



# MISSION

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General Conference of

# Seventh-day Adventists

Southern Asia Division

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Dear Sabbath School Members:

New workers' homes, additional classroom space, and the extension of hospital facilities all testify to growth. New members mean more educational facilities and extra classroom space. The extension of the church's witness demands the spread of the health message. Small health-care institutions begun in faith and housed in temporary quarters, need permanent buildings.

Through the years you have been supporting the work in Southern Asia through your Thirteenth Sabbath Special Projects Offering. We thank you for your interest in our growth and the demonstration of your support by your faithful and generous contributions in the past. This quarter we present our needs for expansion and consolidation of our witness in the countries of this Division. Your offering this Thirteenth Sabbath will help us:

1. Provide homes for workers at the Lakpahana Adventist Seminary and College in the beautiful island of Sri Lanka.
2. Build new classrooms for the E. D. Thomas Memorial High School in South India.
3. Construct a new hospital building for the Ruby Nelson Memorial hospital in Jullundur, north India.

As you think especially of Southern Asia this quarter may we request that you remember us regularly in your prayers. We are facing many difficult problems and the assurance of your prayers on our behalf will be a source of strength to us. Thank you.

Yours sincerely,

G. J. Christo  
President

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Cover Picture: Hindu  
mother pleading for help  
reminds of our commission—  
"Give ye them to eat"  
(Matt. 14:16).

Southern Asia Division  
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# MISSION

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- 15** Perhaps for the first time in the adult quarterly **WORLD MISSION REPORT** presents a two-part story. You may want to plan for the same person to present both episodes of **Appointment With Destiny**.
- 19** **Special effects** should be planned and rehearsed when presenting **Sikkim Secretary**.
- 21** Which article would the editor choose as being the one not to miss? **Healing for a Heart** by Dr. Glenn Christo. It actually completes a pair with "Sikkim Secretary."

## FACTS AND FIGURES

[Sources of information: *Reader's Digest 1980 Almanac and Yearbook*; *The World Almanac and Book of Facts, 1980*; *World Book Encyclopedia*.]

### INDIA

Bordered on the north by the mighty Himalayas, on the west by Pakistan, the northeast by Bangladesh, and the south by the Indian Ocean, the subcontinent of India occupies an area roughly a third the size of mainland United States. Her population, however, is three times that of the U.S. In fact, India's population is greater than that of Africa and South America combined. The sheer size of population in respect to the land mass occupied spells severe economic problems.

The most outstanding characteristic of India is its great varieties and contrasts. For instance, India embraces peoples of widely different racial origins from fair Indo-Aryans to dark-skinned Dravidians. It is the land of the very rich and the very poor, the ultra-modern and the ancient, the highly educated and the illiterate. All live side by side in a potpourri that is unmistakably Indian. The people are deeply religious and support magnificent temples and multitudes of "holy" men and women.

### SIKKIM

Two stories in this quarterly are from Sikkim, a state of India, formerly a tiny mountain kingdom, about the size of Delaware and still maintaining its own character. Mount Kanchenjunga, the third largest mountain in the world, lies on Sikkim's western border with Nepal, and China lies to the north. Gangtok, its capital and only city, has a population of 30,000. Until 1976 her Buddhist kings permitted no Christians to enter her borders.

### SRI LANKA

This country best known as Ceylon—as it was called until 1972—lies 20 miles off the tip of India. It occupies only 25,332 square miles—about the size of West Virginia but with a population seven and one half times as great. About two thirds of the population is Sinhalese, descendants of people who migrated from northern India. One fourth are Tamils, an energetic, largely Hindu people from south India. Sri Lanka has two languages, Sinhala and Tamil. Colombo, the capital city, is a thriving center of international trade.

For further information on these fascinating countries, consult encyclopedias, travel brochures, and *National Geographic* magazines. (Articles on Sikkim: March and November, 1963; November, 1970.)

Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Burma also belong to the Southern Asia Division but are not specifically to benefit from the Special Projects Offering this quarter.

January 2

# Letter From Poona

**Elsworth A. Hetke**

Southern Asia Division secretary

Dear Advent Believers,

"Hello" from Southern Asia. "Namaskaram" (Nahm-us-KAH-rum), from the Tamils; "Sat siriyakal" (Sut-suh-REE-KAHL), from the Punjabis (Pun-JAH-bees); and "Ayu bowan" (EYE-you BO-won), from the Sinhalese (SING-ha-LEEZ).

As you have just heard, Southern Asia is many peoples, many languages, and many challenges and needs. Southern Asia also presents God-given opportunities—opportunities that beckon the church to step out in faith to attempt great things.

This division has taken many steps into the unknown during the past five years. A mission clinic has been firmly established in Sikkim by doctors born and trained in India. This area was previously closed to Christians and even now is closed to non-Indians. So it is with a sense of pride in coming of age as a church that this quarter we present a report of their pioneering success. Recently the church in West Bengal has begun work among the Ravas (RAH-vahs), a tribal people hardly touched by modern civilization. Adult literacy classes opened the way to study the Word among these people, but they badly need medical assistance, too. But that must remain a challenge for the time being.

At the recent Southern Asia Division year-end meetings the president, G. J. Christo, called upon the church

here to fulfill its first calling: that of **mission**. Elder Kyaw Balay (Chaw Ba-LAY), first Burmese delegate to division meetings in approximately fifteen years, quoting the much-loved John 3:16, pointed out that "giving is the law of growth." Dedication, sacrifice, and surrender have been, and always will be, the forerunners of success in finishing God's work.

The true sign of the coming of age of the church in Southern Asia is the self-reliance demonstrated by increased tithe, Ingathering funds, and literature sales. For instance, the new Bangladesh Union reports a 450 percent increase in Ingathering funds for 1980. The South India Union literature sales of the same year exceeded 1.25 million rupees (US\$168,000). To appreciate fully what that figure represents under the Indian economy, one should probably think of a rupee as being a dollar.

Remembering that in the year 1947 the church in Southern Asia first passed the 1000 mark in total yearly baptisms the leaders in 1980 were encouraged to note that two unions had well over 1000 baptisms each, while a third approached 44,000 baptisms. The Lord has truly blessed through the years, even when progress was not measured in great numbers; but how those pioneers would have rejoiced to see this day!

With the steady decline in foreign missionaries, national leaders have assumed more and more responsibility in the various departments and institutions of the Adventist Church. Our schools and colleges have been steadily training workers to fill the needs. Other Protestant denominations have not always been so fortunate, and many congregations have been left without shepherds. Thus some entire congregations are turning to the Adventist Church to fulfill their needs.

Thrilling though these large accessions are, they bring in their wake interesting problems. The South India Union, traditionally the leader of all the unions of Southern Asia in baptisms, now finds itself increasingly unable to care for the educational needs of its members, in spite of its eighty-eight schools, fifteen of which were opened in 1980.

The situation is especially pressing in the E. D. Thomas High School. Your offerings have helped this school in the past, a fact the teachers and students will not soon forget.

Students from this school are active in youth evangelism, and recently twenty-seven baptisms resulted from their efforts. Their evangelistic gospel team, along with the Good News Singing Band, visit the homes of non-Adventist students and friends. Many homes have opened for weekly prayer meetings, and prejudice is being broken down. Today the E. D. Thomas High School is in desperate need of more classroom and dormitory space. The Special Projects portion of the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help this growing school to expand facilities.

Another recipient of that offering

will be the Ruby Nelson Memorial Hospital in the Punjab of North India, at Jullundur. This is one of twelve medical institutions operated by the Southern Asia Division. All are small, outdated, and crowded into remodeled former houses or bungalows. It is not the physical plants that attract the sick and suffering to these institutions, but physical plants are important. For fourteen years the Ruby Nelson Memorial Hospital has been a witness to Christ's compassionate love. It generates ample income for its day-to-day operation but not for the reconstruction of its physical plant as required to meet higher government standards.

The smallest union in Southern Asia has some of the largest needs. Sri Lanka (SREE LUN-ka), formerly called Ceylon, is a country of high property rentals. When housing costs as much as three times the worker's salary, something must be done. Too much money is being diverted from preaching, teaching, and healing in order that workers can be housed. One third of the work force in Sri Lanka is located at the Lakpahana (LUCK-pa-HAH-na) Adventist Seminary and College, where the need for housing is particularly acute. Let us give this Thirteenth Sabbath that those who train our youth may live in dignity and with basic comfort worthy of the Adventist name.

We in Southern Asia say in English "Thank you." In Tamil, "Nandi" (NUN-dee). In Punjabi we say, "Shukriya" (SHOOK-ree-ah) for what you will do March 27. In Sinhalese we say, "Bomaisthuthi" (BO-may-is-THOO-thee). Thanks again!

May God bless you all,  
Elsworth

January 9

# A Tale of Two Women

**Noelene Johnsson and Mrs. Rajamma Sharalaya**

WMR editor and assistant Sabbath School director, Southern Asia Division

The influence of two remarkable women, Ruby Gill Nelson and Susan Abraham Moser, is keenly felt today in Jullundur, in northern India.

Ruby Gill Nelson was born in Colorado, U.S.A., and at the age of 10 was baptized into the Seventh-day Adventist Church. After attending Walla Walla Valley Academy, Ruby trained as a nurse at the Portland Sanitarium School of Nursing, from which she graduated in 1926. The following year she married Philip S. Nelson and joined him in departmental and pastoral work.

Later he completed the medical course at Loma Linda and set up practice in Seattle, Washington, with his brother Reuben in 1936. The Nelsons enjoyed Seattle, but when in 1958 the General Conference invited them to serve in the Southern Asia Division, they sold the practice and sailed for India.

While stationed in Delhi, Dr. Nelson hoped and planned for an Adventist hospital in that capital city. Their home was a haven for mission workers traveling through Delhi. Some suspected that the Nelsons were running a hotel, so many guests did they care for in their home each week.

After a year helping out in the hospital at Ranchi, the Nelsons were motoring to Delhi by India's main east-west highway. They were about to leave on furlough and were eagerly

anticipating a brief visit with Ruby's father, W. W. Gill, and sister, Mrs. O. I. Fields, in Nyasaland, Africa. Above all, they looked forward to a reunion with their sons, Martin and Sydney, and their families back in the United States.

About four hundred miles from New Delhi a tire blew out, and it was necessary for Dr. Nelson to leave Ruby with the car while he went the twenty-five miles into Allahabad (AHL-la-ha-BAHD) to replace it. Ruby was not afraid to stay by the road. There was a village nearby where she knew the people would enjoy a visit from her and where she was sure to find someone in need of her loving attention. As evening drew on, the village headman invited her to stay, but knowing Dr. Nelson would soon return, she declined and returned to wait in the car. But before her husband could return she was brutally murdered and robbed.

The Indian government was greatly distressed by this incident and with an all-out effort successfully apprehended and sentenced the culprits.

This tragic loss of a devoted wife, mother, and friend was keenly felt in Southern Asia. The Seventh-day Adventist Church in India should have a suitable memorial to such a dedicated and completely selfless life, it was thought. Therefore, in 1965 a hospital was opened in Jullundur,

north of New Delhi, and named the Ruby Nelson Memorial Hospital.

At this same time a young Adventist woman, a graduate of Vellore Medical School in south India, was serving at Ranchi Hospital. Many years before, she had entered the Adventist education system at the kindergarten level. Her first teacher, Mrs. Rajamma Sharalaya (RAHJ-a-MAH Share-LAH-ya), clearly remembers the occasion.

"Susie arrived neatly dressed and carrying a little cloth bag. She was a quick learner and soon emerged as the recognized leader among the children," her former teacher wrote. "One day, as the children sat in a circle raptly listening to the story of Baby Moses, an interesting thing happened. We had just sung about the 'basket boat floating on the Nile,' and each child was thoughtfully considering the possibility that God just as surely had a work for each of them as he had for Moses.

"Each child eagerly told of what that work might be. Rita hoped she would be a nurse; Paul, a teacher. Susie could scarcely wait for her turn to declare her intention of working for God as a doctor.

"No," one of the little boys objected stoutly. 'I will be a doctor, but you are a girl. You can't be a doctor!'

"Oh, yes, I can!" cried determined Susie, "You wait and see."

Susie never lost sight of her goal. Not only did she become Dr. Susan Abraham, one of the first Adventist women to graduate as a medical doctor from Vellore, but she also married a doctor, Ceylon-born Eric Moser. Together they have served the church in Southern Asia for twenty years.

How delighted Susan's kindergar-

ten teacher was recently to find Dr. Susan serving at the Ruby Nelson Memorial Hospital, helping to spread the effectiveness of that institution in an ever-widening circle.

Should you decide to visit the Ruby Nelson Memorial Hospital, you would have no problem locating the place. Any taxi driver in the town would take you straight to it, for this hospital enjoys considerable popularity in Jullundur and outlying villages. According to Selwyn David, acting administrator, the patients are drawn from a radius of 250 kilometers (155 miles) and represent all strata of society—rich and poor, educated and uneducated. Those who cannot pay are given free treatment. Most of our patients are non-Christian, a fact that challenges the chaplain and medical staff.

After arriving on the grounds for the first time, however, people do not know which building is the hospital, for side by side are also the mission headquarters for that section of India and a high school. At present a large converted bungalow houses the hospital's clinic, laboratory, X-ray, operating theater, pharmacy, delivery room, and general wards. This sixty-bed hospital is well-staffed and always crowded with patients. While the people of Jullundur appreciate the hospital, it is recognized that the facilities are not adequate to the demands upon them. To this end, part of the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering on March 27 will be dedicated. Southern Asia looks to the world church to help finance the enlargement of these facilities so that Ruby Nelson Memorial Hospital may be even more representative of the one for whom it was named and of Him in whose name our dedicated doctors serve.



January 16

# Balraj Finds the Truth

**D. Balraj**

Sabbath School director, North Tamil Section, India

Balraj (Bahl-rahj) was born to a poor Hindu family in a small village of south India. When he was only 5 years old, while playing with a friend in the street one day, he noticed a strange man working his way up the street, stopping at each house. At last he strode toward the boys and introduced himself as the Lutheran minister.

"How would you like to go to school?" he asked them. Instantly Balraj was interested. His parents, like many others in the village, did not appreciate the importance of educating their children. Balraj wanted desperately to join that school, and he gladly gave his name for admission. Thus the way was paved for him to receive a Christian education.

Each week all the schoolchildren attended Sunday school and learned about the gospel. Balraj enjoyed the Bible stories, and while in the fourth grade decided that he would study faithfully and someday become a pastor. He could just imagine his congregation addressing him as "Reverend Balraj."

He does not remember just when he decided to be a Christian. He gradually grew in the faith and felt it only natural to be baptized when he was 10. However, the teachers felt that 10 was too young for a Hindu convert to be baptized, and at that time his request was refused. Balraj was deeply disappointed. How could they know how

truly Christian he was at heart! But after two years his request was reconsidered and he was baptized.

Now a new problem faced him. Ironically, tuition at the mission school was free to Hindus but not to Christians. Balraj would now be charged a small fee. His widowed mother was poor and could hardly afford to pay for him. But Balraj did not for a moment regret his baptism. He would not be known as anything but Christian. He was happy to be identified as a child of God. Somehow God helped them meet the tuition expenses.

Balraj was a faithful student and soon progressed to his final year of high school. He prayed and studied to pass the government examination, for his admission to teacher training school depended on it. To his keen disappointment, however, he failed in one subject, and his ambition to study for the ministry was shattered.

The teachers sympathized with Balraj and helped arrange a job for him at the nearby mission hospital. Balraj enjoyed the work and made a good impression on the general superintendent, who encouraged him to become a male nurse. But again his way seemed blocked by that final high school examination. Instead, he was given work in various departments of the hospital and always did his best.

A certain young lady took Balraj's

mind from his failure in the examinations. She seemed understanding of his aspirations and enjoyed conversing with him from time to time on spiritual themes. Balraj was certain that life held many good things for him—maybe even the love and respect of this fine woman.

One day while working in the outpatient department he changed the dressings for an old man, Mr. Arumanay (AH-roo-Mun-ey), a retired literature evangelist. Each day as he returned to have his dressings changed, he talked to Balraj of Bible truths. Balraj's interest was aroused. He began to study further into the truth, unaware that Mr. Arumanay was teaching Seventh-day Adventist beliefs in an area closed to all Protestant groups except the established one.

Each new truth Balraj accepted, he talked about with his friends. Naturally his employers disapproved these activities and reminded their zealous young worker that at his baptism he had vowed to follow that church's teachings all his life.

"Tell me," Balraj countered, "did Martin Luther keep his promise to the Virgin Mary to devote himself to her all his life?"

As they studied with Mr. Arumanay, Balraj and some friends grew determined to follow the truth, including the Sabbath. Unfortunately, the one friend above all that he wanted to join him in his stand refused to go all the way. It was particularly difficult for her to give up wearing ornaments, so she reluctantly broke off their friendship.

Balraj left the hospital employ to be baptized with three of his friends. While looking for work he tirelessly

fostered the small group of Adventists. Mr. Arumanay also continued to share his faith, encountering fierce opposition at times. But four years later the little group established a church. Balraj was invited to serve as an assistant pastor, thus fulfilling his childhood dream. His young friend from the hospital wrote, regretting her decision to break their relationship; and after studying she joined the church. They were happily married, but their joy was short-lived. One year later she died, leaving behind a baby girl.

"God is punishing you for leaving the church," some of Balraj's former friends chided him. But in his unbearable grief Balraj found his only solace in the Lord and the truth he held so dear. "There would have been nothing to stop me from committing suicide to join her," he said, "had it not been for the Advent faith."

After his wife's death, Balraj was sponsored by the church to attend Spicer College and complete the junior ministerial course. Soon afterward he remarried and now has three boys and another daughter. "When I look back on my life and see the wonderful leadings of the Lord," Balraj wrote recently, "tears come on my cheeks because He loved me so."

Christian schools are doing a great work in giving this message to the youth of India. Every year young people who might not be Adventists except for the Adventist school they attended enroll at Spicer College. The outreach of our school system is far beyond the means of our local people. It is because of the generosity of the world church that these schools were built.

The Lord has blessed South India

with a great increase of membership, so our schools are flooded with requests for admission. But accommodations are woefully inadequate. The situation is especially difficult in the E. D. Thomas High School, where the classrooms and dormitories were already crowded.

Thousands of villages and towns in India have yet to hear the Word. This quarter, part of the Special Projects Offering, which is 25 percent of the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering, will—among other things—help enlarge this school and thus supply much-needed workers for South India.

January 23

## Witnessing Knows No Handicap

**Tudor Perera**

Thoduwawa church pastor, Sri Lanka

Thoduwawa (THO-doo-WAH-wah) is a fishing village on the northwestern coast of Sri Lanka (SREE LUNKA), formerly called Ceylon. The church here grew out of a layman's zeal to bring the Advent message to his relatives. Unsure of his own ability to teach, he had begged his pastor to help him bring the gospel to Thoduwawa.

Their initial efforts to hold Bible studies in the relative's home had proved successful with a small group of earnest seekers. But with the rest of the village they met scorn and sometimes abuse. Nevertheless, a tiny nucleus grew into a church company, and eventually a church building was erected in 1973. Those charter members will never forget their church dedication, as it was attended by a mob that threatened to disrupt the service. However, the troublemakers

began to fight among themselves and soon left. The members present that day were convinced that this was a sign to them that the Lord's cause must triumph.

Today this is still a church vibrant with life. Much prejudice has been broken down in the village, and the membership has grown. Sixteen-year-old Maristella is an active member about whom this report centers.

Although crippled from birth, Stella, an active child, took a keen interest in all that went on around her. When she was 4, her family moved to Thoduwawa, where her doctor-father set up his practice. A year later Stella accompanied her parents to a Sabbath service in a nearby home. Later she also attended a Vacation Bible School there. Day after day she listened attentively to the Bible stories. Being crippled, she was

unable to attend regular school, but she had learned to read and write and in conversation with adults demonstrated a keen mind.

When Vacation Bible School ended, Stella insisted that her parents take her to Sabbath School each week in Chilaw. Each new facet of truth that she grasped would be talked about during the week with anyone who might converse with her.

Perceptive as she was, Stella found that many older people often have more time to listen to children. She formed a strong affection for a 70-year-old gentleman who delighted to sit and talk to her. Barriers of age were forgotten as he listened to her recitals of Bible stories and doctrinal information that she had picked up in church. He would ask her questions, and she would reply, using surprisingly intelligent reasoning, based on Biblical references. The man was amazed at what he, a lifetime Christian, had never known before.

One joyous day for Stella, he was baptized into the remnant church. He also became an active layman, spreading the good news.

Shortly after the new Thoduwawa church was built, a church school was opened at the rear of the building. Stella desperately wanted to join the other children in this school. It had

always been difficult to get her to Sabbath School once a week, but how much more difficult it would be to get her to school every day.

Some visiting members from Denmark went with the pastor to visit Stella at home. Her devotion warmed their hearts and set them to devising some way for her to get about. They found a cart that would enable her not only to get to school but anywhere in the neighborhood. Now she not only attends school but often visits her neighbors and shares her faith with them. She conducts a Branch Sabbath School with about fifteen neighborhood children and often leads out in the Sabbath School at Thoduwawa church.

The work is forging ahead in Sri Lanka, but much of the mission budget is syphoned off into rent for adequate worker housing. Since rent is three times the salary of mission workers, it must be subsidized by the church. Funds from the Special Projects Offering of March 27 will finance the purchase and construction of adequate housing and ease this drain on funds. Thus your contributions will help to ensure that Adventist workers are housed in a manner worthy of the Adventist name and consistent with the church's philosophy of world mission.

**The Lord does not need our offerings. We cannot enrich Him by our gifts. Says the psalmist "All things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee." Yet God permits us to show our appreciation of His mercies by self-sacrificing efforts to extend the same to others. This is the *only* way in which it is possible for us to manifest our gratitude and love to God. He has provided no other way.—*Review and Herald*, Dec. 6, 1887.**

January 30

## Pioneering in Juba

**Napagi G. Levi**

Lay worker in Juba, Sudan

Having spent some time in Uganda, where he came in contact with the Seventh-day Adventist message, brother Napagi Levi (Nuh-PAH-gee LEV-vee) returned to his home country of Sudan in 1978 and began looking for work in Juba, a city on the White Nile. Napagi was anxious to work for the Lord, witnessing wherever he could. So during his first job interview with the manager of a boat-building company he spoke of his convictions concerning the Sabbath. One might think such a tactic disastrous to his chances of being hired, especially in a non-Christian country. But the Lord was with Napagi as he endeavored to explain his willingness to work every day but Saturday.

"You cannot be employed under those conditions," the manager remarked. "All the other employees work on Saturday."

Patiently Napagi explained to him how at the creation of the world God had set aside the seventh day and made it holy. This puzzled the manager. "What about Sunday?" he asked. "The majority of people in the world today observe Sunday. Even in non-Christian countries most stores close on Sunday."

Briefly Napagi explained as best he could how Sunday, the first day of the week, was declared holy by men, whereas the seventh day was sanctified by God. Convinced by this answer

and impressed by Napagi's sincerity and straightforward manner, the manager agreed to employ him. "Maybe I shall study the Bible myself and see what is written there," he concluded warmly.

The work was new to Napagi and provided a challenge to which he readily applied himself. But he never lost sight of his real purpose in working there: God had sent him to witness in Juba. He could not refrain from speaking about the truth of salvation and often talked to his fellow workers about the Bible. They soon noticed his absence from work on Saturdays and began to scoff.

"This religion of yours," they taunted; "it's like that of the Jews—we don't need such religion in Sudan!"

Others mocked: "You're a false prophet. Jesus said that false prophets would show up in the last days."

After observing his habits for several months they realized that he did not eat certain foods, nor did he smoke or drink. Furthermore he did not spend his money foolishly on the pleasures that they indulged.

"This is not a religion," some commented. "It is just a good plan to help one become rich. He refuses to smoke, drink, or to spend money on women!" Napagi smiled to himself, for he had to admit that these particular restrictions were in his best interests—

financially as well as spiritually.

During the time of opposition he stood firm. God proved an unfailing source of support. In September, 1979, his prayers were answered with the arrival of Pastor Daniel Ogillo and his family, who had come to establish a church in Juba. How the two encouraged each other in those first difficult months!

Another milepost for Napagi was the arrival of large orders of *Signs of the Times* and the Voice of Prophecy's New Life Guides. Enthusiastically he handed them to everyone working at the shipyard, including the manager. Then he impatiently awaited their reactions to the material. He was not disappointed when after a few days most of them had read the tracts for themselves.

"Well, you're not a false prophet after all," some commented. "You've been telling us the truth as it is in the Bible!" Some were particularly interested and asked many questions that showed they were thinking.

"How come," one of them asked, "Jesus died on the cross to bear the sins of the whole human race, so all could escape the bondage of sin; and yet you don't believe that people from all different churches will be saved?"

Not wanting to hurt or prejudice anyone, Napagi tactfully explained that all would be saved who truly sought salvation in Jesus. But he proceeded to demonstrate also that one who refused to consider the full teachings of Jesus could not truly be seeking Him and therefore could not experience saving grace.

When the manager reached the leaflet in the Life Guide series which dealt with the Sabbath and how it was

changed, he asked, with a twinkle in his eye: "Napagi, are you trying to convert me?"

"Yes," the humble layman replied, "if you are willing. Jesus died for both you and me." The manager seemed impressed and continued studying the lessons.

After some time Ismail, one of the workmen who had been studying earnestly, came to Napagi. "I have made a decision," he said quietly. "On Saturday I will not come to work, but I will go with you to your church. I want to see how you pray."

Napagi smiled. Many non-Christians imagined that prayer is offered only in certain ways, the most important being at the house of worship. Napagi would enjoy teaching Ismail to pray when the time came. In the meantime he could hardly wait to share this wonderful decision with Pastor Ogillo. Maybe they would soon see the firstfruits of Napagi's labor in the shipbuilding plant.

Sabbath turned out to be a wonderful day. Ismail witnessed a baptism at the river. "It was as though I was with Jesus in heaven," he commented later. "I want to worship with you every Sabbath." At work on Monday he told everyone of his experience and his decision to follow the Lord. "Seventh-day Adventists will go to heaven," he declared emphatically. "They know how to talk to God in heaven."

Today Ismail is a baptized member in the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Juba, South Sudan. He is now a literature evangelist, working and waiting for Jesus' soon return. Many others, still studying, need your special prayers today.

February 6

# Appointment With Destiny, I

**John and Joan Curnow**

Former publishing department director and teacher, Poona, India

Mandy Barrett stood in line at the Egypt Airlines counter at Heathrow Airport in London, nervously clutching her air ticket. She had bought that ticket to India with what was left of her shattered dreams. Would it bring her the hope and security for which she longed? How she hoped that it would!

Mandy did not consciously expect love to be a part of her future, for she had known little of it in her past. Her parents had ended their unhappy home together when she was 12. A few years later her foster parents' home broke up. Her oldest brother was already separated from his wife, and only the previous Christmas Mandy's fiancé had attacked her with a hammer during a drunken bout. Afraid of what married life might hold for her, she had decided to break with her past and devote herself to village work in India. And so the money saved for her wedding was spent on this air ticket. She owned almost nothing else.

Coming back to reality again, she found herself almost to the counter. The lady before her in line was smiling at her. "Are you going far?" she had inquired cheerily. On learning that Mandy would travel to Bombay, she looked genuinely pleased. "Oh, good, we are too! We'll see you on the plane," she exclaimed impulsively, and went to join her husband and teenage sons.

Mandy overheard an attendant say

that the flight was fully booked and that seating was not allocated, so she hurried aboard in time to find the last available window seat. As departure time approached and the plane filled up, the two seats beside her remained empty. Then she saw four latecomers moving down the aisle looking for seats. The two young men found seats together, and the remaining couple were headed her way. Happily she noticed that it was the friendly lady she had met at the ticket counter.

As the 707 winged its way south over Europe to Cairo, Joan and John Curnow introduced themselves, and the two women found much to talk about. In Cairo there was to be a twelve-hour stopover, so the Curnows took Mandy under their wing. There was limited accommodation at the hotel, but John secured one room for their two sons, another for Joan and Mandy, and he shared a third with a Pakistani gentleman.

The next day as they flew out over the Arabian sea, Mandy told the Curnows how she had been booked to fly the previous week, but illness had prevented her. Now the Hindu organization for which she was to work would not know when to expect her. But she would take a hotel room in Bombay until she heard from them. A frown crossed John's face, and he spoke quietly to Joan.

"Mandy," he finally said, "there are

some very fine hotels in Bombay, but they are very expensive. Of course, there are also cheap ones, but why don't you come and stay with us? You would feel more at home. Our daughter is in the States studying, so you could use her room." At first Mandy was reluctant to accept their invitation, but eventually they persuaded her that she would be no extra burden.

When Mandy awoke that first morning at the mission compound in Poona, she knew for a fact that her plane ticket had brought her to a place of hope and security. Through the open window she could see vivid tropical flowers, and hear the wild joyous melodies of the birds. From time to time she would hear or see something unfamiliar and ask about it. Joan was glad to open Mandy's eyes to the new sights and customs of India, as she would be on her own in a few days. "What is that bell ringing for?" she had asked that first evening.

"Oh, that is for our midweek prayer meeting," John had replied. "Would you care to come along?"

Mandy hesitated but then replied that she would go if they were planning to. She attended that and every other religious service during her two-and-a-half-week stay with the Curnows, but she showed no inclination to discuss religion. Finally, she received instructions to proceed to Madras in South India. On Mandy's last day with them Joan prayed a special prayer for God's care over her journey, before taking her to the train. Tearfully they promised to keep in touch.

Mandy's letters over the next weeks told of some of her experiences in the village. She lived in a little mud-and-thatch hut and found many people in

need of her love and help. Bravely she was trying to accept her new housemates—two enormous water buffalo. What she did not mention were the nights she had lain awake pondering the loving people she had met in Poona. Were they for real with their happy marriages? Mandy would never have thought such happiness possible had she not seen it. Nobody she had known loved like these people did. And then her thoughts would turn to God, and she felt drawn to Him in love. In Him she was finding the peace for which she had longed.

Meanwhile, back in Poona God was working out His plans for her life. With every letter John and Joan would shake their heads and think to themselves, "That is not the life for Mandy. She isn't ready for such demands." Then one day a need arose at the Salisbury Park, Poona, Adventist School for someone to supervise the work of a Christian Children's Fund sponsorship program. John suggested to the principal that Mandy would be very good at this work. The school board agreed and wrote, inviting her to the position.

A new Mandy arrived back, full of enthusiasm for this new adventure. Her new love for Jesus was shining from her eyes, and her infectious laughter soon won her many friends. Other families wanted to share the blessing that she brought and invited her to stay awhile in each home.

One evening, settling back into her room with the Curnows after a stay with other families, she found herself reflecting on her life. Sitting there on the edge of the bed she made a decision. "I must go talk to John," she told herself.

(To be continued next week)



February 13

# Appointment With Destiny, II

**John and Joan Curnow**

Former publishing department director and teacher, Poona, India.

John Curnow sat working in his office, planning his budget for the coming year and considering a trip that would be made. "How I wish that just for once I could travel on any airline I choose, and maybe go first class," he mused. As his mind traveled back over some of his more memorable trips on budget fares he remembered his last London-Cairo-Bombay trip. He had been on that particular flight because of the special budget fare. How the Lord had blessed that fare! For while waiting at the ticket counter and later on board the plane, his wife, Joan, had become acquainted with Mandy Barrett.

Noticing that she was not an experienced traveler, they had taken her under their wing in Cairo and again in Bombay. She confided her lonely past to Joan. Rejected by divorced parents at 12, she had looked for security in a foster home, but that soon broke up. Then she had found happiness in her fiancé and the prospect of a home where love would abide. But this dream was shattered when her drunken fiancé attacked her with a hammer. Positive that life in England could hold nothing for her but more of the same, she had impulsively signed up for village work in India and bought the air ticket with the money saved for her wedding. But that ticket had brought her to John and Joan Curnow, who sat beside her in the last

available seats. Thank God that they had need on that trip for budget fares!

John's reverie was broken by a soft knocking at the door and the entrance of Mandy. "John, are you very busy?" she asked.

"Never too busy," John had laughed, inviting her to sit down. "Now, what is on your mind?"

Mandy looked pensive for a moment, then that new happiness people had noticed since her return to Poona from the village work in the south lit up her eyes. "John, I want to be baptized and join the Adventist Church. Will you give me Bible studies?" With a feeling of warmth towards this 23-year-old girl whom he and Joan had come to love as a daughter, John told Mandy how delighted he would be to study the Bible with her. He suggested that Eleanor Hetke (HET-kee) would also be happy to study with her.

And so a few weeks later John had the joy and privilege of baptizing Mandy. As he stood with her in the baptismal font he pondered the play and counterplay of human life. If Mandy had not had that bad cold she would not have been on their flight. If those last two seats had been filled earlier she would have remained just another unknown passenger. How clearly God had guided in Mandy's life!

After her baptism Mandy said with

a happy laugh, "I wonder what my youngest brother, Jonathan, will say when he learns I have become a Seventh-day Adventist. The last thing he said to me before I left was, 'Now don't go joining any queer religion while you are over there in India!'" Time was running out on her return ticket, so she would soon find out.

Mandy often pondered her future. What would she do when she returned to England? After counseling with her new friends and remembering her experience in village work, she decided on a nursing career. But there was no Adventist nursing program in England. Some of the American families at Salisbury Park, where the Curnows were stationed, came up with a plan for Mandy to train at an Adventist college in the United States.

The ladies gave a happy farewell party for Mandy as they saw her off from Bombay on her return flight to England, where she would stay for three months before proceeding to college in the States. But those three months were to change the life and destiny of someone else.

Her brother Jonathan was deeply impressed by the great change he saw in Mandy. Her radiant optimism was infectious, and he wanted to see for himself who these Adventists were whose faith worked such miracles. So one Sabbath he accompanied Mandy to the local church in Cambridge. There he found the same warm, loving friendliness that Mandy had found in India. Before the end of the year he was baptized, and when the 1977 school year began at Newbold College, he registered as a ministerial student.

While there at Newbold he met and married Mary Palfrey, who now works beside him in service for the Master as student missionaries on the Isle of Wight.

Meanwhile, Mandy had entered Southern Missionary College and begun her nurse's training. Times were difficult as she tried to work her way through school, but just as funds would run out, money always arrived from one source or another. Her faith grew by leaps and bounds that year! Then a church group in Reno, Nevada, heard of her need and sponsored her for a year so she could devote her energies to study. In 1979 Mandy graduated as an R.N. and married a fellow graduate, Grayson Warren. They applied to the General Conference for mission service and then embarked upon their Bachelor of Science degrees. Grayson plans to continue on into his Master's program, the better to prepare for service.

The exciting story of Mandy Barrett Warren is not yet complete. Many thrilling chapters are to be written in the lives of those she will touch as she and Grayson serve the Lord. Who knows the end results of the chain reaction that Joan Curnow set off that day in the crowded air terminal when her life first touched Mandy's?

Let us all remember today that while the money we give enables thousands to labor for the Lord in the world church, our work does not end with the giving. All the money in the world can never pay for the genuine Christian witness you and I unconsciously spread as we go about our daily round. May we allow the Lord to use us fully today and every day.

February 20

# Sikkim Secretary

## Margaret Kurian Christo

Secretary and doctor's wife, formerly of Sikkim, India

[Plan for special effects by having paragraphs marked "Margaret" read by a second person, preferably unseen.]

Sikkim is a landlocked country nestled in the snowy Himalayan mountains. For hundreds of years it was ruled by Buddhist kings, who did not permit Christians within the borders of their kingdom.

But in 1975 a new government granted permission for Adventists to open a clinic in Gangtok, the capital city. Dr. and Mrs. Glenn Christo thrilled to the challenge of Sikkim and applied for the assignment. The brethren in Southern Asia had hoped to send an experienced doctor, but when none was available Dr. Christo, newly graduated from Vellore Medical School in South India, was invited to this post.

With only six months' experience at our Ranchi Hospital in northeastern India, Dr. Glenn, with his wife, Margaret, and two small children, Sanjay and Jyoti, set out to establish medical work in the high Himalayas.

Margaret wrote to a friend in the United States about that first difficult year:

**Margaret:** Things were really tough at first. We had only one room to live in, which we sectioned off for kitchen, bathroom, et cetera. We had two babies, both still in diapers, which we had to wash and dry out in the same room. Sometimes we went with-

out water and electricity for days.

Many times we thought of the comfortable doctors' bungalows attached to mission hospitals and almost left more than once. But the Lord solved our problems one by one and showed us that He has a purpose for us here.

**Reader:** The young family, far from home and loved ones, felt lonely for the fellowship of other Adventists. Margaret wrote:

**Margaret:** How we miss singing and worshiping with fellow believers in a church!

**Reader:** But they did not have time to feel sorry for themselves. Many people desperately needed their help. At first the local priests tried to keep the people from going to the newly opened clinic. But things were soon to change.

**Margaret:** Late one Friday night we were awakened by a loud knock. Glenn opened the door, and I could see framed in the doorway a couple of tribespeople wearing the double-breasted robes typical of their area. Hesitantly they held out a bundle.

**Reader:** Instinctively the doctor stepped back. His trained eye could see that the shriveled little baby within was near to death. He sensed trouble for the clinic. This baby

needed medical help beyond their humble facilities.

**Margaret:** Anxiously the father told us their story. Their first two babies had died from this same disease. Now, in despair over the condition of this little mite, they had sought the prayers of a lama (LAH-ma), or priest at the Buddhist monastery. After twirling his prayer wheel and offering incantations, the lama had told them the child would live, provided they took it to the mission clinic, not to the hospital.

**Reader:** Maybe this was a trap. The baby would surely die, and then the clinic would be discredited.

**Margaret:** Glenn was afraid of that, but the couple refused to go elsewhere. They would rather take the baby home than disobey the lama. So Glenn took them across the road to the little clinic and settled them in a back room. He then withdrew to his consulting room, knelt down in prayer, and explained the problem to God.

With the few medicines and injections that were available, little Pempa Doma's treatment was begun. Since sores covered most of her body, some of the injections had to be given on her back, stomach, and legs. But within ten days she was well enough to go home.

**Reader:** News travels quickly in Gangtok. It was not long before patients, hearing of the healed baby, thronged the clinic—colorfully robed lamas among them. And then Margaret herself was launched into a new career.

**Margaret:** Sikkim is a cold country, and living conditions none too adequate. But the people survive the cold by layering their clothes. Many do not own a change of clothes and seldom

bathe fully for fear of the cold. They are shy about being examined by a doctor, and women positively refused Glenn permission to examine them. So I was called upon to help. At first it was difficult for me, a secretary, to dig through the layers to examine a patient and report my findings to the doctor behind the curtain so he could make a diagnosis.

When he had me scrub up for my first delivery, I thought he must be kidding. But one look at the desperate mother and I knew I must do it. I prayed constantly during those first few deliveries. We have had some difficult cases, but God has never let us down. With His help and Glenn's advice I can now deliver babies and give injections better than I can type!

**Reader:** Isolated from the rest of the world, the missionary couple bravely carried on. They held Branch Sabbath School and invited neighborhood children to attend. Some went home singing about Jesus and were barred from attending again. But in spite of this at least eight children were present each Sabbath.

A laboratory technician, Vinod Rao (Vin-ODE ROW), joined the clinic. Now there were two men to share the burdens.

**Margaret:** Recently a school-teacher begged us to come to his village to hold a clinic. He offered his hut as consulting room if we would take the day to walk there. We had to refuse. If only we had a jeep!

**Reader:** Glenn and Margaret sat down together and planned every detail of a proposed village health plan, including both preventive and curative aspects, and prayed for that jeep.

In the meantime they discovered a

building that could better house both them and an enlarged clinic. The union president wrote that he had every confidence the young couple would make the right decisions with regard to acquiring the building.

**Margaret:** How many nights Glenn and I stayed up and cried and prayed and asked God to help us—to give us a sign. If our work should fail, people would blame our youth. Or worse, the work in Sikkim would be set back. If only someone from the union would make the decision for us!

**Reader:** Again the Lord proved sufficient. They acquired the building and moved in. Then in 1978 Margaret wrote:

**Margaret:** The jeep has come at last, thanks to the Quiet Hour. Now we can begin medical work for the outlying villages.

**Reader:** Dr. and Mrs. Christo are now on study leave, but the work continues. They thank you for your support of missions, without which they may never have been asked to adventure for God in Sikkim.

February 27

## Healing for a Heart

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**Glenn Christo**

Physician, formerly of Sikkim, India<sup>1</sup>

Dusk descends rapidly and heavily over the Himalayas. From his second-floor bedroom window Dr. Glenn looked down on the dimly lighted bazaar. Shadowy figures of late shoppers flitted in and out of lantern-lighted shops. Pavement vendors had bundled up their wares and carried them home. Here and there a shutter screeched down. Gangtok, capital city of Sikkim, sleeps early in winter.

An old battered jeep blared its way through the thin crowds and clattered to a stop in front of the mission residence. Two Sikkimese men stepped out, paused to read the sign on the closed door of the downstairs clinic, then started urgently up the stairs.

"Somebody is sick," the doctor mused as he waited a few seconds

before turning to the door. At the first knock he threw the bolt to admit his evening visitors.

The taller man, a little out of breath, spoke in Gurkhali (Ger-KAH-lee). "Our father is sick. He collapsed suddenly. He is lying unconscious. Will you come with us to Timi Tarku (TEE-me TAR-koo)?" His voice trailed off uncertainly.

Timi Tarku is a collection of loosely-strung hamlets set amid cardamom<sup>2</sup> and tea estates. In summer the trip would have been delightful, but this time of year it meant a three-hour drive on a precarious mud road chronically prone to landslides. One careless turn would land the jeep into the surging cataracts of the Tista (Tees-ta) River, far below.

Brushing aside these thoughts, the

doctor nodded. "All right. But I'll need a few minutes to dress and get my bag."

"Thank you, sir." Both men looked relieved. "We have to pick up some relatives, but we will be back in ten minutes."

It was pitch dark as the doctor squeezed into the front seat between two relatives, his black bag wedged between his knees.

From the chatter that flew around his ears he was able to piece together a fair case history.

"Did he trip on the stairs?" someone asked.

"No. He was walking down the stairs. He suddenly clutched his chest and tried to sit down on the step, but swayed forward and collapsed on the floor."

"But he was so active and in such good health," another interjected.

"That's right. He spent the whole morning hoeing the cardamom. In the afternoon he walked a mile down to the temple by the riverside."

So Mr. Chettri, while descending a flight of stairs had evidently suffered a heart attack. A teetotaler and non-smoker, he had led an energetic life, personally supervising his vast estates.

The passengers were unanimous in their admiration of this man, who had married each of his eight daughters to prominent men—not an easy thing in the tiny kingdom of Sikkim. Furthermore, although uneducated, he had taught himself to read and write three languages. In fact, only recently had he mastered English.

The jeep finally stopped in front of a veranda dimly illuminated by a kerosene lamp. Dr. Glenn shined a flashlight onto his watch. It was already

nine-thirty, he noted.

"Come with me, doctor." A hand nudged his elbow and steered him through the cluster of worried relatives and servants standing by the door.

Inside, Mr. Chettri was stretched out on the floor, his head cradled in the ample lap of his wife. The doctor knelt beside the still form. His wrist was warm, but there were no pulse, signs of breathing, or heartbeat.

Slowly Dr. Glenn arose, shaking his head gravely. "I'm sorry," he whispered. The tall gentleman understood. "It is as I feared. He has gone." He led the doctor into the next room. Over a hot drink he talked of the remarkable old man. He was obviously in awe of his father-in-law.

"Would you like to see his room?" The doctor put down his cup expectantly.

"Yes, indeed. I'm sure that would be interesting." They arose and carried the lamp through the house to the bedroom.

Characteristic of the man, the simple furnishings and fittings reflected an austere life style. But something familiar on the bedside table arrested the doctor's attention. A pair of spectacles lay folded on an open magazine.

"Is this what he was reading?" Dr. Glenn stepped over to the table. There was the January, 1977, *Signs of the Times*. A whole bundle of these had arrived at the little mission clinic. They had been out of date but looked wonderfully current to the eyes of the doctor and the Sikkimese people he had shared them with.

"Yes, he was reading that magazine. That was the last thing he did before he went downstairs and collapsed."

In the lamplight the title on page 23 seemed to glow. Glenn looked closely, and his face relaxed into a smile. In his final hours Mr. Chettri had been reading the article, "God Healed My Heart."

What a wonderful encouragement to a young doctor, frustrated by his

human limitations, to know that God was working in His own ways to bring healing for a heart.

<sup>1</sup> Indian-born, Dr. Christo was a pioneer medical missionary to Sikkim, India, until he left for study leave in 1980.

<sup>2</sup> A spicy herb of the ginger family grown in Asia.

March 6

## The Miser's Gift

Noelene Johnsson

Teacher, formerly of Poona, India

About seventy miles inland from the port city of Bombay, India, the Western Ghats rise sharply from the coastal plain to join a great plateau called the Deccan, which occupies most of India's southern peninsula. Situated on the western edge of the Deccan is the bustling city of Poona, where the Southern Asia Division has its headquarters. Also located in the greater Poona area is Spicer Memorial College, where the author lived for many years.

Traveling between Poona and Bombay provides a memorable experience. The narrow two lanes of highway that connect the two cities not only zigzag up the very steep mountainside but also form a busy artery. Trucks and taxis rush madly back and forth as their drivers strain to save minutes—to make one more trip per day and boost their meager earnings. Every taxi overtaken is one less in the line that will form ahead of the aggressive driver when he reaches the other end to wait his turn for a new complement

of paying passengers.

When business slackens at the close of a day, one place in line may mean the difference between waiting idly for hours or starting back soon. So drivers take every opportunity to overtake the vehicles ahead of them.

The Johnssons were latecomers to the taxi routine. They had usually traveled by the morning and evening train, the "Deccan Queen," until they learned of the advantages of taxi travel. At any time of the night or day one could arrive at the taxi stand and take the chance of soon finding three other people waiting to make the 150-mile trip. All four would share the cost of the trip and speed on their way.

"The important thing is to be first," they were informed on their first Poona-Bombay trip. "That way you can sit up front and be more comfortable." But one trip was enough to disprove that rationale. Who wants to be able to see every scary move the driver makes! Who needs to see every curve in that winding downhill course!

By the last steep stretch of that first journey the driver began to slow down and ordered Noelene to wind down the window as far as it would go. Now what? She wished she had sat in the back seat.

With one eye on the road and one hand on the wheel, the driver began fishing around in his pocket and all the while edged closer to her. Then suddenly as they rounded a bend he reached right across her, deftly flicking some coins out the window and into the arched entrance to a roadside shrine. The devout Hindu often keeps small change handy as a gift for the gods or for beggars. Such acts of charity build up *karma*, credit for the future life.

On one of their last trips down the ghats before coming to the United States, the Johnssons set out in the usual small taxi with two Poona businessmen and a very daring young driver. Every few minutes he would pull out over the center line, the better to determine the immediate risks of overtaking. The passengers apprehensively cowered as he aggressively courted danger.

Roaring up the steep ghats he wove in and out between the straining vehicles, cutting an occasional corner and hoping for the best. "*Aste, aste* (AH-stay)!" Bill would murmur to himself. "Take it easy!" One of the passengers, a prospering industrialist in open-neck shirt, took out his wallet and nervously selected a couple of small coins, which he placed in his shirt pocket with a tender pat. No doubt he was arming himself for the little shrine they were soon to pass.

Descending the hill, the taxi slipped around a truck that was slowing on a curve. Too late the driver discovered

that the traffic ahead was almost stationary and that the truck driver behind had allowed himself distance enough to use his defective brakes without the taxi's cutting in and reducing the space. The poor little car was gently squeezed between two trucks until the hood crumpled like an eggshell, and the radiator hose burst, squirting hot water into the air. The rear door popped open from the pressure, and the three passengers in back gingerly alighted.

Satisfied that he was in one piece, the relieved businessman became effusive. "God is good! It is His will that we are safe. You see I had selected my offering to leave at the shrine. God saw it. He has rewarded me, and we are safe, thank God!" And he patted the coins in his pocket appreciatively.

Noelene bristled. "You really bought God off cheap!" she wanted to say. "You drive a great bargain! I mean, two cents! Even a Bombay beggar would have argued for more!"

There was no way such thoughts could have been spoken graciously, so she just swallowed them and smiled. But stranded there by the roadside she realized that there was a meaning for her in all of this.

Why do Christians give offerings? To assure them of divine protection? Or do they mostly give from habit, without thinking why they do it? Is the gift sometimes but a token to appease the conscience?

May God teach us today more about the giving part of worship. And may we learn to give ourselves with our gifts. For all the money we bring will never accomplish for the Lord what a daily dedicated witness can.

God bless us all in our worship today.



March 13

# Victory Cometh by Grace

**Mrs. B. Hmingliana**

Minister's wife, Mizoram, India

"Get out of here!" roared an angry father to Biakchawna (BYAK-show-na) and his two sisters. "If you persist in these seven-day ideas you shall not stay under my roof." There was no time even to take a change of clothing, for father was furious. Hurriedly Biakchawna and his two sisters fled to their sister's house in the same village.

Before long their father discovered that his three children were still observing the Sabbath in the village. He was very angry and, sharpening his knife, headed toward the house where his children were sheltered. As he entered, his son-in-law stood up just in time. Grabbing the old man's hand, he held him fast. Biakchawna and his sisters, seeing the knife and the ensuing scuffle, ran out of the house, and each fled in a different direction.

Unable to find his children, the old man guessed that they had taken the downhill path. It would be useless for him to follow, so he took some boulders lying by the roadside and rolled them down, hoping to hurt the children. At last, satisfied that he had done all the harm he could, he returned home.

After some time two of the children stealthily crept out of hiding and ran toward the jungle path. As loudly as they dared they called to their missing sister, but there was no response. Biakchawna and his younger sister

reluctantly set out toward Thanzawl (Tun-ZOLL) village twenty miles away.

The two lay preachers who had brought the Advent message to them in 1971 had told of a group of believers at Thanzawl who were building a church. Biakchawna was certain that these people would provide a refuge for the forsaken trio.

About halfway there they sat down to rest by the roadside.

"I hear someone calling my name," Biakchawna said.

His sister smiled. "Who would know you out here? You must be hearing things!"

They listened intently, and sure enough, they heard a familiar call. Straining their eyes back down the trail, they saw a forlorn figure hurrying in their direction. It was their sister. There beside the path they thanked God for bringing them safely together.

The church members in Thanzawl cared for them gladly, providing for their necessities. But Biakchawna became restless. He loved the Lord dearly and wanted to visit from village to village preaching the good news wherever he found opportunity, just as the men had done who had brought the message to him.

As the months went by, his father's heart softened. Ashamed of the way he had treated the family, he wrote a

letter to his son, promising to allow him freedom to worship as he pleased if he would only return home. So Biakchawna returned.

True to his word, Father welcomed his son and permitted him to worship as he pleased. Before long the two sisters also returned. But the father's tolerance was short-lived. Each Sabbath morning he became more restless, grumbling about urgent work with which he needed help. As the demands became more insistent, Biakchawna decided he should leave home and begin preaching as he had long wanted to do. But, first, he decided, he would make one last concentrated effort to win his father by conducting family worship and talking to the old man about the truths that could change his life.

Alas, the father could not be persuaded to join in the worship, and every effort to talk with him was unsuccessful. Biakchawna acknowledged defeat and spoke to his father of his plan to visit other villages and preach the gospel. As before, his father opposed the plan violently, and next day Biakchawna fell ill. Lying in bed, he thought over the events of the last months. It seemed he had been falling ill very often lately. In fact, there was a pattern. Every time he asked his father for permission to go preach and was refused, he spent the next day or two ill. However, this time even his father was alarmed. Reluctantly he promised that Biakchawna might go and preach the gospel—but he must wait until after harvest.

Immediately after harvest season Biakchawna packed his few belong-

ings, ready to set out on a preaching itinerary; and again the father, like Pharaoh of old, hardened his heart and rebuked his son for lack of respect. He threatened to curse Biakchawna if he willfully disobeyed him. Again he hinted of death as he took his knife and stroked the blade meaningfully.

Biakchawna was not afraid. Calmly he said, "Father, I am not leaving you for good. Believing that you were a man of your word, I got ready to preach the Word of God for a few weeks. I will come back home to help you when I am done."

His father glared back. "You will be sorry, my son. If you go I shall burn the house and take poison. My curse will always cling to you."

The hill people of Mizoram (MEE-zoh-rahm) greatly fear curses, so the father was deflated to find his son unmoved. Biakchawna was determined this time. "If this will open a way for me to preach the Word with freedom, then it must be God's will. I must go." And he left by the same path he and his sisters had taken four years before.

True to his word, Biakchawna returned to help his father before his next preaching tour. Gradually the father's heart was softened by the Holy Spirit. He began to participate in morning and evening worship, and one glad day was baptized. Biakchawna still devotes himself to lay-preaching, for he knows that:

**Not to the strong is the battle,  
Not to the swift is the race,  
But to the true and the faithful  
Victory cometh by grace.**

March 20

# Never Say Impossible

**M. F. Nash**

Sabbath School director, Western Pacific Union Mission

Visiting the beautiful Solomon Islands for the first time, one can hardly believe that one hundred years ago its people practiced ancestor worship and spirit sacrifices. With the arrival of Christianity came freedom from the fears that had so long held them.

In some areas missionaries from just one denomination arrived and established Christianity. Sometimes people were not required to give up their old beliefs, so they still live in fear and superstition. Even today they consult "devil-devils" and rely on "custom doctors" and "custom medicine."

Adventists wanted to bring the good news of freedom in Jesus Christ to these people but were prevented from entering these areas by the established missions.

In the Santa Cruz islands God found a way to overcome this prejudice. He used a young, single woman to open the way in this remote group in the Solomon Islands area of the Western Pacific.

Sally Hoagland, a 24-year-old American from Denver, Colorado, volunteered for the Peace Corps and in 1976 was sent to the Solomon Islands.

During her first year in the Solomons she taught home economics on the island of Malaita. Sally enjoyed the fellowship of the nearby Adventist church and became the youth leader.

She soon mastered pidgin English and felt at home with her new friends. But she was saddened to notice that her non-Adventist students still clung to many superstitions from spirit worship. Though many of them faithfully attended church, they did not understand the meaning of the formal ritual in the services.

During her second year in the Solomons Sally was transferred to a new boarding school on the remote Santa Cruz islands. She moved willingly, wondering what God had in store for her there. As the only Adventist in Santa Cruz, she expected the year would hold many challenges.

The first challenge was in the person of the headmaster. He was a retired priest and was not pleased to give Sally her Sabbaths off. He tried in many ways to discourage her. The monthly school dances, previously held elsewhere, Father Brock staged near Sally's room. He knew that at least once a month on Friday nights Sally might be tempted to forget about the Sabbath.

You cannot keep noise out of a leaf house, but you cannot keep noise in, either. Every Friday night Sally played her ukelele and sang choruses. Some of the students passing by forgot about the dance and joined her.

Right next to the school was the training center for catechists and the district headquarters of the Church of

Melanesia. Lonesome for fellowship with believers, Sally often joined in their services. The vestments, rituals, and prayer books were a new experience for her. What did these things mean, she wondered, and she sought answers at the training center. When students could not answer her inquiries, they asked the priest.

"Stay away from Miss Sally. She's a wolf in sheep's skin," he told them. The students became all the more interested in Sally and her religion. But alas, her two-year term was almost up. What a pity to leave when interest was just awakening! These people needed the full gospel story.

But with God all things are possible. Sally was requested to stay on for one more year at Santa Cruz.

Returning home to the United States for a brief furlough, Sally thrilled her local church with a report of her experiences. Afterward a member offered to send some flannelgraph materials to her in Santa Cruz. Sally had never been involved with children's work before, but she gladly accepted the offer, and four boxes of flannelgraph materials duly arrived.

Things had changed at the training center in her absence. The priest who had so vigorously opposed her witness was on extended leave in England. When Sally requested permission to tell Bible stories in the village, she was surprised by the response.

"Why don't you take Sunday school here at the center?" asked the new director. "All the children from the village come here anyway. The men who usually lead out don't tell good stories. It would do them good too."

So Sally took Sunday school, to the delight of the children and their previous teachers. Soon the parents also

attended. "When the Brothers told the stories, it was always history thousands of years old. Sally makes it real for us. She shows how much stronger God is than 'devil-devils,'" one enthusiastic child reported.

In 1978 two Seventh-day Adventist workers were sent to Santa Cruz. Some of the local priests were worried. The school principal preached a sermon one Sunday, warning students of their presence. "They are people from the 'Don't Church,'" he explained. "They don't let you smoke. They don't let you drink. They don't let you eat any pig or shellfish. They don't even let you chew betel nut! So don't you let them into your villages or homes. Don't even be friendly to them."

Much impressed with the warning and noticing that Miss Sally had missed it, a group of students stopped by to alert her to the danger.

"You really think Adventists are bad." Sally looked more amused than scared. The group nodded gravely. "But I'm a Seventh-day Adventist. You'll have to stop visiting me, too," she chided them.

"That's different," one student spoke up. "You teach Sunday school and tell us of God's love. You told us you don't eat some things because they are not good for you."

Sally was emphatic! "He was talking about me and my church!" But the students looked doubtful. "He must have made a mistake. He is quite wrong about you. We'll have to listen to the new teachers and see if it is indeed as the principal said."

Thus the way was opened for Adventist workers to begin evangelism on Santa Cruz. Five young men joined the church at the first baptism. Eleven more are studying earnestly

with the pastor. Many more participate in the correspondence course and in Branch Sabbath Schools. A good

beginning has been made—all because God overcame the impossible and opened the way.

March 27

## New Light in Rajasthan

**K. S. Kongari**

Sabbath School director, Rajasthan, India

The haunting trill of a flute wafted through the hazy twilight and momentarily lifted Hema's spirits as he sat in the doorway of his home. The day's grueling heat was over, and the tantalizing aroma of curry brought promise of the evening meal. Hema loved these special sensations of early evening in the Bhilwara (Bill-WA-H-ra) district of Rajasthan (RAH-jah-STAHN)—"harsh land of sun and sand, wind and rock."<sup>1</sup>

Had not the great Indian poet Tagore (Tah-GORE) said that "villages are like women, (for) in their keeping is the cradle of the race." Surely this held true not only for villages like his own Masih Khera (Mah-SEE Kerra), but also of all Rajasthan. Was not this thinly populated state—larger than England, Scotland, and Ireland together—once the land of the Rajputs (RAHJ-puts), fabled caste of warrior-rulers? And did not its village people keep touch with the past and preserve the art, culture, and religion for which their ancestors so bravely fought?

Hema's musings came to an abrupt halt as a passing stranger placed in his hands a small Christian pamphlet. What a shame that he could not read it for himself! But his neighbor's son

would surely oblige for a small fee.

And so it came about that the lad read aloud to him *The Hope of the World*, an Adventist tract. Hema had a high regard for the gods; this had led him to build a small temple in front of his house. He had hoped thus to bring God closer to his life and to help others live a better life. Now as he listened to the message of the tract he heard an inner voice urging that this was truly the way of salvation.

"Is that all?" he inquired when the lad was done. "Doesn't it tell where it came from? I must know more." The lad located the address: Seventh-day Adventist church, Bhilwara.

Hema would have set out at once for Bhilwara, but in 1973 times were difficult. People worked hard to achieve a meager living. There was nothing available for unplanned-for journeys. But Hema knew that he would find a way. And he did.

After some time he was able to visit the church and to meet Pastor E. F. Gardner. Our work had barely begun in Rajasthan, and Pastor Gardner had been praying for just such an opening. Promptly he visited Masih Khera and began studies with Hema and a small group of friends. How they soaked up the words of life.

Once convinced of truth, Hema saw his little temple as a hindrance to true worship, and immediately he set about to tear it down and destroy its idol. Misunderstanding his zeal, the villagers became angry. Might not this irrational behavior insult the god and bring ill fortune to them all? Hema's 70-year-old father, in particular, became abusive.

The little temple had brought security to his old age. Surely the gods would have treated him kindly in the afterlife if his favorite son, who provided for the gods of the village, were to light his funeral pyre. But now what comfort could he expect, his son having destroyed a temple?

Hema longed to bring to his outraged father and townsfolk the peace that passes all understanding. But they would not listen.

His study group, however, numbered fifteen earnest souls preparing for baptism. They encouraged each other as they earnestly studied the Bible and at last made the trip to Bhilwara, where they were baptized.

In their absence from the village the enemy of souls was busy stirring up trouble. The faithful group returned from the baptism to find themselves locked out of their own homes. An angry group of villagers, brandishing weapons before them, surrounded the sixteen men, berating them for following such foolishness. Eventually all

sixteen were turned out of the village, and for two weeks they slept in the fields.

At last, realizing that this was no passing notion that the group was about to give up, the families relented and allowed their return. Hema continued to witness to the truth and encouraged others to find the peace that he knew in Christ. But he was not satisfied. As he gazed upon the empty space before his house where once the temple had stood he vowed to build a Christian church in its place. Before long, with the help of his fellow believers, a small church was erected. Now the people had a place to worship the true God.

But difficult times were not all in the past. The Adventist services were disturbed from time to time. Once a hostile group threw Hema's brother down a well. The poor man was badly hurt and suffered much before the believers found and rescued him. His recovery took seven months.

But as a result of the continued witness, fifty people now worship in the little church. A pastor, Parveez Lall (Lahl), was sent to shepherd the flock, and the group continues to grow.

There are other large areas of India today that are waiting for the light to spread as it did in Rajasthan. Part of the Special Projects Offering this Thirteenth Sabbath will help schools where workers train for this task.

<sup>1</sup> Raghubir Singh, "The Pageant of Rajasthan," *National Geographic* (February, 1977), p. 219.

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# SOUTHERN ASIA DIVISION



Unions	Population	Churches	Church Members	Sabbath School Members
Bangladesh section	81,000,000	27	2,323	4,475
Burma	33,884,007	97	7,538	9,956
Central India	148,695,053	142	27,638	34,384
Northern	386,926,990	142	17,720	18,716
Pakistan	76,000,000	41	3,095	5,541
South India	92,021,255	333	44,059	49,404
Sri Lanka	14,000,000	24	1,368	1,627
<b>Division Totals</b>	<b>832,527,305</b>	<b>806</b>	<b>103,741</b>	<b>124,103</b>

(Figures as of Second Quarter, 1980)