus? What would He have to do to get you to listen? *[Discuss ways class members think God might use to reach them.]* Imagine how much God loves us, to go to the trouble of introducing Himself to us in a way that would make us want to know Jesus better. God will do whatever is necessary to lead us to Jesus. All we have to do is follow.

? Vanitha experienced persecution—trouble, objection, ridicule—for her new faith. Some of this persecution came from her own father. How did Vanitha respond? *[She refused to let other people pull her away from Jesus. In fact, she has become even more determined to remain faithful to Jesus. She also prays for those who persecute her.]* How would you respond if your family members or friends made fun of you for being a Christian? How can you be sure that your response will help others see that you are serious about following Jesus?

PRAY pray **PRAY**

Pray that Vanitha's testimony will lead many in her village to discover Jesus for themselves.

India



Anitha



Pachi



Kirti



Andy

GraceLink Connection: Service.

Young lives are changed when they meet Jesus at an Adventist school.

Spreading the Word

Alita Byrd

[Ask four or five students to present the following four reports.]

Narrator: Adventist schools in India do more than teach students what they need to know to have a successful life. They also introduce Jesus to young people who may never hear of him any other way. Today some students from Adventist Schools in India share what a Christian education means to them.

Pachi: My father worked hard so I could have a good education. Then he got sick and could not work. My mother and elder sisters worked to help me stay in school. When I wanted to quit, they told me I must study and make a better life for us all.

My parents learned about this Adventist school, and I am now studying here. I am at the top of my class. When I finish school I will be able to get a good job and help take care of my family, the way they have taken care of me.

But even better, I have learned

about God in class and during daily worships. I now pray to the living God. I have seen that Jesus is the true God, that He answers prayers.

I tell my family about God, and they listen. I thank God for this school, which is giving me more than the tools to have a good life here; it is teaching me to live for eternity.

Kirti: I thought all I needed to do to be a Christian was to pray to the statues in my family's church. But when I came here I learned so much about God that I never knew before. Here we study the Bible together and memorize Bible verses. We worship God in everything we do. Now I feel that I am really getting to know Jesus, and I want to follow Him.

When I go home for the holidays, I teach my brother and sisters the songs I've learned at school. I pray with them and tell them Bible stories I've learned

here. At first my parents weren't happy that I had accepted this new faith, but now they believe too. I want to share God's love with everyone I meet.

Andy: I am from a poor family. One day some strangers knocked on our door and told my parents about an Adventist school where we could study. These people offered to sponsor us to study at this school. My parents agreed, for they could not afford such a good school if they had to pay for it. The school is far from my home, but I am happy to be here.

My family is Christian, but as we study the Bible in class and in worships, I realize there is so much that I did not know. I learned about keeping the Sabbath day holy and lots of other things in the Bible that I had never heard of or understood. Here I am learning what following Jesus really means.

When we go home for vacation, we share what we are learning with our family and friends. I want to follow Jesus and be baptized soon.

It's not easy being so far from home. But I am learning to trust in God and hold on to His promise: "I will never leave you nor forsake you" (Joshua 1: 5, NIV).

Anitha: I come from a very close-knit family. We live just a few miles from the Adventist school.

Our Adventist neighbors told my parents about this school and urged them to send me here. My parents knew the school offered an excellent education, so they agreed to enroll me. They wanted me to live in the dormitory.

I liked my teachers and my classes, but I was really homesick for a while. I missed my family, and I couldn't sleep. So I tried living at home and taking the bus to school every day, but the ride was very long, and I became too tired.

My friends at school wanted me to return to the dormitory, so I did. Soon I got used to being away from home, and now I really enjoyed spending more time with my friends. I have become more involved in the religious activities on campus now that I live in the dormitory. I started reading the Bible more and asked my teachers many questions about God.

I still go home on holidays, and I teach the neighborhood children the songs and Bible stories I have learned at school. The children love the stories, so sometimes I take them to the little Adventist church in our neighborhood. There they can learn more.

Recently I decided to be baptized. At first my parents were not happy when I told them. But the neighbors who had invited me to study here reminded me that standing up for my faith when I was away from the school would not be easy. They urged me to be sure I understood what

I was doing.

I have prayed and studied my Bible, and I am even surer now that I want to be baptized. The girls in my dormitory pray with me every day. They pray for my parents as well. I want to spend eternity in heaven with God, but I want my family there with me.

Narrator: Adventist education has been one of the best ways to lead young people to Jesus in India. In any Adventist school in India most of the students are from non-Christian backgrounds. But as they study the Bible together, pray, and attend worships in the dormitory and the church, many of these students accept Jesus as their Savior.

This quarter part of our Thirteenth Sabbath offering will help to build a new Adventist school in Ongole, a region of India that is just opening to the gospel. Thousands of students will study at this new school during the coming years, and they will be influenced by the lives and the teachings of their teachers, the staff, and the Christian students.

Your weekly mission offerings spread the gospel throughout the world. Your Thirteenth Sabbath Offering this quarter will help young people and new Christians grow in their faith throughout southern Asia. 🙏

Pachiappan (Pachi), **Kieurhik** (Kirti), **Andy**, and **Anitha** study at E. D. Thomas Higher Secondary School in Thanjavur, India. **Alita Byrd** is a freelance writer living in South Africa.

Let's talk

? Adventist schools offer Bible classes, dormitory worships, and other ways to learn about God. Has any student in class attended both an Adventist school and a secular or public school? Ask what other differences they found between an Adventist Christian education and a secular one. *[In a secular setting, classes are taught without reference to God. Often students learn to compete with each other rather than cooperate to learn. Students and teachers hold different values. Students make friends at both schools, but Christian friendships provide a better influence.]*

? Not everyone has the opportunity to attend an Adventist school. How can students in public schools get some of the same blessings that students in Adventist schools receive? *[Suggested responses: Form a Christian Bible club that meets during the week; invite non-Christian friends to attend. Ask the pastor or youth leader at church to provide programs to supplement what young people learn in Sabbath School and church. Pray for one another during exam times and other stressful times.]*

PRAY pray **PRAY**

Pray that God will continue to bless Adventist teachers and leaders as they teach young people about God in India and around the world.

GraceLink Connection: Service.

What does God expect us to do when someone wrongs us? Is forgiveness enough?



Abinash

Betrayal and Forgiveness

Abinash Tudu

[Ask a teen boy to present this first-person report.]

My childhood was happy. Although my mother was a Christian and my father worshipped idols, they did not let their religious beliefs trouble them. My father worked for the government and was well-known and respected in our area. He often took extended trips in his work, and the whole village looked forward to his return, for he would bring sweets for everyone. Life was good in our Indian home.

Betrayal

Then one day my happy world came crashing down. Father returned from one of his trips with more than sweets for the village. He had brought another woman with him. He introduced this woman as his second wife. Mother was shocked and refused to stay in the house with Father and his new wife.

Father decided to return to his work post and take his new wife and me. But when he told my mother that he was going to take me too, my mother became angry and refused to let me go.

My father was determined not to let her win this battle. He grabbed me and tried to force me to go with him. Seeing my parents fight like this was so unusual and upsetting. I saw how deeply my father's actions hurt my mother, and I told my father that I did not want to go with him.

My refusal made my father even angrier, and he beat me. Our neighbors heard the fighting and came to see what was happening. Finally Father left the house with his new wife, leaving me with my mother. But Mother knew that he wouldn't give up that easily.

On the Run

Mother told me to pack my things, and we left our home and went to stay with my mother's father.

For two years I did not attend school in my grandfather's village, but spent the time tending my grandfather's goats and cows. During that time Mother decided that she would have to file a complaint against my father. In our country it is

illegal to have two wives, and Mother hoped the complaint would force Father to come back to us. Mother knew where to find Father, and the authorities arrested him and sentenced him to be punished by kneeling down on stones for two days.

When Father was released after his punishment, he was very angry. He knew that Mother had filed the complaint, and he decided to try to kill her, thinking that if she were dead, he would be free to live with his second wife.

Mother sensed that something bad was going to happen, and she left my grandfather's house. I believe that God was protecting her, for Father arrived a short time later and found no one at home.

Mother fled to another village and hid there for a month. She didn't contact any of us, and I feared that she was dead. During that month Father came to my grandfather's house looking for me. My uncle hid me, and finally Father left, thinking that sooner or later Mother would return to our home there, and he would kill her.

One day Mother was riding on the inter-city bus when she saw Father approaching the bus. She begged the bus driver to hide her, and he told her to climb under some seats. Father flagged down the bus and searched it, but he didn't find Mother. As soon as Father got off he bus, the driver sped off.

Another Chance to Study

Mother enrolled me in the village school near my grandparents' home. Once again I was studying. I made friends quickly, but some were not the best influence on me. They encouraged me to do bad things, and this worried Mother. She decided to send me to a religious boarding school far from home. I would be safe from Father there, but I would miss my family.

While I was at school, my mother and grandparents attended some evangelistic meetings that were held in my village. After the meetings several members of my family joined the Adventist Church, and that upset

some of the other villagers, who made trouble for our family. They even contacted the boarding school where I was studying and asked the school to refuse to let me attend.

Once again I had to return home and tend my grandfather's goats and cows. I asked God to lead me. Eventually a pastor from another town visited the believers in our village. He told Mother about an Adventist boarding school where I could study. Mother enrolled me, and once again I left home to study. It was hard to be so far from my family. I felt lonely, but I knew God wanted me to be at this school.

Praying for Father

I was impressed that my mother prayed for my father every day, even though he had caused so much unhappiness for our family. I decided that if Mother could pray for Father, so could I. I decided to pray for my stepmother and the two children my father and stepmother had.

I did not see my father for

several years, but one day God answered our prayers and Father visited our home and asked Mother to forgive him for leaving us. We rejoiced as we saw that God was answering our prayers. God was working a miracle in Father's life. After years of not seeing my father, I went to see him in his home. I had been praying that our family would be united in our faith. God again answered my prayers when Father told me that he had given his heart to God and wanted to be baptized.

Following his baptism, Father told Mother that he wanted to return home. He said that my stepmother had become an alcoholic and was treating their children badly. To my amazement, Mother not only invited Father to return to her, but she is raising my stepbrother and stepsister as her own children.

I still pray that my stepmother will stop drinking and give her life to Jesus. God has worked other miracles in our family. I know that He can answer this prayer too.

Your mission offerings helped my family learn about God. Because you gave, my family's lives have been changed forever. Thank you. 🙏

Abinash Tudu is studying at the Adventist Higher Secondary School in Khurda, Orissa State, India.

let's talk

? Abinash says that his family was happy until his father brought a second wife home. How did Abinash's father's action affect the family? *[His mother was angry and refused to stay in the house with him.]* Abinash faced a difficult decision when his father tried to force him to live with him and his new wife. Why do you think he chose to stay with his mother? What do you think comforted Abinash during this difficult time? *[He followed his mother's religion and trusted God as she had taught him.]*

? Why did Abinash pray for his father after he took the second wife? *[He saw his mother praying for him.]* What difference did it make? *[In time Abinash's father became a Christian and joined the Adventist Church.]* Why does Abinash continue to pray for his stepmother? What can we learn from Abinash about forgiveness and mercy? How can we follow Abinash's example in extending grace to others?

PRAY pray
PRAY

Pray that Abinash and his family will stay strong in their faith and that his stepmother will give her life to Jesus.

GraceLink Connection: Community.

A young girl's life was filled with tragedy and sadness. Then God stepped in.



Fulmani

A Member of God's Family

Fulmani Marandi

Fulmani [fuhl-MAH-nee] is the eldest of four children. She and her three brothers grew up in northeastern India. But their childhood was changed forever when their father died when Fulmani was just 5 years old. Fulmani remembers that he had been sick for a long time, but still his death was a shock to the entire family. After Father's death, Mother and the children moved into their uncle's home. They were just getting used to their new way of life when the children's mother died too.

Fulmani was just 8 years old when her mother died. As the eldest girl, she was put in charge of caring for her youngest brother, who was less than 2 years old. She fed him, bathed him, washed his clothes, and cleaned the house for the entire family. She loved her little brother dearly and did the best she could to care for him and make him happy. But then tragedy struck again. Her little brother became sick. He had a sudden seizure and lost consciousness. Three days later he died.

Fulmani was so sad. She blamed herself for her brother's death, though she did not know what more she could have done for him. As the oldest she felt she had to be strong for her two remaining brothers, but when she was alone she cried bitterly. First her father, then her mother, and now her baby brother were gone. Without any god in her life, Fulmani had no one to pray to. She could only cry.

New School, New Hope

When Fulmani was 10 years old her aunt learned of a school that would take orphan children. The school would provide a home, food, school tuition, and fees—everything. Her aunt told her uncle about the school, and they decided to send Fulmani and her two brothers to that school. Fulmani was happy, for she wanted to go to school and study.

The children enrolled in the Seventh-day Adventist boarding school. They shared rooms with other children and were provided with school uniforms and good

food to eat. Fulmani liked the school and quickly made new friends there.

But even though the school provided their home and their food and their textbooks, the children had no money for personal items such as toothbrushes, toothpaste, soap, and pencils. Fulmani decided to make a little money by washing younger children's clothes. The littlest children could not wash their own clothes, and their families often were willing to pay an older child to help them.

Fulmani washed clothes for one little girl named Manisha [mah-NEE-sha], who was just 6 and still too young to wash her own clothes. Manisha's mother had little money, but she managed to pay Fulmani a few rupees to help her daughter. It was a happy arrangement. And Fulmani liked the little girl.

Then one day Manisha's mother asked Fulmani if she would like to live with Manisha's family for the summer. Fulmani went to visit Manisha's family and decided

that she would like to stay with them. Even though the family did not have much money, they were willing to provide Manisha with a place to live and food to eat for the two-month summer vacation.

During the two months Fulmani lived with Manisha's parents she became close to them. In school she had learned about God and Jesus, but she had never seen a Christian family and never knew any family could be so happy. She had learned how to pray, but in this family she saw how prayer really made a difference in a family's life.

Manisha's family lived quite a ways from the school where the girls studied, and they were the only Adventists in their village, so they worshipped in their own home on Sabbath. Fulmani grew to love the family worships as much as she enjoyed worship at school.

When it was time to return to classes, Fulmani and Manisha went to live in the dormitory. But Fulmani did not forget the impressions that Manisha's family had made on her. During that school year she decided

that she wanted to follow Jesus and be baptized.

But when Fulmani told her uncle of her plans to be baptized, he was not happy about it. He did not forbid her to be baptized, but he and her aunt let her know that they did not like Adventists and were not happy with Fulmani for her decision. Fulmani was sad that her desire to follow God displeased her aunt and uncle, for they were the only family she had left. However, Fulmani decided to go ahead and be baptized, even though it hurt to go against her aunt's wishes. After her baptism Fulmani was so happy. She felt that she was a part of a new family, a big family, God's family.

Fulmani still washes clothes and works in the school cafeteria to have enough money to buy the things she needs. But she does not mind. She is happy, for she is in an Adventist school, and she is learning more about God every day. God is showing her the path He wants her to follow, the path of light. Fulmani knows that God cares for her and will meet her needs every day. When she has a problem, she can pray and ask

God to solve it.

Fulmani's uncle wants her to quit school and get married, for she is 16 years old now. But she wants to stay in school and complete her education. And since a sponsor is paying her school fees, she feels free to refuse to marry now. She does not know what God's plans for her future are, but she is learning every day that she can trust Him to lead her in the path she should go.

Mission offerings help make Christian education possible in India, where Adventist schools teach thousands of children that God loves them and gives them hope for eternity. Thank you for giving your mission offerings each week. And on Thirteenth Sabbath, part of the mission offering will go to build a new school in eastern India as well as a boys' dormitory at an Adventist school in northern India. 🙏

Fulmani Marandi is in ninth grade at Khurda Higher Secondary School in southern India. She hopes to study nursing after high school.

Let's talk

- ? When Fulmani's mother and father died, and later her little brother died, to whom could she turn for comfort? *[She had no one to turn to. She knew no god and had no hope for eternity.]* Although Fulmani did not know God, she yearned after a divine being. How did God reach out to her and teach her? *[God opened the way for her to attend an Adventist school, where she could learn about God. There she found peace and a love for Jesus.]*
- ? Fulmani and her brother have been baptized, but their aunt is not happy about it. How can these two young people share their love for Jesus with their aunt and uncle, who do not know Him? *[Through their actions and obedience, they can help their aunt and uncle see the difference in their life now that they know Jesus. Through their testimony they can teach their family what they have learned about God.]*

PRAY pray **PRAY**

Pray that Fulmani will be able to share her faith with her family and lead them to Jesus. Pray that she will be able to continue her studies and serve God as a nurse.

GraceLink Connection: Grace.

A teenage boy who had drifted away from God finds new life after a freak accident.



Asays

The Shock That Saved Me

Asays Kumar Mali

[Ask a teen boy to present this first-person report.]

My name is Asays [AH-says]. I live in Orissa, India.

When I was young my parents told me again and again that I was a prayed-for child. They had prayed for more than five years for a child. When I was born they dedicated me to God, just as Hannah had dedicated Samuel, to work for Him. My parents centered our lives in God. My lessons were from the Bible; my bedtime stories were Bible stories, and my parents even taught me to read using the Bible. They encouraged me from the time I was young to listen for God's voice and to do what He asked of me.

And I responded to God's love. I often visited the sick in our village and prayed for them and helped them with chores that needed doing. Many of the villagers loved to hear me read the Bible to them.

Wandering Boy

When I was 8 years old I started school. My parents wanted me

to study in an Adventist school, to receive the strongest Christian education possible. That meant that I would live in a dormitory at the Adventist school, some 300 miles [500 kilometers] from my home. I missed my parents very much, and they were lonely without me, too.

I had friends in the dormitory. Some were my own age, but others were older boys. These older boys began to influence me in ways I knew weren't right, but it was hard to resist the temptation. I began following their example, teasing younger children and using bad language. My parents didn't know this, for I made sure I did not use the bad words when I was at home.

Before I started school, I would spend time reading my Bible and would give my life to God every day. But at school, in spite of the daily worships and loving teachers and deans, I began to forget these habits. Eventually I stopped studying

the Bible and praying. I drifted far away from God.

My job at school was to keep the school grounds clean. We had had a storm with a lot of rain and high winds. The storm had knocked many branches from the palm trees on campus, and my supervisor sent me to gather them and pile them on the rubbish heap.

Jolted Awake to God

I picked up one large palm frond and started toward the rubbish heap. But instead of dragging the palm frond and walking around the many rain puddles left by the storm, I lifted the frond above my head and walked toward the rubbish heap. As I neared the rubbish pile, I swung the branch high over my head to bring it down onto the pile.

Suddenly I heard a loud blast like a gunshot and felt a huge jolt go through my body. The tip of the branch had hit the high-voltage

wire that hung low overhead. The jolt I felt was electricity passing through my body. I had been electrocuted. Before I passed out I thought, *I'm going to die.*

People from all over the campus came running to see what had happened. They found me lying on the ground with the wire on top of me. One of the teachers managed to remove the wire without being electrocuted, and some students carried me to one of the nearby classrooms. A teacher checked my pulse and breathing. They found no pulse and could not detect any breath. Someone began CPR while the other teachers prayed that God would spare my life.

Finally I coughed and opened my eyes. I didn't know where I was or what had happened. My foot and hand hurt, and someone told me that I had been burned when the electricity passed

through my body.

I was taken to the hospital, where doctors examined my burns. They could not believe that I had not been killed when the huge surge of electricity passed through my body. As I lay in the hospital bed, I realized that something greater than luck had saved my life.

A Timely Prayer

My parents came to be with me. As we talked about the accident, my mother asked me what time the accident had happened. I told her that I thought it was about 9:00 Sunday morning. "I was praying for you at just that hour," she said to me. I realized then the awesome power of God to save us in answer to someone's prayer, even though I knew I was not walking with Him.

During the next few weeks of rest, I had plenty of time

to think about the path I had chosen to follow, a path that led away from God since I had left home. I realized how fragile life is and that my parents' prayers had literally saved my life. I rededicated my life to God and asked Him to help me return to the path He wanted me to follow. I did not want to spend one more moment outside of God's will.

In time the burns on my hand and foot healed, and I was well enough to return to school and work. I have no permanent effects from the accident, for which I praise God.

My parents prayed for a child, and when I was born, they dedicated me to God for His work. I lost my way on that path for a while, but God didn't give up on me. I know that others have wandered from God's path, and I want them to know that God is waiting for them to return to His path. I am so thankful that God has given me another chance at life. I don't want to waste it. What are you doing with your life? 🙏

Let's talk

- ? Asays, the boy in today's story, was born in answer to his parents' prayers. How do you think his parents felt when he was born?
 - What are some special answers to prayer that you have had? How did you feel when God answered your prayer?
- ? Asays was influenced by older boys at his school. Who is influencing you in your life? Are the influences good or bad?
 - How can we influence others around us to do good rather than bad things?
- ? When Asays was electrocuted by the powerful jolt of electricity, what was his last thought before he passed out? Was he ready to die? What lesson did he learn from the accident that almost killed him? [*He learned that life is fragile, and nothing is guaranteed.*]
- ? Asays learned that his mother had been praying for him at the very time the accident happened. How do you think that impressed him? How important is it that we pray for others when God puts them into our thoughts?
 - How important is it that we pray for others when God puts them into our thoughts?
- ? Asays said that there isn't time to live outside of God's will. What do you think he means by that? What are you doing to follow God's will in your life every day?
 - God's will in your life every day?

PRAY pray
PRAY

Pray that God will keep Asays close to Him and that he will be faithful in telling others the story of Jesus. Pray for all the students at Adventist schools in India, that they will accept Jesus as their Savior and want to follow Him.

GraceLink Connection: Community.

The friends we choose influence who we become.



Davidson

From Darkness to Light

Davidson Kujur

[Ask a teen boy to present this first-person report.]

I was born into an Adventist family and grew up knowing that Jesus loves me and died to save me. When I was 10 years old my mother died. My father was devastated by her death and moved to the city to find work, leaving my younger brother and me with my grandmother.

My younger brother was given a sponsorship to study in an Adventist boarding school. That was great news for him, but I remained alone with my grandmother. She was old and could not give me the kind of guidance I needed.

Wrong Friends

I studied in a local English-language school, but I began spending time with the wrong boys at school, boys who smoked and drank. They were a bad influence on me, and before long I was smoking and drinking along with them.

I picked up other bad habits too. My friends often skipped school and urged me to skip

classes with them. So each morning I packed my school bag as if I were going to school, but I never actually went. I sneaked out with my friends instead.

My grades fell because of so many absences, and I decided to quit school entirely. I spent my time getting into trouble with my friends, who taught me how to steal from stores and from people who rode the bus with us.

Burglary

One evening one of my friends, Sudhir [soo-DEER], told me that he planned to rob a rich man's house. He wanted me to help him and made it sound like great fun. I went along with the plan, pumped up with excitement over such a daring adventure.

Sudhir had learned that the man would be out of town on a certain weekend, and he decided that was the time to rob him. Late at night we went to the house and broke in through the back door. We found a little money and some electronics, but

not much else. We carried our treasures home and hid them in our houses. A few days later I got scared when police started asking questions about the robbery. But Sudhir urged me to say nothing, and no one suspected us. Sudhir wanted to try robbing another house, but I was nervous. Then God stepped into my life and stopped me.

One night I dreamed that Jesus came back to earth. I could see Him in the clouds, and I expected to be lifted up to go to heaven with Him. To my horror, instead of being lifted up with the others, I was left behind with those who refused God's eternal life. I woke up sweating. I tried to ignore the dream and pretend it did not happen, but several months later I had the same dream again. And a few weeks later I had the same dream a third time. Finally I had to acknowledge that God was calling me, but I was not ready to answer Him yet.

My father learned about my bad habits and wanted to put me

into a Christian school, but he was not earning enough money to pay for my tuition. The best he could do was to send me to a private boarding school. It was not a Christian school, but it did have strict rules that kept me from misbehaving. I could not smoke or drink at this school, and I hated it.

I made a friend there, Randhir [rahn-DEER], who planned to run away from the school. One day during recess we left campus without anyone seeing us. We stopped in some woods near the campus.

That Voice

"Let's go!" Randhir said. "No one saw us leave, and we can escape this place!" I started after him as he hurried toward the bus stop. But as we walked, I heard a voice saying, "David, what you are doing is wrong." The voice was so clear that I turned around to see who had spoken. But no one was there. We arrived at the bus stop and waited for a bus. Out of nowhere I heard the voice again. "What you are doing is wrong," it said.

I realized that I was hearing God speak to me. Suddenly I did not want to run away. I told Randhir that I was going back to school. "What's wrong with you?"

Randhir asked. "You wanted to get away from here. Are you getting scared?"

I told him I thought it was wrong to run away, and I was going back to the school. "You can go," I said. "I won't tell where you are." Then I turned and started in the direction we had come from, leaving Randhir standing at the bus stop. A few minutes later Randhir left the bus stop and followed me back to school.

Turning Back

That was the turning point in my life. I returned to my room and fell to my knees. For the first time in several years I prayed earnestly and honestly to God. I asked God to help me turn my life around and help me overcome my bad habits so that I could live a new life for Him. I asked God to take away my desire to smoke and drink and do the other things that were not pleasing to Him, and He did. In their place God gave me a desire to follow Him.

Although my life was back on track with God, I was still having trouble in school. The boarding school was much more difficult than the day school I had attended, and I had trouble grasping my lessons. When our grades were issued, I had failed

two classes. I asked God to open my mind and help me understand. The next quarter I studied hard, and with God's help I passed all my subjects. My grades still were not as good as I wanted, but I kept praying and studying, and within a year I was doing well. Two years after I gave my heart to God I was at the top of my class! I know that only God could have done this, and I am grateful.

I remained at the boarding school until I was able to enroll in an Adventist school for my high school classes. I am so grateful to be in a Christian school, and I praise God for never letting me go when I wandered from Him.

Adventist schools in India are mission schools that lead many young people to Jesus every year. Thousands of believers and church workers became Adventist Christians while studying in Adventist boarding schools. Your mission offerings help keep these boarding schools operating. Thank you for sharing so that young people in India can meet the Savior. 🙏

Davidson Kujur is a senior at the Adventist Higher Secondary School in Khurda, Orissa State, India. He hopes to study medicine and become a doctor.

let's talk

- ? How did Davidson go from a Christian to one who got into trouble? *[He chose friends among the wrong group of boys. Our choice of friends has a powerful effect on us and our behavior. Friends influence our values and our everyday activities.]*
- ? List some ways we as Christians can influence our friends for good. *[We must keep our words and actions pure and pleasing to God, and let our friends know what we believe in. Then we will influence them rather than they us.]*

PRAY pray
PRAY

Pray that young Adventists who must attend public schools in India will stand firm in their beliefs; pray that the students in Adventist schools in India will give their lives to God.

GraceLink Connection: Grace.

Eager to return home for vacation, Julius and his sister found themselves in a dangerous situation. But God protected them.

Long Journey Home

Julius Soren

School exams were finally over, and Julius was eager to go home. "I don't think you should leave today," a teacher told him. "It's a holiday, and some trains and buses are not operating. You might be stranded." Julius knew the teacher was right, but he was eager to go home to his family. He thanked the teacher and hurried to the dean's office to get permission to leave the school that day. He picked up the papers he needed and hurried to find his sister, Sushila [soo-SHEE-lah].

"Let's go home," he said happily. "The train leaves in two hours, and we can catch it if we leave soon." He picked up his own bag and his sister's smaller bag, and the two set out for the train station.

The pair arrived at the train station and saw a small crowd waiting for the train. Sushila watched their bags while Julius bought their tickets. Soon he was back with news that the train would come in 20 minutes.

The train's horn sounded in the distance, announcing its arrival. Julius and Sushila

hurried to find their car and settled down for the journey.

The Long Wait

The sun had set when their train arrived at the station where Julius and Sushila would transfer to a bus. Julius hired an auto rickshaw (a small three-wheeled taxi) to take them to the bus stop. But they arrived to find the platform empty. They waited for 30 minutes, but the bus they expected did not come. Julius had an uneasy feeling that the bus would not come, but he did not share his fears with Sushila.

He saw a shopkeeper nearby and walked over to talk to him. "When will the bus to Dumka arrive?" he asked.

One bus should come in two hours, and another about midnight," the shopkeeper said. Julius sighed and thanked the man. Then he walked back to where his sister sat on their bags.

"The train won't come for more than two hours," Julius told her.

"I'm tired," Sushila said. Julius told her to sit on the bags and sleep.

When the shopkeeper saw the girl trying to sleep on the bags, he called to Julius. "Bring your sister here and let her lie down on this bench," he said. Julius thanked the man and led his sister to the bench to sleep. Then he returned to the bus stop to wait. He did not dare fall asleep and miss the bus.

Time dragged by slowly. Only one bus came, and it was not their bus. One by one the shopkeepers closed their shops. Julius realized that his teacher had been right. His haste to leave the school on a holiday had put himself and his younger sister into a dangerous situation. *Dear God*, he prayed in his heart, *please protect us.*

Night in the Temple

Just then the friendly shopkeeper called to him. "I don't think your bus will come tonight," the man said. "This is no place for children to be at night. Wake your sister, and I'll take you to the temple down the street. You'll be safe there."

Julius went to waken Sushila. *If only I had listened to my*

teacher, Julius chided himself. He gently shook Sushila. "Wake up, sis," he said.

"Is the bus here?" she asked sleepily.

"No. The shopkeeper thinks it isn't going to come tonight. Let's go to the temple to sleep. The shopkeeper said we'll be safe there." Sleepily Sushila stood up and followed her brother and the shopkeeper to the temple down the road.

They found a corner and put their bags down. Sushila laid her jacket under her head and was soon asleep. Julius leaned his head against the temple wall and stared at the brightly painted idols—forms of the elephant god and the snake god glared back at him with unseeing eyes. *Dear God, Julius prayed again, I'm sorry I did not listen to my teachers. Please keep us safe here tonight and help us get home tomorrow. Amen.*

Julius arranged his jacket under his head and lay down. Soon he too was asleep.

Birds chattering woke the children the next morning. They quickly gathered their belongings and hurried to the bus station. The sun climbed higher into the sky, and temperatures grew hotter by the minute. But no bus came. A woman and her two children arrived at the bus stop. They were

going to Dumka too. Julius's courage soared. *Maybe a bus will come soon!* he thought. But no bus came.

The Man in White

A man arrived at the bus stop. He was dressed in a white shirt and pants. "Where are you going?" the man asked in a gentle voice. The woman answered that she was going to Dumka. When the man looked at Julius, he said, "My sister and I are going to Dumka too. But we have waited since last night for a bus, and no bus has come."

The man asked the group to give him their bus fare, and he hired a taxi to take them to Dumka. He paid the difference between the fares and the driver's fee to take them to Dumka.

The travelers squeezed into the car and started toward Dumka. Julius's head began to ache, and his stomach became upset. He knew that he was getting carsick. He told the man in white that he was sick, and the man asked the driver to stop the car. Julius felt bad that he had to delay their travels, but the man dressed in white was not angry. When Julius felt better, he got into the car, and they continued their journey.

"If you feel sick again," the man said, "tell me so the driver can stop for you." The man's

gentle voice comforted Julius.

When the taxi arrived at Dumka, the man in white went to find a rickshaw to take them to their home. But he did not return. Julius wished that he had been able to thank the man for his kindness to them.

Soon the local bus arrived, and Julius and Sushila climbed aboard. They watched the familiar scenery pass by, and soon they stepped off the bus near their home. They were exhausted but happy that God had protected them from a difficult situation.

"My faith in God strengthened that day," Julius said. "Soon after this, I asked the pastor at school to help me prepare to be baptized. I am grateful for our Adventist school, which taught us to trust in God. I'm thankful for the teacher who cared enough to warn me of the difficult journey ahead of us, even though I did not listen. And I'm most thankful to God for loving us and keeping us safe on our long journey home." Our mission offerings make it possible for many children to study at Adventist schools in India. Thank you for giving so that others may know about Jesus. 🙏

Julius Soren, 16, is a student at Khurda SDA Higher Secondary School in Orissa State, India.

Let's talk

- ? Julius was unwise to leave the school with his younger sister on a major holiday, when public transportation was not available. List those whom God sent to offer them counsel or safety during their dangerous journey.

PRAY pray PRAY

Pray that we will be willing to listen to wise counsel when it is offered. Pray that we will trust in God's protection when we need it.

GraceLink Connection: Community.

He ridiculed the pastor who tried to introduce him to God. But soon he realized that this new God was who he had been searching for.



Babulu

Seeing the Light

Babulu Suna

Babulu [BAH-boo-loo] lives in a poor farming village in southeastern India. Almost every day he went to the temple and prayed to the gods for relief from the family's poverty. But his prayers went unanswered. He began to wonder, *Are these gods really gods? If so, why do we suffer so?*

The Wrong God?

One day Babulu saw a Christian pastor talking about the living God. Babulu became angry and shouted, "Why are you talking about a foreign God? We have our own gods. We don't need your religion. Go away and leave us alone!"

To his surprise, the pastor did not become angry. He listened to Babulu quietly, and then he said, "The God in heaven is the true and living God. He loves you so much that He died for you. I must tell people about the living God so they can decide for themselves whether they want to worship Him or the idols."

Babulu walked home thinking about what the pastor had said. That night he could not sleep. Thoughts whirled in his mind. *Could the Christians' God be the true God? Babulu wondered. Is He really more powerful than our gods? Does the Christians' God really care about me, a poor boy in India?* Hour after hour his mind dwelled on this new God. *If the Christians' God is the true God, that would explain why the stone gods do not answer my prayers.* Slowly it started to make sense to him.

The next morning Babulu went to the pastor's house and knocked at the door.

A New God

When the pastor saw Babulu standing at his door, a flicker of fear crossed his face. But he invited Babulu in.

"I want to learn about your God," Babulu said. "My gods have done nothing for me. Even though I pray at the temple every day, I have no peace; I am not happy;

and my family is hungry. How do you know if your God is real?"

The pastor took a deep breath. Where should he start? "First of all, the true God must be powerful and holy, a perfect example to follow. Are your gods pure and holy?"

Babulu admitted that the gods he worshipped were not pure and holy. They killed people and had many wives.

"The living God," said the pastor, "the God I worship, is alive. He lives in heaven. When humans fell into sin, my God sent His only Son, Jesus, to live a perfect life on earth and show us how to live. Jesus healed people and taught them how to live. Then He allowed wicked men to kill Him so that by His death, we may live with Him forever. That is how much my God loves us." The pastor sat back and waited.

A tear welled up in Babulu's eye and gently rolled down his cheek. "Thank you, Pastor," Babulu said, standing. "May I come back tomorrow?"

“Certainly!” the pastor said. “Let’s ask God to show you the path He wants you to follow.” The two prayed together before Babulu left.

As Babulu walked home, he thought about what the pastor had said. *Is this God the pastor talks about the true God? It seems strange that He wants nothing from me except my devotion.*

The next day Babulu returned to the pastor’s house to learn more. “God listens when you speak to Him,” the pastor said. “You can talk to Him about anything and ask His advice and help for things that trouble you. Talk to God as you would talk to a close friend,” he explained. “Talk respectfully, for He is the Creator of the universe, but He understands if you are upset or hurting.” The pastor showed Babulu how to pray. Every day Babulu went back to the pastor’s house to pray and to learn more about God.

Help Me!

Then one day while he worked in the field, a sharp stick stabbed Babulu in the eye. His eye began watering and bleeding; it swelled

and was painful. Babulu went to a doctor, who gave him medicine. But his eye became worse. The doctor said he needed surgery or he risked losing his eye.

“But I have no money,” Babulu said. He told the pastor what happened. “I am so afraid that I might lose my eye,” Babulu said. “Can your God help me?”

“We can pray,” the pastor said. “Jesus healed many people, and He can heal you. God does not always answer our prayers the way we want Him to, but if we trust Him, He will do what is best for us.”

The two men prayed. And Babulu prayed when he was alone. His eye began to feel better. When he returned to the doctor, the doctor was amazed to find the wound was almost healed.

Babulu told him he had prayed, though he did not say to which God he prayed.

Chased Away

Babulu was convinced that the Christians’ God was the true and living God. He began reading the Bible and attending worship with the pastor. At last he felt peace in his heart. But when Babulu’s

parents learned that Babulu was praying to the Christians’ God, they were furious. When he tried to explain what he had learned, his mother spit on him. “You’re not my son,” she screamed. “Leave this house!” Babulu’s father picked up an ax and chased Babulu out the door.

Babulu ran to his sister’s home. There he spent days reading his Bible and praying to Jesus. When his parents discovered where he was, they came to see him. “Please come home,” his mother said. “Stop this foolishness and come back to your family.”

Come Home

But Babulu was convinced that he had found the true God. “I will return home only if I can worship the God I believe in.” Babulu’s parents finally agreed that he could follow his Christian beliefs, and he returned home.

Babulu’s faith continued to grow. One day a Global Mission pioneer visited the pastor’s house when Babulu was there. He joined them in worship, and then he told them about the Sabbath. Babulu believed, and his pastor-friend gave his blessing for Babulu to follow their new friend.

Babulu continues to share God’s truth with everyone he meets. He prays that someday his parents will see the light, as he did, and follow Christ.

The church in the state where Babulu lives is growing rapidly. New believers worship in small chapels, in homes, and under trees. Part of our Thirteenth Sabbath Offering this quarter will help 20 congregations in this region to receive simple chapels in which to worship. Please ask God what He would have you do to help the people of Orissa State grow stronger in Christ. 🙏

Babulu Suna lives in Sambalpur, Orissa, India.

Let's talk

- ? God revealed Himself to Babulu in stages. First he learned that Jesus was the living God; then he learned of God’s power and might, that He created the heavens and the earth. Next he learned, through an accident, that God truly is mighty and can heal and save those who come to Him. How did these discoveries change Babulu’s life? How did his family and friends respond to his new God?
- ? Have you just met God—or just learned something new and exciting about God? If so, share it with the class. What difference has your discovery made in your life? How have you told others of your discovery?

GraceLink Connection: Community.

He was a new believer, and now he had lost a valuable bag. How would he ever repay the owner?



Paul

The Lost Bag

Paul Sahoo

[Ask a teen boy to present this first-person report.]

I am Paul. I come from a big family in southeastern India. My father is a deeply religious man. He worships the idols and a special stone every day. Father expected us to follow his example in worship, which we did, though we did not understand how it could help us. Sometimes when we prayed to the idols, I found myself praying, “God, if You are there, show me who You are.”

One day I entered a small shop and heard a man talking to the shopkeeper. I listened to their conversation and realized that the visitor was teaching the shopkeeper about a living God. *A living God!* I thought to myself. *So there really is a living God!* I wanted to know more.

I learned that the visitor was a Christian pastor and that he was organizing a youth club. He invited me to join, and I gladly did. The club met every day for a lecture on health, cleanliness, or family relationships. Then we cleaned up the public areas in the village. This, he said, helped us to become good citizens.

After the cleanup I stayed behind and asked the pastor many questions. There was so much that I did not understand. And the pastor answered them all. Then he asked me a question. “May I come to your house and talk with your family?”

I told him where we lived and invited the pastor to visit. He came and talked to my family. Then he offered to pray with us. Soon he was coming regularly to our house.

Intervention

We were poor, and our house was made of thatch and built in a squatter’s camp on government land, for we had no land of our own. One day the government sent bulldozers to plow down the squatters’ village.

Everyone was afraid and did not know what to do. I ran to tell the pastor what was happening, and he hurried to the mayor’s office to explain that we had nowhere else to live. Then he asked that the houses in the squatters’ village be allowed to

remain. Meanwhile, I prayed that God would save our house.

The bulldozers parked around the edges of the settlement, while people ran screaming to save their few meager possessions. Then suddenly the bulldozer engines were shut down. The houses were safe. The pastor had convinced the government to let us stay—for a while at least.

I told my family that the pastor had gone to the city government and that God had answered our prayers and saved our home. My family nodded in agreement. Soon after that I was baptized into the Adventist Church.

A Big Loss

I was still a teenager, but I wanted to share my testimony with others while earning money to help my family. I prepared to become a literature evangelist. I was paired with an experienced literature evangelist who taught me how to talk to people and how to sell Christian books.

One day we worked hard all day, and we were tired. We

stopped an auto rickshaw (a three-wheeled taxi) to take us home. As we rode along, we talked about our day's adventures. When we arrived at his house, we got out and went inside, and the rickshaw driver drove off.

We had been in the house just a few minutes when my fellow literature evangelist looked around. "Where is my bag?" he asked.

I stared at him a moment, then stammered, "I thought you had it." I could tell he was unhappy.

"We must have left it in the rickshaw," he sighed as he flopped down into a chair, a defeated look on his face. "It had all my books—and the money we earned today—inside it."

There were hundreds of auto rickshaws in the city, and finding the one in which we had ridden would be almost impossible. There was nothing to do but report the loss to the police.

"Can you give any identifying characteristics of the auto rickshaw in which you were riding?" the police officer asked. We shook our heads. "You are Christians, right?" We nodded. "I advise you to ask your God for help. There is nothing we can do."

An Impossible Task

My friend and I went to tell

the pastor that we had lost the expensive bag and its contents. The pastor said, "Getting the bag back is humanly impossible. But maybe God will accomplish the impossible for us." We prayed together that God would deliver the bag to us again.

We also searched for the bag. We knocked on doors and asked questions. For three days we talked to people and searched, but we found no clues to lead us to the bag. Then on the fourth morning after we had prayed with the pastor, he said, "God has told me the name of a person who knows about the bag." Together we went to a certain street corner that the pastor described. There we found a young man.

"A rickshaw driver has a bag that belongs to these two boys," the pastor said to the man. "We think you know that rickshaw driver."

The man answered, "Yes, I will get the bag and bring it to you in two days' time."

Two days later the man returned, but without the bag. "The driver who has the bag has left town for his village," the man said. "I can't convince him to bring it back."

The pastor learned where the man lived, took some church members, and set off for the

appointed village. Our guide led us to the man's house, and the pastor knocked on the door. A man opened it.

"A leather bag was left in your rickshaw six days ago," the pastor said. "Do you have it?" The man shook his head and said he didn't know about a bag. But we saw a large wooden box in the middle of the room. We stepped inside and removed the lid. We pulled out some newspapers and found the leather bag still locked.

"Thank you for keeping this bag safe for us," the pastor said. We took the bag and returned home with songs of praise in our hearts.

When I told my family how God had led us to the missing bag, they were impressed. My brothers joined me in preparation for baptism, and in time we all were baptized.

God uses many different ways to bring glory to His name. In this case He used a lost bag to confirm my faith and lead my brothers and me into the church. I want everyone to know that I serve a living God who cares about even small things such as lost bags. 🙏

Paul Sahoo shares his faith in Bhubaneswar, Orissa, India.

let's talk

? Have you ever lost something important and had no idea where it was? What did you do about it? *[Let class members share their responses.]* While we must do what we can to solve our dilemmas, whether it is to find a lost item or to right a wrong, we must also remember to ask God for wisdom to resolve our problems to His glory.

PRAY pray
PRAY

Pray that God will keep Paul and his brothers close to Him and that they will share their faith with others in their largely non-Christian village.

GraceLink Connection: Grace.

She found a faith she could live with, but would God provide her with a husband who shared her beliefs?



Sahana

Match Made in Heaven

From the time she was a young girl, Sahana [sah-HAH-nah] loved God and attended church every Sunday. Sometimes, however, she wished that the worship service was not so loud and exuberant.

When Sahana finished her studies, she continued to live with her parents, as is the custom in India. She knew that soon her parents would choose a husband for her.

Sahana found a job at a college and made many friends there. She especially liked Marina, a teacher at the school.

A Chance Meeting

One day Marina fell ill with malaria and was admitted to the hospital. Sahana went to visit her friend. While she waited outside Marina's room, she met a man who was also waiting. They started talking.

Sahana learned that the man's name was Michael and that he was a Christian. "What church do you belong to?" Sahana asked, curious.

"I am a Seventh-day Adventist," Michael said.

Sahana wanted to know more about this man's religion, but in her culture it is not appropriate for a single girl to talk to a man she does not know, so her questions had to wait. However, Sahana could not help but wonder about this young man and his church. Sahana had read the Bible and had many questions about it. Her own family's church did not answer her questions. Perhaps Michael's church had the answers. Sahana decided to ask Marina when she felt better.

Many Questions

When Marina returned to school, Sahana greeted her friend. "I met your friend Michael in the hospital," Sahana said. "He told me that he is a Seventh-day Adventist. Do you know anything about this church?"

"A little," Marina answered. "I have been attending the Adventist church for a year now. These people worship on Saturday because the Bible tells us to keep the seventh day holy."

"Oh," Sahana said, surprised. "I had read about the seventh

day in the Bible, and I have some questions. Can you answer them?"

Marina answered Sahana's questions as well as she could. Then she said, "The people at the Adventist church are so friendly and kind. My husband has joined the church, but since I have to work on Saturday, I have not joined yet."

"Does this church teach about the books of Daniel and Revelation?" Sahana asked with excitement. "I don't understand them, and I would like to know what they mean."

Marina brought some material on Daniel and Revelation for Sahana to read. As Sahana read the material she was amazed at how clear these books of the Bible became. Later Marina brought her other books, which Sahana read through eagerly, impressed that these were the truth.

Ready to Visit

Sahana visited the Adventist church and saw for herself a church whose services were reverent but vibrant with God's love. The people were friendly

and gracious, exactly what Sahana had been told. “I feel as if I have found my spiritual home at last,” she told her friend.

Sahana returned home after church and eagerly told her parents about her worship experience. Her parents had never heard of Seventh-day Adventists, but they listened as she explained to them some of the basic beliefs. She read to them the Ten Commandments and explained that God had never abolished or changed His law. “Jesus and His disciples kept these same laws,” she told them.

Sahana’s parents were glad for her and encouraged her to follow her heart, but they continued attending their own church.

The Search Begins

Sahana’s parents talked about their search for a good husband for her. Sahana shared her concerns that the man they choose share her faith. She also asked her friend Marina, “What if my parents choose a man who doesn’t want me to worship as an Adventist? How will I keep my faith if I marry someone who doesn’t share my beliefs?”

Marina urged Sahana to pray about the search. Then Marina added a surprising comment. “Maybe I can help your parents to find an Adventist man. I know a few people.”

“That would be wonderful,” Sahana said.

Sahana spoke with her mother about her concerns. “Mother, I want to marry an Adventist man.”

“All these churches are really the same,” her mother said. “And we don’t know any Adventist men.”

“My friend Marina can help you to find an Adventist husband for me,” Sahana said.

“Well, yes, if Marina has someone in mind, we will certainly consider him,” her mother replied.

Marina knew that many Adventist young people would attend their pastor’s wedding soon. In fact, one young man would stay with Marina. She invited Sahana to meet this young man in her home.

Sahana prayed earnestly that God would lead her to a good Adventist young man. When Aby, the young man, arrived, Sahana was pleased that he was so

courteous—and handsome. The two talked together in Marina’s home for several hours. Then Sahana’s parents met Aby and were impressed by him.

Match Made in Heaven

When Aby returned home, he told his parents about Sahana. Soon Marina received a message to send Sahana’s picture. Two months later Aby’s parents met Sahana and her parents. Aby’s parents liked her, and his mother said, “She is the girl I would choose for you.”

Wedding arrangements began, though Sahana and Aby did not speak to each other. Meanwhile Sahana was baptized. Three months later the couple was married. Their wedding day was just the second time they had seen each other, as is the custom in arranged marriages.

Though they were nearly strangers, Sahana and Aby are convinced that God led them to each other. They are settling into a life together with God as the center of their home.

And Sahana’s parents were so impressed at how God led in arranging their daughter’s marriage that they too are attending the Adventist church. 🍷

Let's talk

? Many cultures around the world still arrange marriages for sons and daughters. The children often do not know their partner at the time of marriage. While this custom may seem strange to those who live in a society in which young people choose their own partners, what advantages can you see in such a system? *[Parents look at other issues than physical attraction. They consider ability to support a wife, skills in homemaking, training, and upbringing. Sometimes these important issues are lost sight of when young people seek their own mates.]*

? If you lived in a culture in which parents find a mate, what traits would you want your parents to look for in that person? Would you pray any differently for your future mate than you would if you were to choose your own husband or wife?

Aby and Sahana Kurian live in Hosur, India, where Aby is a software engineer.

PRAY pray **PRAY**

Pray that young people will seek God’s will in finding a mate, no matter how one’s culture dictates it should be done.

Nepal



Pranita



Praveen



Rebecca



Sabina

Nepalese Youth for Christ

[Ask three girls, a boy, and a narrator to present these first-person testimonies.]

Narrator: Until recently Nepal was the world's only Hindu nation. But one by one, quietly, individually, people are learning about God and accepting Jesus as their Savior. Today four young people from Nepal tell how Jesus has changed their lives.

Pranita [girl]

I am Pranita. I live in Kathmandu [kath-mahn-DOO], the capital of Nepal. One day my brother died while he and my father were working in India. Mother was crazy with grief. Her sister is a Christian and told us that Jesus wants to comfort us in our sadness. I knew nothing about Christians or about Jesus, and wondered whether Jesus lived in our city. My aunt answered our questions about God.

Mother enrolled me to study in a private boarding school in Kathmandu. We did not know that it was owned by a Seventh-day Adventist, but soon I began to learn more about Jesus. I enjoyed the Bible stories and the worship

services and wanted my mother to come too. I invited her, and she came and began studying the Bible. We were baptized together, and today we pray that the rest of our family will learn about Jesus and follow Him too.

Praveen [boy]

I am Praveen [prah-VEEN]. I was born in a small village in eastern Nepal and grew up worshipping gods made of stone. When I was 8 years old, my father was transferred to Kathmandu to work. We moved to the city. Father began drinking more often, and sometimes he abused my mother.

Then Mother and I met an Adventist family who invited us to attend church with them. The group of worshippers met in a small room, but I enjoyed the pastor's messages very much. We decided to keep going to the church programs. But my Father became angry about this. He often beat my mother and argued with us about religion.

One Sabbath Father was drunk.

He told us we could not go to the church, and he lay down in the doorway of our house. He told Mother that if she stepped over him to go to church, he wouldn't take care of us any longer. Eventually he moved, and Mother and I could go to church.

Whenever Father saw us in our good clothes on Sabbath, he made trouble, so Mother told me to take our good clothes to a neighbor's house, and Mother and I dressed in our work clothes to leave the house. Then we changed clothes at the neighbor's house and went to church. This way we could attend church without my father causing problems. Every day my mother and I prayed for Father.

In time my father stopped objecting to our worshipping God. After Mother was baptized, she got a job so she could pay my school fees to attend the Adventist boarding school.

God is answering our prayers! This past year Father stopped drinking and began attending

church with us. At first he came only for song service, then he stayed for Sabbath School, and today he attends the entire service. He has changed so much. He helps Mother around the house and has begun to help pay my school fees. I praise God when I see how He has worked in Father's life. I pray that my father will accept Jesus as his Savior soon.

Rebecca

I'm Rebecca. My family is from a village in western Nepal, about seven days' walk from Kathmandu. When I was young a relative told my mother about God. When my family moved to Kathmandu, Mother wanted to follow God, but my father wasn't interested.

Mother began worshipping in our home. She invited the Adventist pastor to come. Father would not stay home when the pastor came, and sometimes he fought with Mother about her beliefs. But in time Mother was baptized.

One day Father began to have medical problems, and there were no doctors who could heal him. Mother convinced him to go to the Adventist hospital an hour out of Kathmandu. The medical staff there treated his illness, and soon

he felt better. While at the hospital, Father listened to what the people told him about Jesus. Eventually he accepted Jesus as his own God and was baptized. Now my parents are happy together.

Then times became hard for us. Father went away to work and stopped sending money for my school fees. Mother worked hard to earn money for food and clothes. I was studying at the Adventist school in Kathmandu and growing strong in my faith.

Then last year Father contacted Mother and apologized for the mistakes he had made. Although our family still has struggles, we are together again and serving God. I am happy that God is leading my family once more. I pray that God will work in the hearts of my family, and we will again be united in our faith.

Sabina [girl]

I grew up in an idol-worshipping family, but when my neighbor recommended that I study in the Adventist school in Kathmandu, they agreed. There I began learning about God and that He wanted me to be His child. I was happy at school, but there were problems at home.

Father drank a lot, and my parents often quarreled. Sometimes my father hit my mother. One day my mother left my brother and me with our grandparents and did not return for us.

My grandparents fed and clothed us, but they couldn't afford to pay our tuition, so we had to quit school. One day I met the neighbor who had told us about the Christian school. She asked why I had not been at school, and I explained our situation. She urged me to return to school and promised to find a way for us to study. God provided a sponsor for us, so we now live in the dormitory at the school and can study again.

I tell my grandparents about Jesus, and sometimes they attend the little church on our school campus. I don't know where my parents are, but I pray for them every day.

I am so thankful to be studying at this school, where I have learned about Jesus. I pray that my parents will learn that God loves them too. I know that God will never leave me. 🙏

Pranita, Praveen, Rebecca, and Sabina
all live and study in Kathmandu, Nepal.

Let's talk

? Each of these young people has had difficult challenges to face. One lost a brother to death; others had a parent who objected to their faith, health problems, or other challenges they had to deal with. How has the Adventist school they attend helped them deal with their family problems? *[They have learned to pray and let God work out their problems.]* How can your faith help you when you meet problems you do not understand? *[If we learn to trust God when we are young, we build up faith for difficult times in the future. When we read our Bible and memorize texts that promise strength, God will remind us of these verses when we are in difficult situations.]*

PRAY pray
PRAY

Pray for the youth of Nepal who do not know Jesus. Pray that young people such as these we met today will share their faith with those who do not know God. Pray too for the young people at the Adventist school, that they will grow in their faith.

GraceLink Connection: Service.



Kumar

A Changed Life

Kumar Adhikari

[Ask a teen boy to present this first-person report.]

I am Kumar, from Nepal [*Locate Nepal on a map.*]. As a child I faced difficulties because of my family's religious beliefs. Superstitions controlled everything in our lives. Once a neighbor who practiced witchcraft cast a spell on me, and I became sick. For months I barely ate anything, and the sickness continued for years. My family took me to doctors and to religious leaders. They prayed to their idols, and they even took me to witch doctors to have the spell removed, but nothing helped.

I was near death when some Christians offered to pray for me. But my father resisted, thinking that if a Christian prayed for me, I would become possessed by the Christians' God and would no longer follow our family's gods. But when it seemed that I would die anyway, he finally allowed the Christians to pray for me.

The Christians prayed for me, and I recovered. After this, my parents allowed me to enroll in a Christian school to study. There I learned about the God who had saved me.

Another Turning Point

One day a visitor came to our village to teach people about God. Our family met this man—an Adventist pastor—and listened to him as he told them many things from the Bible. My family did not accept the pastor's message, but the pastor saw that I was eager to know more. He arranged for me to study in an Adventist school in northern India.

I studied hard and was eager to know more about this God who had saved me when I was so sick. I wanted to follow Him and to serve Him. I completed high school and received help to study at Spicer College, where I prepared to become a pastor.

When I finished my studies, I returned to my homeland in Nepal to work for God. I was sent to eastern Nepal, where I found only one Seventh-day Adventist family. We worked together, and God blessed our efforts. Within six months 14 people were baptized. One of them was the daughter of this family, who would become my wife. Also

among this group were members of my own family, including my parents. That first baptism was precious to me!

Our work in Nepal has grown, and today we have two churches and 13 companies in the region where I work. Ten volunteer evangelists work with me to nurture these believers.

God's Fruits

God brings people to his truth from all situations. Kalpana [kal-PAH-nah] had been sick for eight years. She was paralyzed and could not get out of bed. But doctors could find nothing wrong with her. Our church family prayed for her, and my wife massaged her arms and legs. Within a few weeks Kalpana could walk on her own to our little church. She has been baptized now, and she brings her mother, her brother, and her sister to church with her.

Kishan [kee-SHAWN] was a dangerous man. He drank a lot and fought with anyone who crossed his path. Whenever I met

Kishan I told him a little about Jesus. He had never heard of Jesus before and seemed confused. But I continued talking to him gently about Jesus. And then I invited him to visit our prayer group, which met in my wife's parents' home.

Every evening we met together in the house. We would sing some songs, and then I would tell a story to those who came. Kishan came, and little by little his heart began to change. One day Kishan said he wanted to become a Christian. I visited him, and his wife said that she too wanted to follow Jesus. She said that for years Kishan had beaten her, but now he was kind to her. He was no longer beating up the people in the village, either.

Others noticed the changes in Kishan. His mother had been an alcoholic for years, but she saw the changes in her son, and she quit drinking and followed Jesus, too. Kishan's brother and sister began asking what had changed Kishan, and after studying the Bible for several months, they accepted Jesus as their Savior. Nearly all of Kishan's family

members have been baptized.

Today Kishan is respected throughout the village instead of being feared. Everyone is amazed at his kindness and helpfulness to others. Today the weekly worship services are held in his home.

Rice Paddy Witness

Krishna bought a rice paddy that became a testimony of God's power in his village. He hired a farmer to plant rice on the land, and when the planting was complete, Krishna and the farmer walked around the paddy while Krishna prayed. "God, I bought this land in this place where Your name is not known. Please use this field to tell the people in this area that You are the living God."

When the field was ripe, the farmer harvested more than twice as much as the farmers of other fields of the same size. The neighbors were amazed and wanted to know why, so the farmer told them that Krishna, the owner, is a Christian. "He asked His God to bless the crop, and this is the result," the man said.

The following year the same

thing happened. Krishna and the farmer prayed over the field, and again the yield was twice what the neighboring rice paddies produced.

The neighbors asked Krishna what he was doing to raise so much rice. This was Krishna's opportunity to share Jesus with the people who did not know Him. He explained that God loves us and wants to bless us when we follow Him. He told the neighbors that his worship to God included giving faithful offerings back to God.

Many of the villagers are now studying to know about the living God, including the farmer who saw God's hand bless Krishna's field.

Pray for the people of Nepal. Pray that God will open their eyes so that they can see that their idols cannot help them. And please continue giving your mission offerings, for they help spread the word of God in Nepal and around the world. Many more people in Nepal need to know of God's free gift—His Son—and the eternal life that He offers. 🙏

Kumar Adhikari is a pastor working in eastern Nepal.

Let's talk

? Kumar grew up in an idol-worshipping family. How did he come to know about Jesus? *[He was sick for a long time and under a spell. Finally some Christians prayed for him, and he was healed.]*

• How did he become a pastor? *[An Adventist pastor visited his village, saw his interest in learning about God, and invited him to study at an Adventist school, where he gave his life to Jesus. He studied hard and was rewarded with a scholarship to study at Spicer College, where he prepared for the ministry.]*

? God gave Kumar a huge task—to work in an area of Nepal where only one family was Adventist. And God blessed him with many new believers. What task has God given you to do? Does it seem too large and impossible to complete? How can you know that you can complete it? *[God has promised that when He gives us a work to do, He will help us to do it.]*

Program

Celebrating Growth

Opening Song "Far and Near the Fields Are Teeming"
The Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal,
No. 358

Welcome Superintendent or Sabbath
School teacher

Scripture See responsive reading

Prayer

Program "Celebrating Growth"

Offering While the offering is being taken,
ask the children to sing songs they
have learned this quarter.

Closing Song "Lead Them, My God, to Thee"
The Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal,
No. 653

Closing Prayer

"Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

How . . . can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard?

And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can they preach unless they are sent? . . .

Faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ. . . .

"Their voice has gone out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world."
(Romans 10:13-18, NIV)

Participants: Six reporters (you may divide reports among fewer reporters if you wish). *[Note: the 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. Practice two or three times so that participants can feel comfortable adding inflection where called for.]*

Props: A large outline map of India. (Project the map on the back of the mission quarterly onto a wall or trace the map onto a large sheet of white paper.)

* * *

Speaker 1: The Southern Asia Division is made up of India, Bhutan, Nepal, and the Maldives Islands. Work in some areas is progressing rapidly, while other regions of this division struggle to reach people for Jesus.

Speaker 2: India is the second most populous country in the world. The church here has faced strong challenges to Christianity and to Adventism. Even today less than 3 percent of the population is Christian.

The first Adventist missionaries entered India more than 100 years ago, and the church's work soon took root. But growth was often painfully slow. In 1995 membership stood at less than 200,000 in a country that numbered almost a billion people. There was just one Adventist believer for every 4,500 people.

But an aggressive outreach program utilizing Global Mission pioneers, national pastors, and

worldwide prayer has brought about stunning growth. Today membership stands at more than 1 million believers—five times what it was just 10 years ago. Today India has one Adventist for every 1,000 people.

Speaker 3: This is wonderful news. But such growth puts huge strains on the resources of the Adventist Church in India. Pastors must be trained and supported as they lead the new congregations that have been established. Churches must be built. And in a country where day-to-day survival is a matter of constant concern, new believers simply do not have resources to build even the simplest chapel. Believers around the world have helped build thousands of chapels in India, but thousands more are needed to accommodate those still waiting for a chapel in which to worship.

Colorful temples dot the landscape where people come to worship their gods of stone. But many new Christians do not have a house of worship. They must meet beneath a tree or in a private home. Often new believers are ridiculed for their poor meeting conditions. Such attitudes make it difficult for Christians to convince their friends and families to come to meet the God of the universe.

Speaker 1: Part of our Thirteenth Sabbath Offering today will provide simple churches for 20 congregations in Orissa State and

20 congregations in other regions of the Southern Asia Division.

Speaker 4: If Global Mission is the front-line effort of evangelism in southern Asia, education is the backbone. The Adventist educational system in India is highly regarded and accounts for a significant number of conversions every year. Parents of all faiths want their children to have the best education possible, and the Adventist educational system is known for its quality education. Children who come to study find a whole new way of life and worship. They learn principles from the Bible and learn that Jesus loves them and wants them to be His friend forever. Many of these children become Christians while studying in Adventist schools, and they take their newfound faith home to their parents.

Demand for high-quality education continues to grow in India, and thousands of students of all faiths seek to study in Adventist schools every year.

Speaker 5: An Adventist school is particularly important in regions of rapid church growth. One such area, Ongole, on the eastern coast of India, has grown rapidly in the past few years and has many new believers. A school will help train parents as it trains their children for leadership in the future. The school will become the training center for the entire region.

Speaker 1: Part of our Thirteenth Sabbath Offering today will help build a new school in Ongole [awn-GOH-leh], in Andhra Pradesh, and a boy's dormitory for Raymond Memorial Higher Secondary School in northern India.

Speaker 6: In the past 10 years 800,000 new believers have been added to the church in the Southern Asia Division. This is an average of 219 new believers every single day. Imagine, two new congregations of new believers added to the world church every day in southern Asia alone. This is encouraging growth. But the region still faces difficult struggles as it seeks to penetrate into unreached areas.

Southern Asia needs our financial help to provide for its growing membership, and it needs our prayers in order to nurture and sustain the growth it's experienced. Pray that God will hold back the forces of evil, so that those who honestly seek God will find Him. Thousands are coming to Christ every year in this vast land. How will you respond to the challenge of leading these spiritually hungry people to Jesus?

Speaker 1: As you prepare to give your offering today, ask God what He would have you do to help finish the work in this vast and largely unreached territory.

[Offering]



Your Thirteenth Sabbath Offerings have helped build hundreds of churches throughout the Southern Asia Division. The members of these churches say thank you for answering their prayers for a house of worship where they can invite friends and family to meet the Savior.

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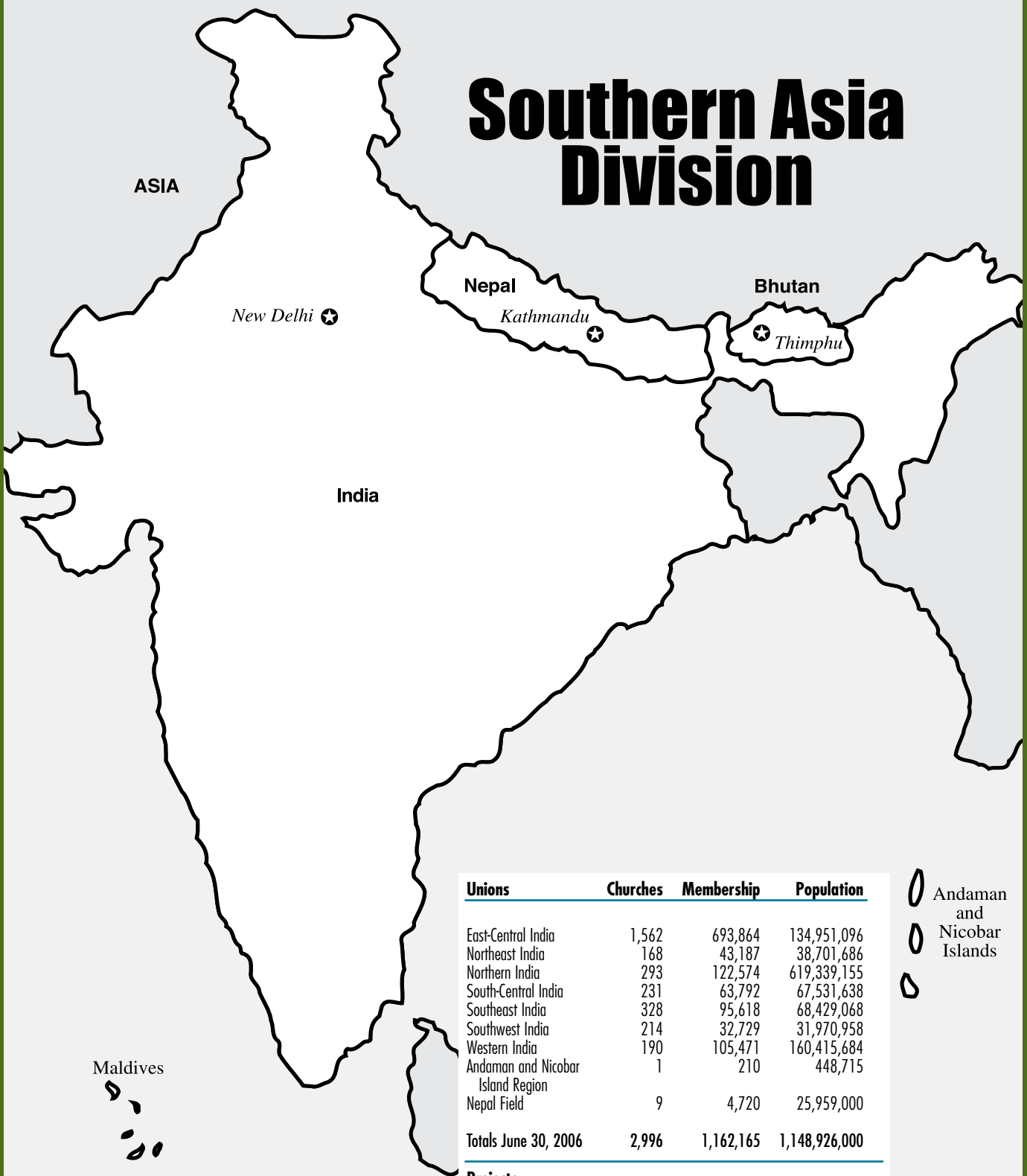
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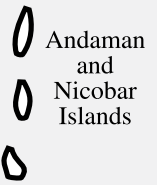
Fourth Quarter 2007
Southern Asia Division

Mission
Teen

Southern Asia Division



Unions	Churches	Membership	Population
East-Central India	1,562	693,864	134,951,096
Northeast India	168	43,187	38,701,686
Northern India	293	122,574	619,339,155
South-Central India	231	63,792	67,531,638
Southeast India	328	95,618	68,429,068
Southwest India	214	32,729	31,970,958
Western India	190	105,471	160,415,684
Andaman and Nicobar Island Region	1	210	448,715
Nepal Field	9	4,720	25,959,000
Totals June 30, 2006	2,996	1,162,165	1,148,926,000



Andaman and Nicobar Islands

Projects

- Secondary boarding school in Ongole, Andhra Pradesh, India
- Boys' dormitory Raymond Memorial Higher Secondary School, West Bengal, India
- Twenty churches in Orissa State, India
- Twenty churches throughout Southern Asia