

Outlook

THIRD QUARTER 2013 • SOUTHERN ASIA-PACIFIC DIVISION

A smiling woman in a yellow top and pink headscarf carries a large metal pot in a rural field. The background shows a vast green field with scattered trees under a bright sky.

Bangladesh:
A Nation with a
Heart of Promise

Outlook

THIRD QUARTER 2013

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what's inside

01 DEPARTMENTS

- 04 EDITORIAL: Hearts, Hopes and Hidden Jewels
- 06 PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE: "Namaska!"
- 07 FEATURE: ADRA Bangladesh: Changing the World One Life at a Time
- 08 FEATURE COUNTRY: History of Adventist in Bangladesh
- 12 ADRA STORIES: A Progressive Farmer Abul Hashem
- 13 ADRA STORIES: Mariam's Economic Development

02 FIELD NEWS

- 14 Division-Wide Representatives Attend Ny 13 Urban Evangelism Training
- 14 Meet OYIM-SSD Representative, Anthony Stayner
- 15 ADRA-Philippines Responds to Northern Flood Victive Needs
- 16 One Year in Mission
- 16 SSD-Wide Children's Ministries Convention Held in Bangkok

03 FEATURES

- 17 FEATURE STORY: Accompanied by Angels
- 19 CHILDREN STORY: Songs of Hope in Bangladesh
- 20 YOUTH LINK: The Light at the End of A Narrow Way!
- 21 RECIPE: Bangladesh Dal (Split Lentils) Soup



Hearts, Hope &

EDITORIAL



I read once that people can tell a great deal about you by what you have in as well as on your refrigerator. An article I read last week from a Singaporean newspaper seemed to prove that theory by featuring about 10 refrigerators and testing how well the contents matched the individuals. It was fun, light reading but eerily accurate. As for the outside of a refrigerator telling a story, I've often been amazed by what I learn about my friends by "reading" their refrigerator doors. Some are very sparse with perhaps just an appointment reminder or small calendar taped to the door. Others, however, are like art galleries with every centimeter covered with photos of smiling faces and fun vacation memories. Still others feature colossal collections of refrigerator magnets from every corner of the world, it seems.

If you were to study my refrigerator door, you'd find some destination magnets from our travels, a few photos of family, friends and relatives and then a variety of magnets or small souvenirs from places and people particularly meaningful to us. At first glance, you'd probably miss the heart-shaped magnet on my door. It's not colorful like the others. It's not large like a few I have. It's not fancy with intricate details. Instead, it's small and features a simple design with simple text and a few basic colors against a neutral background.

It certainly wouldn't capture anyone's eye from a distance but when you get up close, you can see the individual stitches in the design and the careful handiwork. To me, though, it stands out among all the others because I know what it represents.

It was made by a lady I don't know whose circumstances may be very different than mine but we share a common thread: we've both benefitted from Pollywog Industries – the organization that produces hand-crafted products like my refrigerator magnet. Pollywog Industries is an Adventist organization in Bangladesh that offers handicraft training and business skills to women with difficult life circumstances: poverty, lack of education and even abusive environments. It's a way for women to have income of their own so they can better provide for the needs of themselves and their families. Pollywog Industries not only offers training but then assists them in selling their creations through Pollywog's online store. So you can understand how the women benefit but how do I benefit?

and Hidden Jewels

Often I see the challenges of our church work throughout our division, the challenges of sharing Jesus in non-Christian countries, the challenges that our members and their neighbors face in terms of poverty in some areas and materialism in others, limited educational opportunities and even the more horrific circumstances like that mentioned in this issue's YouthLink. So, I need reminders, daily sometimes, of how God is working in the midst of all this.

My refrigerator magnet is a constant reminder of the country of Bangladesh and our Adventist church work there. Like my magnet amidst the others on my refrigerator, the country of Bangladesh is often overlooked on the world scale. The larger or more influential countries garner more attention and the world misses out on the lessons from Bangladesh. We as individuals and church members miss out on the lessons as well due to our busy lives and how a variety of church-related issues fill our minds. So we want you, our readers, to be more aware of the hidden jewels to be found in Bangladesh: stories of how the Adventist church is helping change lives through ADRA Bangladesh's many practical programs, reflections on the history of Adventism there (you might be surprised by all you'll learn), and opportunities to step into the lives of fellow brothers and sisters in Bangladesh. After reading, we hope you'll find yourself taking a little time, stepping back from all that distracts you and finding simple, practical ways to change the world around you. It just might be less daunting and complicated than you think and perhaps as simple as sharing a Pollywog magnet with friends and then brainstorming about what you could do in your area. After all, even the smallest efforts – like using needle and thread to create a livelihood – can have the biggest impact on lives and hearts.



“Namaska!”

(How are you?) **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE: BANGLADESH**

Greetings from Adventist family in Bangladesh in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ! It is my privilege to briefly share the joys, challenges and plans of the church (BAUM) to all of you (in Bangladesh) and this country.

About Bangladesh

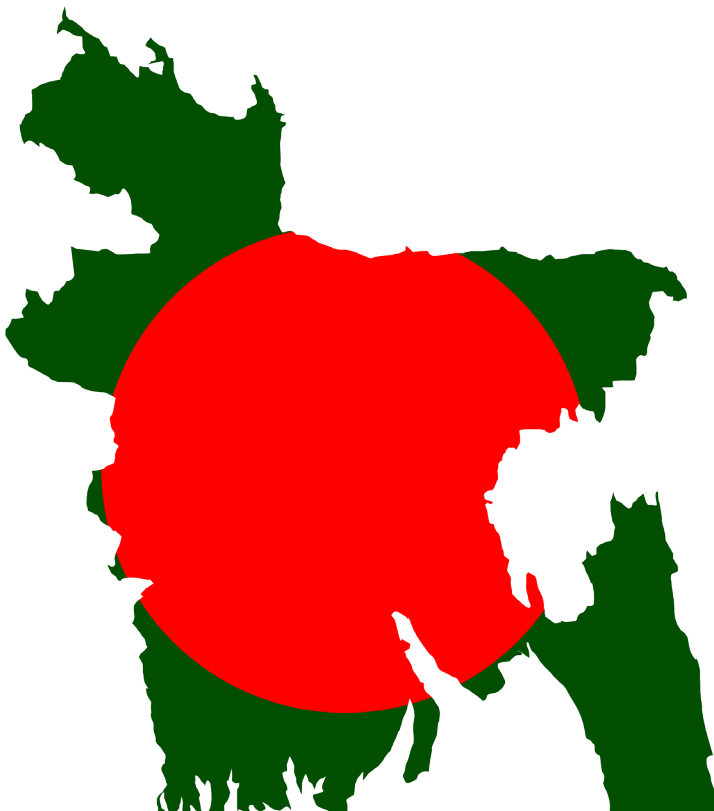
The Republic of People's Bangladesh, also known simply as Bangladesh, is a country in southwest Asia. It shares borders with Myanmar (east), India (west, north and east), and the Bay of Bengal (south). In 1971, Bangladesh gained its independence from West Pakistan. With a population of over 163 million according to 2013 statistics, Bangladesh is the third most populated country in the world and rates as one of the most economically-challenged countries. Bangladesh is subject to devastating floods, tropical cyclones and tornadoes, often accompanied by surging waves that can cause great damage and loss of life. Very often victims of these disasters are those living in poverty in slums on the outskirts of towns. Not only do floods cause damage among people, but they wreak havoc on crops, domestic animals, cattle and houses as well. However, the people are very lovely and smiling no matter what situation comes to them.

About Bangladesh Union Mission (BAUM)

The Adventist message came into Bangladesh in 1906, particularly Gopalganj to the southern part of Bangladesh by a layman named Kellogg Mookerjee from Kolkata India. From the southern part of Bangladesh, the Adventist message spread out toward the west, the north, and finally to the east by many committed pioneers. At present, there is one union mission headquarters named Bangladesh Adventist Union Mission (BAUM) and four local missions (East Bangladesh Mission, North Bangladesh Mission, South Bangladesh Mission, and West Bangladesh Mission). Geographically BAUM has 55 districts, but only 21 district pastors take care of the local churches. BAUM has 121 organized churches and 296 companies and 32 ordained pastors are serving the local churches, organizations and institutions. The church membership of BAUM as of 2013 is over 27 thousand and the ratio between Seventh-day Adventists and the general population is 1:5,745. BAUM has one (1) college (Bangladesh Adventist Seminary School and College) with 198 enrolled students, seven (7) boarding schools, ten (10) city day schools, and 159 elementary schools. All in all 8,670 students are educated in the Adventist philosophy of education for whole person development: physically, intellectually, and spiritually development.

Our Great Challenge

Eighty three percent of the Bangladesh people follow the Islamic religion while Hinduism accounts for 13% of the population. With only 0.0002% of the population reported as Seventh-day Adventist, public evangelism is a great challenge and usually blocked. Conversion from Islam or Hinduism is rare. Also, the four missions face great economic challenges. Their working capital and liquidity are usually very low. Year after year, the four missions and main boarding schools suffer from insufficient finances. A great number of students are not able to pay their tuition fees and without sponsorships from abroad, the majority of students must stop their study. We are earnestly praying for those in need to receive sponsorships soon.



ADRA BANGLADESH

Changing the World One Life at a Time



Mission to the cities is our great challenge. There are many cities here such as Dhaka, Chittagong, Barisal, Mymensingh, Khuluna, Sylhet, Rajshai, etc., but only a few Adventists living there except in Dhaka, the capital city. The Adventist message must enter every city.

Our Vision and Mission

In spite of these often overwhelming religious and economic challenges, we have very ambitious visions and dreams to share the Three Angels' message of Revelation 14:6-12 with unreached people. One of the strategies to reach unreached people is "Mission to the Cities." BAUM has chosen five cities for city evangelism: (1) Dhaka, the capital city, has been assigned to BAUM, (2) Chittagong, the second largest city in Bangladesh, has been commissioned to East Bangladesh Mission, (3) Mymensingh, an unreached area, is under the care of the North Bangladesh Mission, (4) Khuluna is the focus of the South Bangladesh Mission, and (5) Rajshai is the project for the West Bangladesh Mission. We want to establish Centers of Influence in the five (5) selected cities so that we will be able to reach the unreached people by launching Integrated Evangelism Lifestyle (IEL), Health Ministry, Community Service, Counseling Office, Matrimonial Advice Office, Vocational Advice Office, etc. We are going to start these project in 2014.

To accomplish these plans for our mission here in Bangladesh, we desperately need the prayers and support of the world church. Please allocate some time daily in your prayer life for Bangladesh. May the Lord bless all of you richly.

■ MYUN JU LEE (D.MIN), BAUM PRESIDENT

With 49.5% of the population considered to be poor (with less than 1.25 USD/day) with over 30% of the population lives in extreme poverty, ADRA Bangladesh (ADRA,B) attempts to meet the needs. In 2012/2013 ADRA,B supported 67,340 people in 12 projects in Bangladesh.

ADRA, B is not one of the major NGOs in Bangladesh; however, it is recognized that in what it does, it does its best. We are humbled to hear that all of our donors consider projects implemented by ADRA Bangladesh as having the best practices among implementing partners.

ADRA,B is bringing hope to thousands of families in Bangladesh by empowering women through health, literacy awareness and improving their purchasing power; assisting farmers with new technologies and agricultural inputs; bringing street children to light of education by providing informal education and linking them in mainstream education; improving the nutritional status of children by providing them with healthy meals and teaching them on healthy cooking; and being with the people with food aid and psychosocial support in times of disasters. r education, we can change the future of the children. As a result, it has supported some of the boarding schools, such as Gopalgonj Adventist Pre-Seminary (GAPS), Bangladesh Adventist Seminary and College (BASC) and Adventist Hill Tracks School and Seminary) AHTSS through a partnership with BCSS.

In a variety of ways, areas and projects, ADRA,B is committed to changing the world in Bangladesh one life at a time. ■ LUCILLE SIRCAR, ADRA,B

History of Adventism in Bangladesh

FEATURED COUNTRY

Bangladesh is a small country in terms of land area but large in population. The Adventist message came to this country for the first time in 1906, more than 100 years ago yet the Adventist population is just a handful compared to the general population. After 107 years, there are over 31,000 baptized members as of June 2013: 7,000 in the East Bangladesh Mission, 7,000 in the North Bangladesh Mission, 8,000 in the South Bangladesh Mission, and 8,000 in the West Bangladesh Mission. During the pioneering stage, many worked diligently to spread the gospel in this land; some even sacrificed their lives for the cause of preaching the gospel. These missionaries from abroad, in particular the United States, came to this land to preach the gospel despite hardships and the existing cultural and religious barriers. Adventists in Bangladesh are eternally grateful for this.

center in a house on Bow Bazar Street that Burrus rented and prepared for them.

In March 1896, a school for Hindu girls was opened on the first floor of the mission house under the supervision of Burrus and Taylor, with a well-educated Bengali woman as a teacher. It was while visiting homes in the neighborhood of the school that Burrus met Nanibala Biswas, who later became the first female Adventist convert from Hinduism. After her conversion, Biswas adopted Burrus as her last name in honor of the one who introduced her to Christianity.

In 1896 the Adventist publishing work began in Kolkata with the publication of a four-page tract entitled "Can All Be Saved?" Later in that year an article by Ellen G. White, "The Coming of Christ," was published as a tract in the Bangla (also known as Bengali) language.

From this fruitful start in west Bengal (India), the Adventist work spread to Bangladesh (then East Bengal) in an intriguing way. A group of young people from Gopalganj went to Sreerampur, not far from Kolkata City (Calcutta), to be enrolled in a seminary established by Dr. William Carey, a Baptist missionary from England. Three of them were returning home with heavy hearts because they were not allowed to enroll due to overcrowding at the seminary. Among them was Mr. Krishna Dhon Poddar. As they waited to board a train at Sealdah Railway Station in Kolkata to return home, Poddar sat there with his head hanging down and heart full of disappointment. Suddenly he noticed a pair of white feet just in front of him, so he straightened himself and looked at the stranger's face—a beautiful lady stood in front of him and politely offered him some tracts printed in Bangla. He accepted them but in his discouragement, he just

In the later part of nineteenth century and early part of twentieth century, several literature evangelists brought religious books and tracts to this land, then known as Bengal. At the time, it included both west Bengal (India) and east Bengal (now known as Bangladesh). The first regular Adventist worker to reach west Bengal (India) under appointment by the Mission Board was Georgia Anna Burrus (later Georgia Anna Burgess). She was a young Bible instructor from California who arrived in Kolkata (then Calcutta) on January 23, 1895. It had been planned that she would accompany D. A. Robinson, the leader of the projected mission to India, but when he was delayed in England, she proceeded alone. Since the Mission Board paid only for her fare, she aimed to work as self-supporting worker until the regular mission could be established. Burrus found lodging during her first year in Kolkata at the YWCA home. On November 8, 1895, Dores A. Robinson and another Bible instructor, Martha May Taylor, arrived in Kolkata, and eventually opened an Adventist mission



put them in his shirt pocket and didn't even bother to look at them.

When he arrived at home, he went to bed early because he was so tired from his journey. While he slept, his daughter said to her younger brother, "Papa just arrived from Kolkata. Let's check his shirt pockets; for some candies." They did not find any candies in the pockets but instead found some printed papers. They were not interested in those papers, so they threw them on the floor and went on to bed.

Poddar had a nice sleep that night after his travels. When he awoke the next morning, he found some papers scattered on the floor. He was a Sunday-keeper so his attention was drawn to the topic on one of the tracts, "Christ rested on Saturday, not on Sunday". Although he could not read or understand what was written there, he could understand the two words, "Sabbath" and "Sunday". He began looking up the Biblical references. As he studied, whatever skepticism he had in his mind disappeared. He discovered that Christ went to synagogues on Sabbath; even Paul did the same.

After some time and a great deal of studying, he went to his church and asked the church leaders to meet with him in order to discuss the Sabbath issue. He showed from the Bible which is the rest day, Sabbath. The results were explosive. During an emotional response, it became obvious that the church leaders were strongly divided in their opinions; some were for Sunday and others were for Saturday. To calm the chaotic situation and halt the disunity, the chairman expelled Poddar from the meeting.

But he could not keep quiet; instead he went door-to-door in the area, enthusiastically sharing



this new-found truth with people. The next day he went to the village of Katra for consultation with Mr. D. N. Roy, one of the students who went to study at the seminary of Dr. William Carey. Mr. Roy read the tracts, studied, checked the Biblical references and was convinced too. The two of them decided to start Sabbath worship service on the very next Saturday. They were able to convince 13 families to join with them on Saturday to have Sabbath worship services and the very first Sabbath service was held in Bangladesh (then East Bengal).

However, the Sunday-keeping church leaders who were so enraged during their meeting with Poddar threatened the 13 families and warned them not to join the new church. As a result, some of them left the new church but others clung to their new found faith. Thus they kept the Sabbath as best they could for the next four months. Poddar tried to find another Adventist group or organization in Kolkata so his group could have more spiritual support. During those four months, he sent four letters to the press where the tracts were printed, but there was no reply.

Meanwhile the Adventist mission board in the United States sent Elder J. L. Shaw to Kolkata to survey whether a mission station could be established in Kolkata City. While he was preparing to go to India, he met Georgia Burrus who had recently returned from India. She suggested that once he arrived in India he should contact one of her Christian friends, Mr. Lal Chand Mookerjee, a convert of Dr William Carey. After Shaw landed in Kolkata, he did find Mookerjee, and he introduced himself as a Seventh-day Adventist from the United States. When Mookerjee's eldest son Akkhay heard the name Seventh-day Adventist, he immediately recalled the four letters he received from Poddar in Gopalganj. Akkhoy brought those four letters and showed Elder Shaw; in those letters, Poddar mentioned the tracts he received in India. When the group realized that those tracts had been printed by the Mr. Lal Chand Mookerjee, they were overwhelmed by how God had guided Poddar.

After hearing about the Sabbath-keepers in Gopalgonj, Shaw decided to go there to meet

■ CONTINUE ON PAGE 11

History of Adventism in Bangladesh

them. The next day, he started his journey toward Gopalganj by train and steamer. He arrived at his destination in the evening and stayed in a circuit house (bungalow). On Saturday morning he went out to look for the Sabbath-keepers, especially for Poddar. He found a man who brought him to a business where poddars work with gold jewelry (poddar means a businessman who deals with gold). Shaw told them he needed to find a Christian whose name was Mr. K. D. Poddar. A young boy helped Shaw find Poddar's house; when they neared it, they heard a group of people singing and realized it was indeed the right house.

When the people inside saw a white man, they were immediately frightened because the Sunday-keeping church leaders had threatened to report the Sabbath-keepers to "the whites" (during those days, "the whites" were the British who used to rule India). All of the Sabbath-keepers were seated on floor-mat except Poddar who sat on a chair to lead the services. Poddar stood up and politely offered his chair to Shaw. When Shaw declined and indicated that Poddar should continue leading the services, the group wasn't sure what to think. However, when an offering plate was passed and Shaw gave a valuable 10 Taka note, they were no longer scared of him because

they realized he was friendly and sincere.

After the Sabbath services, Shaw tried to find out how they learned about the Sabbath but no one there knew English so they conversed through their own improvised sign language and a local Hindu teacher who agreed to interpret for them. Mr Poddar even showed Elder Shaw the tracts he brought from Kolkata railway station. Elder Shaw was so glad to know there were Sabbath-keepers in the area that he promised to return to the U.S and send money to establish a mission station in Gopalganj. He gave the same promise to the Mookerjee family when he bid them farewell in Kolkata before his return to the U.S.

Upon returning to the United States, Shaw met Georgia Burrus and discovered that she was the one who arranged for the tracts to be printed. She wanted to return as a missionary to India but the mission board was reluctant to send her since she was still young and single at the time. However, some years later, she returned with her husband as a missionary to India.

In the meantime, Mr. Akkhoy K. Mookerjee was concerned about his son, Lal Gopal. Lal Gopal had recently married an American woman and was still unemployed. So they discussed the proposed mission station in Gopalganj and decided that Lal

Gopal would be a good candidate to help start the mission because his wife could translate for and assist the Americans while La Gopal could assist the locals. Akkhoy suggested that his son should contact Poddar to find a suitable piece of land in Gopalganj to buy and establish a mission station. Lal Gopal did so and Poddar found available land on the bank of River Madhumati. Lal Gopal and his wife then came to Bangladesh (then East Bengal) and established a mission station with their own money. Later the American missionaries were glad to purchase this property for the church.

Thirteen interested families gathered there to discuss the establishment of a mission station. To meet the interest, Poddar and L.G. Mookerjee were busy constructing several buildings for the next three to four months. The group met for Sabbath services on the veranda of Mookerjee's newly built residence since there was not yet a church building then. The news of the newly established mission station spread like a wild fire among the Christian community in the surrounding villages in that region. Christians from Borashi village and villages in the Gopalganj area came to the mission station to know about the Sabbath truth and join the Sabbath services. Mookerjee led the Sabbath

EAST BANGLADESH MISSION (EBM)

The Adventist message arrived in this region in 1984. During the next two years, about 29 people accepted the Adventist truth and were baptized under the leadership of Arun Libraso. At present there are little over 7,000 baptized church members in EBM. Originally, it was called a region with M.L. Baidya, Hiron Dango, R.C. Adhikary, Simon Halder, J. C. Roy, and P.R. Das serving as coordinators. From 1997 onward, it was considered a field and elected full time administrative officers for the first time. They were Edward P. Chambugong as president, Daniel Shaha as executive secretary, and Stephen Murmu as treasurer. In 2010 it was upgraded to mission status. Present officers of EBM include Daniel C. Boidya, president; Dennis Das, executive secretary; and Ramesh Ekka, treasurer.

EBM IS COMPRISED OF THE FOLLOWING:

Organized Churches:	25
Company Churches:	58
Total membership:	7,370
Boarding Schools:	1
City Day Schools:	1
English Medium Schools:	2

NORTH BANGLADESH MISSION (NBM)

In 1947, P.C. Gayen, Ashini Kumar Bairagee, S.K. Somaddar, and S.C. Madhu from the southern part of Bangladesh went to the Garo area, the current location of the North Bangladesh Mission. Gayen and Madhu returned after a few days but Bairagee and Somaddar stayed there in a rented house to preach the gospel.

The first three believers in this area were Durga Das, Jacob Biswas and Jacob's daughter, Minu Biswas; they were baptized in 1947. In the later part of 1947 another three people were baptized: Ibrahim Rema and Ramesh Chambugong from Monosapara village and Subol Tozu from Amtola village. Rema and Chambugong later became denomination workers.

The first church was organized in the village of Langura in this region. The Gairo, the local people, responded positively to the Adventist message, so the message spread quite fast. Within a few years' time, organized churches included Akonpara, Biruidakuni, Kanka, Gazirvita, and Randhunikura. When the Bangladesh Section became a Union in 1979, the Garo region became North Bangladesh Mission. Edwin P. Rema who was Field Director was elected as president. At

present NBM officers are Edward P. Chambugong, president; Harish Hajong, executive secretary, and Vaskor Bapari, treasurer.

HERE IS THE BRIEF STATISTICS OF THIS MISSION:

Organized Churches:	35
Company Churches:	72
Total membership:	7,302
Boarding Schools:	2
City Day Schools:	1



services and Poddar assisted him as they taught the villagers all the spiritual truths that they had learned up to that point.

By 1907, the first baptized members of the Adventist church in Bangladesh included Purna Chandra Dey, Manob Sircar, Kishna Dhon Poddar, Ananda Chandra Halder, Sadhon Chandra Sircar, and Purna Chandra Gayen. Later some were appointed as district leaders. During this time, Mookerjee and his pregnant wife went to the U.S. for her medical treatment. Sadly, she died during childbirth. In his grief, he decided to stay there for further study and was baptized. After two years, he returned to India as a denominational worker.

During Mookerjee's absence, an Anglo-Indian dentist named Dr. A. G. Watson took over leadership of mission work in various parts of Bangladesh. An American, Mr. John C. Little, was sent to oversee the work some parts of Bangladesh, Kolkata, and Karmatar. Unfortunately, he died within short period of time after contracting cholera in August of 1910. However, God's work continued with the combined leadership of Dr. Watson, Mr. W.A. Burlow, and Mr. W.W. Miller. Gradually Adventist work in Bangladesh started to expand to the villages of Charkhuli, Buruabari, Gobra, Kalikapur, Barisal, and Borashi. Since, there were

not many members in these places, they could not organize churches in these villages. Therefore, members from these villages used to walk 16 to 20 kilometers to have Sabbath services at the established locations. To meet the growing needs of these Adventist churches, the first denominational workers were chosen: Aditta Falia, Ananda Chandra Halder, Krishna Dhon Poddar, Purna Chandra Arinda, Purna Chandra Gayen, and Sadhon Chandra Sircar.

The first general meeting (constituency meeting) was held in Bangladesh in 1909 and during this event, the very first communion service in Bangladesh was held. The second general meeting was held after a year and forty believers attended this meeting with twenty baptisms occurring then. Though the Adventist work started in Gopalganj, the first church was organized in Barisal with 26 members.

In 1929, A.G. Youngberg replaced L.G. Mookerjee as superintendent of the work in Bangladesh. We might think of that title as similar to a president's position today. After two years, a physician, Dr. C. F. Shilling, came to Bangladesh as superintendent. During the Second World War, in that time of horror, he led the church with boldness and bravery. Afterward, Mr. P.C. Gayen was invited to be superintendent of the church and

simultaneously served as executive secretary and treasurer until 1951.

When East Bengal became one of the provinces of Pakistan, it was renamed East Pakistan in 1947. Thus the mission headquarters became known as the East Pakistan Section. A Sri Lankan gentleman, R. S. Fernando was the first superintendent to be called a president and carried this responsibility until 1956. Kenneth S. Brown replaced him in 1956 and worked as president of this section for ten years. During his time the mission headquarters was moved to Dhanmondi Road No. 1 in Dhaka from Gopalganj. In 1965 the headquarters was again moved, this time to its present premises in Mirpur, Dhaka City. In 1979, the Southern Asia Division approved the status change from a section (mission) to Bangladesh Adventist Union Mission (BAUM). During that time there were two local missions, namely North Bangladesh Mission and South Bangladesh Mission as well as a region called West Bangladesh Region. Presently, there are four local missions under BAUM—East Bangladesh, North Bangladesh, South Bangladesh, and West Bangladesh.

■ COMPILED BY BENJAMIN RAKSHAM, BAUM COMMUNICATION DIRECTOR
[SOURCES: SDA ENCYCLOPEDIA, BAUM DIRECTORY-2013, BAUM MONTHLY POTRIKA/NEWLETTER, NOVEMBER 2006, VOL. 23, NO. 11, NORTH BANGLADESH MISSION SDA CHURCH HISTORY, INFORMATION COLLECTED VERBALLY FROM DIFFERENT SOURCES]

SOUTH BANGLADESH MISSION (SBM)

SBM has the distinction of being the home of the very first Adventist baptized in what is now Bangladesh. For the most part, pioneering Adventist work centered in this southern part of Bangladesh during the early part of the twentieth century. From 1929 onward, it gradually moved toward the west and toward the north from 1947 onward. In 1979 the Bangladesh Union was organized with the South Bangladesh Mission coming into existence afterward. The first mission officers were Rakhil Chandra Adhikary as president and Ramesh K Biswas as executive secretary-treasurer. Later presidents included N.D. Roy, Philpot, B.B. Bol, D.D. Roy, Ramen Halder, Swapon Halder, Gamaliel G. Falia, Bibek Halder, Daniel C. Boidya, and Dilip Hagidok. The present officers of this mission are President Matthew Adhikary, Executive Secretary Edwin Halder, and Treasurer Ashish K. Bol.

BRIEF STATISTICS OF THIS MISSION INCLUDE:

Organized Church:	34
Company Church:	61
Total membership:	8,118
Boarding School:	2
English Medium School:	3



WEST BANGLADESH MISSION (WBM)

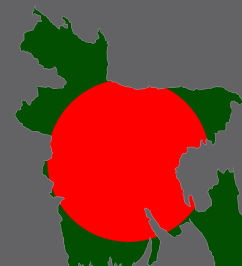
Adventist work began in this area when U. N. Halder and C.C. Keller went to Beldanga in the district of Dinajpur to baptize Forga Marandi, family members of Rani Nagar, and Gomdi Soren and his wife. In spite of this, formal Adventist work didn't start until 1947. Mr. Girish Chandra Arinda went to visit a nearby village called Basudebpur and formally organized an Adventist team for the area. In March 1950 Pastor S.K. Somaddar was sent to Hili and two years later he opened a mission station there. From then on, many leaders have come and gone with N.C. Dewri, S.K. Bairagee, P.B. Das, and A.K. Sarker among them. They established many churches in this region. However, the evangelistic focus was only on the Santal tribe during this time.

In 1978 church leaders planned an organized approach to reach other tribes. Pastor Subash Ritchil was sent there and he began to spread the gospel among the Orao, Munda, and Khatriya tribes. Thereafter, M.L. Boidya and N. Bayer worked among these tribes and they established several churches. The first officers of this mission were Isaac P. Bairagee, president; Nathaniel N. Baroi, executive secretary; and Ashish K. Bol, treasurer. They were followed by leaders such as Ramen

Halder, Propip K Tudu, Reuben Kisku, Simon Soren who died during his term, and Nitish K. Drong (acting president). The present officers of this mission are David D Mitra, president; Moses Murmu, executive secretary; and Amal Baroi, president.

WBM CONTAINS THE FOLLOWING INSTITUTIONS:

Organized Church:	27
Company Church:	92
Total membership:	8,740
Boarding School:	1
City Day School:	1
English Medium School:	2



A Progressive Farmer

Abul Hashem

ADRA STORIES

Abul Hashem of Mymensingh is the husband of Fatema Begum of Bekerkanda Women Empowerment Group of WEP. Since March 2012 Fatema and Abul have been involved with different project interventions. They have 6 sons and 2 daughters. They have 12 decimal homesteads and 60 decimal cultivable lands.

In 2012, Abul Hashem received training on system of rice intensification (SRI) methods in Amon from ADRA staff and then tried these methods on 10 decimals of his land. He had a 30% greater yield than the previous season. The beneficiaries and community people observed the trial result and were highly impressed. As a result Abul Hashem now assists ADRA staff in organizing farmers' meetings at Bekerkanda village so they can apply SRI method in their fields. Due to interest and hard work of Abul Hashem, in the last season 40 farmers cultivated rice by following SRI method in their 558 decimals of land. Abul Hashem supervises and motivates the farmers in proper seed preparation, seedling usage, proper spacing and management.

As a result, the farmers in the ADRA program had a yield of as much as 7.20 tons per hector while other farmers only harvested 4.75 tons using traditional methods.

Now Abul Hashem serves as a model farmer in Bekerkanda village. Other people ask him for farming advice. Through his abundant harvests, Abul Hashem has earned enough to build a new tin sheet house and purchase a sanitary latrine. Now other farmers call him the SRI teacher and he uses only ADRA SRI methods for all his farming. ■ **BABUL**

GOMES, ADRA, B



PHOTO COURTESY OF ADRA BANGLADESH

Mariam's Economic Development

ADRA STORIES

Mariam lives in Barmopur village in Birol with her husband Ansar Ali, son and mother-in-law. Her determination and diligence have changed her family's economic condition. Mariam said, "When I married my husband, he had no land where we could build our own house". They used to live in a money lender's house and her husband worked for the owner. "With such a small income, my family would not survive properly," noted Mariam.

Mariam is one of the members of Hasnahena Women's Group under the care of HRDP project of ADRA Bangladesh. In the beginning, she borrowed Tk.2000/- (2,000) from ADRA Bangladesh and invested in a small grocery shop. She managed both the shop and her house while investing money in her shop for three years repeatedly. Day by day, her business became more profitable. In addition, Mariam successfully completed three months of tailoring training from ADRA Bangladesh. Later, she purchased a sewing machine and started a tailoring business to complement her grocery shop. From her tailoring and shop business income, Mariam has started to change

her family economic conditions. She was able to send her children to school regularly and she purchased land for building her own house from her business income. Mariam also purchased a

rickshaw-van to sell her business produces. Now her husband is selling their business products in various communities from the rickshaw-van. Mariam said, "My husband and I have close cooperation in our business works. As a result we are able to change our family economic situation."

Mariam is a very active group member of Hasnahena Women Group. She serves as a cashier in her group and is an elected board member of Tiya Women Board. Mariam said, "This ADRA project made us more powerful and self-reliant as group members. That's why we are able to invest and expand our micro-enterprises, improve our housing, ensure education for our children, afford better clothes for our family and children, ensure better nutrition and medical treatment, and also have enough money to give wedding gifts for relatives (a very important part of Bangladesh culture) and support relatives in need." She gratefully adds, "ADRA taught me how to bring about change and empower myself."

■ PALASH ROY, PROJECT MANAGER ADRA,B



PHOTO COURTESY OF ADRA BANGLADESH

Division-wide representatives attend NY 13 urban evangelism training

■ TERESA COSTELLO/MISSION TO THE CITIES/NY 13

The Adventist church in the southern Asia-Pacific region (SSD) sent three official delegates to partner with 14 other evangelists representing four of SSD's union territories to the General Conference International Field School of Evangelism as part of NY 13 held June 7-29, 2013 in New York City.

NY 13 was an evangelistic project involving approximately 400 New York City-based evangelistic series held concurrently with the two main series conducted by well-known evangelist Pastor Mark Finley and Pastor Robert Costa, the General Conference Evangelism Coordinator. It was the kick-off event for the Mission to the Cities initiative.

Three days a week, the delegates and evangelists attended three hours of field school classes. Classes focused on topics such as "The Holy Spirit and Outreach, Life changing Prayer, Revival and Evangelism, Health Ministry, Family Life Outreach, Lay Bible Study Ministry, Small Groups, Literature Ministry, Involving Young People in Christ's Mission, Developing an Evangelistic Strategy, Equipping Lay People for Service, Understanding your Community, Preparing Evangelistic Budgets, Effective Evangelistic Advertising, Holding an Audience, Evangelis-

SSD attendees included Rodolfo Bautista Jr (Central Luzon Conference, Philippines), Edwin Gulfan (South Philippines Union Conference), Ernesto Douglas Venn (SSD), Pastor and Mrs. Nelson D. de Chavez (North Philippines Union Conference -NPUC), Israel P. Andoy (NPUC), Pastor and Mrs. Ber-son Simbolan (Southeast Adventist Union Mission - SAUM), Danson Ng (SAUM), Reymundo Bayaborda Torres (South Central Luzon Conference - SCLC), Pascual "Wally" Pangalima (NPUC), Arnelio Abacan Gabin (SCLC), Santos Gloria Eranista (SCLC), Patric Choo (SSD ASI), Leroy Mapalie (East Indonesia Union Conference), David Tan (SSD ASI), and Johnny Lubis (SSD).

Finley explains that "the massive evangelistic outreach in New York City (was) part of the Seventh-day Adventist Church's 'Mission to the Cities' initiative. Church leaders at every level of church organization have identified 630 major cities worldwide to focus their evangelistic energies and resources on in the next three years. This comprehensive evangelistic approach blends Biblical principles with the practical, divinely inspired counsels of the Spirit of Prophecy to reach people living in

MEET OYIM-SSD REPRESENTATIVE, ANTHONY STAYNER

CITIZENSHIP: USA and Philippine (Tony's father is American and his mother a Filipino)
LANGUAGES SPOKEN: English and Tagalog
EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND: Bachelor of Science (Mathematics) and currently completing a Masters in Divinity majoring in Youth Ministries

TRAINING/WORK EXPERIENCE: Tony is the a co-founder and director of DREAM International Creative Ministries which is an independent ministry that supports the Youth Departments of the Southern Asia-Pacific Division and North Philippine Union Conference. He has also served DREAMiCM as Project Manager, Media & Graphics Coordinator, and as a Resource Personnel Officer

CHURCH LEADERSHIP/ MISSION EXPERIENCE: Tony has been active in youth ministry since he was the age of 12 at school and at his local church. His parents being missionaries in the Philippines placed him in a mission field at early age. In college he was actively leading in media and graphics ministry teams and as well as a worship leader in his last year of college. After co-founding a mission group in 2007 he has conducted several mission trips for youth and young adults round the Philippine islands.

Being an active Master Guide, he was tasked by the Southern Asia-Pacific Division (SSD) Youth Department to plan and program the first SSD Pathfinder Camporee in 2009.

■ ONE YEAR IN MISSION



tic Preaching, Decisions, Appeals, Making Baptism Meaningful, Follow Up and Nurture, Sustaining Evangelistic Momentum in a City, Evangelism and Media," according to Costa.

Two days a week, the evangelists met with the teams assisting them during their evangelistic meetings. Afternoons were spent preparing for the night's meeting or visiting interested attendees. In spite of such a busy schedule, evangelists from SSD also managed to fit in friendship evangelism and cultural exchange opportunities as they hurried through their busy schedule.

these urban centers with Jesus end time message of hope for our time."

Manila, the capital city of the Philippines, is one of the designated cities mentioned by Finley. Thus, the field school gave instruction and practical experience that many of the SSD attendees will use when they assist with Hope for Manila 2014, a major evangelistic endeavor patterned after NY 13 and to be held May 4-17.

For more information about the above programs, visit www.ny13.org, www.manila2014.org, www.h4bc.com or www.missiontothecities.org.



PHOTO BY KHENNJO DELES

ADRA-Philippines Responds to Northern Flood Victim Needs

■ JELOME SELDA-MANALU, ADRA PHILIPPINES



PHOTOS BY MOISES MUSICO

During monsoon season, the Adventist Development and Relief Agency in the Philippines (ADRA-Philippines) served families affected by August typhoons and flooding in the northern Philippines.

After the August 9 landfall of Typhoon Labuyo, ADRA-Philippines quickly did a National Emergency Management Plan (NEMP) with food aid to two municipalities in northern Luzon particularly in Aurora province and assisted those living in evacuation centers. 500 families were assisted with food packs valued at over 600,000 Pesos.

Later in the month, rain from tropical storm Maring caused deep flooding in much of metro Manila and the surrounding areas. The Adventist

church office building in north Philippines (NPUC) and the nearby Manila Adventist Medical Center both had flood waters inside their doors.

ADRA-Philippines assisted over a thousand Adventist and indigent families with donations from Seventh-day Adventist institutions such as the Southern Asia-Pacific regional office headquartered in Silang, Cavite, Philippines and the three Adventist union office headquarters in north Philippines: South Central Luzon Conference, Central Luzon Conference and Northern Luzon Mission. Additionally, over 500 affected families in the nearby province of Cavite were given food aid during an NEMP response. Total value of the relief aid distributed in the two Cavite municipalities

of Rosario and Kawit amounted to over 600,000 Pesos.

Thousands of families were relocated to school and public gymnasiums temporarily made as evacuation centers until the need to resume classes. The ADRA Network responded by sending donations to give check vouchers or a cash transfer program (CTP) to 830 families to purchase basic commodities for their own priority needs and better their living condition.

Those who received assistance were very grateful for the ADRA Network that helped them purchase food and essential items lost in the flood waters.

One Year In Mission



■ TERESA COSTELLO/ONE YEAR IN MISSION

One Year in Mission (OYiM) is a General Conference initiative to provide youth and young adults with innovative service opportunities through urban evangelism. OYiM functions in partnership with Mission to the Cities and Adventist Volunteer Services.

In 2012 young adult representatives from each of the Adventist church's 14 divisions around the world were chosen for the pilot program. The pilot program started in January 2013 and consisted of three time periods with corresponding activities. During the first three months, OYiM team members received training and were oriented to the program and their duties in their home countries. For the next six months, team members experienced a variety of innovative evangelism programs, community service activities and communication opportunities as they assisted in the preparation for a major evangelism series in New York City.

Team members will return to their home countries and begin implementing the OYiM program in their divisions with the goal of developing OYiM programs on the union level in 2015 and conference/mission level thereafter. The Southern Asia-Pacific division chose Anthony Stayner as its representative for the pilot program. Look for more news about SSD's own OYiM team, headed by Anthony, in the next issue and learn how the program will be implemented in this division.

More information about the pilot program can be found at www.oneyearinmission.org.

SSD-wide Children's Ministries convention held in Bangkok



■ GAY DELES

On August 21-25, over 200 Adventist children's ministries leaders met at the Bangkok Palace Hotel for a week of training seminars. Titled "Turbo Charged: Children's Leadership for the Master", the series of seminars emphasized various aspects of understanding children, family health and parenting as well as tackling deeper issues like bullying and healthy ways for children and tweens to respond to it.

Children's ministries specialists from around the globe shared their insights with the delegates. Presenters included Linda Koh and Saustin Mfuno, children's ministry director and associate for the Adventist World Church respectively; Miriam Andres, director for children's ministry in the southern Asia-Pacific region (SSD) of the church; Dinora Rivera, director from the inter-American region; Julie Weslake from the south Pacific region; Caroline Chola from the southern Africa India ocean region; Omobonike Adeola Sessou from the west central Africa region; Elsa Cozzi from the inter-

European region; Sim Sew Moi from the southeast Asia territory and retired couple James and Shirley Chang, who are lecturers on children's health and success.

Attendees came from throughout the SSD territory and beyond. A group of children's ministries leaders from the Middle East found their time in Bangkok to be very beneficial. Nancy Colegado is the children's ministry director for the church in the Gulf Field covering the nations of Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen. In an exchange of emails after the seminar, Colegado wrote, "We, the delegates from the Gulf field, were really blessed by the presentations and resources that we heard, learned, and gathered. We felt that the expenses for our travel were well spent and the returns have enriched us."

Another delegate from the Gulf Field, Jacqueline Campbell, said that the "planning and organization skills helped to make the convention a success and our trip a pleasant one. The resource



PHOTO COURTESY OF SSD WOMEN'S MINISTRIES DEPARTMENT

materials, accommodation and tour planning were all appreciated."

Additional leadership training is scheduled for the majority of SSD's countries in 2014 as leaders strive to meet the unique needs of children and their families in this world area.

My mother died when I was in the fourth grade but I remained active in our church's youth activities. By the time I reached my teenage years, I was the president of our young people's group called MASAYA (happy) which stands for Malungon Sarangani Adventist Youth Association. Although I was always involved in the many joyous activities we organized, I felt an emptiness within me. Perhaps it is due to the fact that I couldn't pursue a college education since my father could hardly even provide food for the family.

When I heard that the Adventist College of Technology (ACT) in the southern Philippines accepted working students, I went there and grabbed that opportunity. There I met a literature evangelist named Antonio. Though I wasn't initially impressed with these workers selling books, I listened while Antonio talked of his experiences with God Who proved for him time and again. His testimony showed that God can do what we think is impossible. Because of my dire financial needs, I decided to give it a try.

Over and over God showed me that He would do the impossible in my life as well. One special literature evangelist experience stands out in my mind. I was going to a canvassing appointment

Accompanied by Angels

FEATURE STORY

in the next province at Banga, South Cotabato. I only had 50 pesos (a little more than a dollar). I went to the bus terminal in the morning to catch a ride. There a public van with the driver's wife as the conductor. She asked me where I was going. I answered "Banga." A one-way fare from Koronadal to Banga cost 15 pesos back then so I had just enough with some left over in case of an emergency.

In Banga, I stopped at the municipal hall at the time when the employees were still having a flag ceremony so I sought the shade of a nearby mango tree to rest and wait. Then out of nowhere an old man came up to me to ask for 5 pesos. "What do you need 5 pesos for?" I asked. He replied, "I need it to go to Koronadal." I thought to myself, "He needs 15 pesos to get there." So I gave him my last 20 after I saved my own return fare. To my surprise, he gave back the extra 15 pesos. I was too bewildered about his actions that I said nothing and just accepted the change which meant I had enough money for two fares back to Koronadal – myself and someone else.

I had a really successful day of sales at the municipal hall and was so grateful for how God provided for me. But I didn't realize what He had truly done that day until my ride back to Koronadal. Around 4 pm, I was ready to go home

and coincidentally caught the same van I rode on that morning. The lady asked me "You going home?" I answered happily, "Yes!" "Where are your other companions? There were seven of you this morning," she added. "You all looked so bright in your white uniforms." For the second time that day, I was confused. Yes, I was wearing a white, collared shirt with black pants, but I was travelling alone and I certainly didn't have any companions that day so I told her there was nobody with me. She frowned. "Oh well, guess we'll have to pick up more to fill the seats!"

I'm pretty convinced God sent six angels to accompany me on that trip for protection and encouragement and perhaps one whose special job was to be by my side as I sold books at the municipal hall. By His grace, through literature evangelism work, I finished a two-year computer course at ACT. To this very day, I remain a believing, full-time literature evangelist. May the Lord bless the literature ministry until He comes! ■ HERNANIE A. MOMO IS A LITERATURE EVANGELIST IN GENERAL SANTOS CITY, PHILIPPINES





Songs of Hope in Bangladesh

The journey started about 10 years ago, when Sabbath School teachers in Dhaka, Bangladesh felt the need to compose songs in the local language. One of the composers, Mrs. Sweetie Ritchil, began preparing lyrics for the children's Sabbath Schools, especially for the Beginners class. The songs told the same stories that the children were learning in Sabbath School. **CHILDREN STORY**

In 2012, Angela Minjee and Sweetie Ritchil, both Sabbath School teachers, began asking what more could be done with the songs that had been composed long ago. As they discussed, a dream began to form. They imagined creating something that children could watch and sing along with anytime they wanted.

A small group of Dhaka Sabbath School teachers began planning, practicing, and filming the songs and stories that had been composed. Sweetie Ritchil worked on ideas, lyrics and tunes. Sweetie Ritchil, Bobby Sircar, Angela Minjee, Mita Das, Provati Boidya and Rosaria Sircar came together after work and on weekends to sing, play and record the songs. Bobby worked on the accompaniment, voice and audio editing. Angela Minjee did video editing. Deepanwita Sircar played the part of Naaman's servant girl and a group of children from the Bangladesh Adventist Union Mission also joined in singing and performing for the videos. When the video was complete, Prince Talukder designed the cover for the DVD.

The task was very tiring. At first it seemed impossible but the group took the challenge. Once they committed themselves to the project, they had fun and were inspired.

After eight months of hard work, the video was finally finished. Copies were shared with key people and a suggestion was

made to create a video in English also. Many people attended the "Opening Night" celebration. The reaction was very positive, both from the adults and children. Over 80 copies were sold in the first week.

The titles produced include:

You Can Do Something, Even If You're Small – The story of Naaman the Leper and his servant girl in English & Bangla

Great Flood in the Beautiful World – The story of Noah's Ark in Bangla (Reward of Noah's obedience/ Safety of his family) Great King in the Little Hut – The Christmas Story

In addition to effort, the team put their own money into this project and created it on their own time. If they sell enough videos, they will be able to pay for expenses on the first video and produce more children's music videos in the future.

The producers hope that the children of Bangladesh and other countries will be able to have something they can watch and interact with any time they want. The goal is for children to learn and enjoy the stories of the Bible and realize how God lead the people mentioned in the stories. If children have something positive to watch, perhaps they will be inspired and less likely to watch TV programs that do not have positive values.

If you would like to purchase or know more about the "Children's Songs of Hope", please contact Hope in Media through this address: hopeinmedia@live.com ■ JANELLE BRAUER

The Light at the End of a Narrow Way!

YOUTH LINK

My name is Violet (pseudonym). I am a 12-year old girl and have three more siblings. My mother works in a ready-made garments factory. Long ago my father left us. Then my elder sister got married and my brother got work as a helper on a bus. Once I used to go to school but that was more than two years ago. So I was mostly alone at home.

NOTE: NORMALLY, YOUTHLINK FEATURES ADVENTIST TEENS IN VARIOUS COUNTRIES – THEIR EXPERIENCES AS CHRISTIANS IN DIFFICULT SITUATIONS, THEIR CHRISTIAN VIEWS, THEIR OPINIONS AND HOPES. HOWEVER, THIS ISSUE'S YOUTHLINK ADDRESSES A DISTURBING BUT TRAGICALLY REAL ISSUE FACING YOUNG GIRLS AND WOMEN IN BANGLADESH AS WELL AS OTHER PLACES IN THE WORLD, THAT OF CHILD AND TEEN PROSTITUTION. THIS REAL EXPERIENCE OF ONE YOUNG EARLITEEN GIRL HIGHLIGHTS THE ADVENTIST CHURCH'S RESPONSE TO THIS PROBLEM AND WHAT HOPE CAN BE GIVEN TO OTHERS IN THESE TYPES OF SITUATIONS.

With no one to guide me, I would spend my days wandering around the slum and the neighborhood. One day I met a girl who told me she knew an easy way to earn money. She said that she could help me get started because she was already working and knew what

to a place to get business. I won't talk about what happened but after this, I felt like there was nothing good left of me. The girl paid me BDT 20 to 30 (US 40 cents). I began to feel that there was no other way for me and so began this type of life for me. I would use the BDT 20 to 30 to buy lipsticks and other accessories needed for my secret work. As time went on, I began to find my own clients so I could keep more of the fee. Then I took a job as a house cleaner at a nearby house but I didn't plan to quit my secret work. My thinking was so different then that I thought of just making enough money to provide for myself and my family.

That was my plan until one day a few staff members from an office of ADRA Bangladesh found me and offered to enroll me in a project for children of the slum where I live. It was called the Chalantika Slum Children Development Project. I was not really

to quit the secret work. She counseled my mother about me, too. But I remained stubborn because I did not realize the dangers of what I was doing and what it was doing to me. So I did not change until I attended an adult session on HIV/AIDS. It really frightened me and I finally realized the risk of sexually transmitted diseases and the social illness waiting for me in the future. I quit the secret work but didn't know what to do for my future.

Soon after that, I qualified for admission in the government school. I became attentive at school and I made good friends there. I was also one of the few chosen for a tailoring training program. I'm doing well at the training and can now sew things for my mother. I am busy with my studies and helping at home. It seemed many good things happened in my life within a very short time. Now I realize that my behavior and thoughts have changed a lot. I have given up all my wrong ways. The ADRA people are also helping me to think better of myself and not look at my past. I have seen the light at the end of the narrow path the ADRA ladies talk about. I am not going back to where I was before. Thanks to the ADRA ladies, I am on the right track now and I am so grateful for my new life and future. ■ STORY NARRATED TO HALIDA HAIDER,

PROJECT MANAGER ADRA, B

to do. I didn't really understand at first but I began to realize she was talking about prostitution. I didn't really think about what it meant and what I would have to do. Instead, I just thought of the money. She kept talking and talking to me again and again and finally convinced me to go with her

interested but enrolled. Even after enrollment and being in the program for a while, I failed to change my ways of living or give up my secret income. The ADRA staff members had several counseling sessions with me. Baro madam (a title of respect for the project manager) tried hard to motivate me



Bangladesh Dal (Split Lentils) Soup

■ SWEETIE RITCHELL, BAUM TREASURER

INGREDIENTS:

250 grams (or 1 cup) pink dal	2 liters (or 4 ¾ cups) water
Salt as needed	4 garlic cloves, slivered
2 tsp oil	1 medium onion, chopped
Pinch of cumin	Moringa leaves (however much you wish)

DIRECTIONS:

- Wash the dal at least three times.
 - Add about 1 liter water and boil until the dal becomes very soft.
 - Add the salt and garlic.
 - Mash the dal until smooth. Now add another 1 liter of water and boil again over a medium fire.
 - When the water has reduced by 30%, remove the dal from the fire
 - Put oil in a pan and add the onion and a pinch of cumin. Watch carefully so it doesn't burn but cooks until it is soft and has a nice smell.
 - Put the sautéed onion and cumin in the boiled dal and simmer over a low fire. Once it boils, add the moringa leaves and cook until the dal thickens.
- Serves 4 people

RECIPE

Dal, also known as split lentils, comes in several colors and is a favorite food in Bangladesh. Pink dal has a mild flavor and can be eaten as a curry or soup (as in this recipe). It also goes with rice and chapatti (flat bread).





“Now there were in the church that was in Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the Tetrarch, and Saul. As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work where unto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.” ACTS 13:1-3, KJV

Over the years I have come across a traditional story with a Biblical connection. Please allow me to share aspects of this traditional story (keeping in mind that it is a traditional tale) and see what lessons we can take from it.

TRADITION:

Once a certain prophet of God by the name of Monahem was told by God to tell a boy of seven year old that the boy would be king in the future. Monahem thought to himself, "A seven year boy? How could he remember this message when he grows up and becomes king?" So, Monahem devised a plan so that this boy would long remember what Monahem would tell him now. While the boy was on the way to school, Monahem slapped the boy quite hard on his backside and the boy jumped up. Then the boy asked Monahem, "Why did you do such thing to me?" "You will be king one day," replied Monahem.

Low and behold, one day this boy became king and he is no other than Herod the Great (He is mentioned in the SDA Bible Dictionary, Vol. 8, 1969 ed, pp. 701, 702). When Herod assumed the throne, the story says he called Monahem to the king's court. He asked Monahem, "How did you know that I would be king?" "God told me so," Monahem said. "Well and good," said Herod the Great. "You will rule the nation for many years, but your later days would not be as good as the earlier days," warned Monahem.

The king told Monahem the prophet, "Now, one thing I want you do, Bring one of your sons to the king's court. He will be a brother to my sons; he will be a playmate to my sons; he will eat at my table; he will grow up as a prince." So, Monahem brought his son, Monaen, to the king's court. Monaen grew up in the king's court like a prince, enjoying all the benefits along with the other princes. After many years, the crown prince, Herod Antipas, became king. Now here again we can note a Biblical connection to this traditional story. The SDA Bible Commentary cites that Manaen accompanied Antipas to Rome and both of them were educated there (Vol. 6, 1980 ed., pp. 279).

As the traditional story continues, after many years, Monaen witnesses the torture of Jesus—the mocking, beating, stripping off of the clothes, putting a crown of

thorns on the head, inhuman suffering, and then the putting of Him on the cross by the order of Monaen's 'brother', Herod Antipas. Afterward, Monaen debated whether or not he would stay in the king's court and live in luxury or leave the court. He eventually decided to leave the king's court. He told his 'brother', Herod Antipas, "I am leaving the king's court." "Why," asked Herod Antipas. "Because Jesus whom you tortured and put to death on the cross is God Himself," confidently replied Monaen. Monaen, after he left the king's court, went to Antioch where the disciples of Jesus were based.

According to Biblical record, when persecution started in Jerusalem, most of the disciples and followers of Jesus gathered in Antioch including Barnabas, Simeon, and Saul (later Paul). Here in Antioch, Acts 13:1-3 seems to indicate that Monaen was among those who ordained Paul and sent him for a missionary journey to Asia Minor and Europe.

Perhaps Monaen, traditionally believed to be an eyewitness to Jesus's death, told the disciples and the gospel writers how much suffering Christ had endured. Perhaps the gospel writers picked up facts and details from his vivid telling to add to their impressions; perhaps they absorbed these ideas and later wrote in their own language and understanding. Perhaps... In this way, perhaps Monaen played a great role in the recording and narration of Christ's suffering and agony.

For those who are in the ministry, especially in leadership positions, we can pull several lessons from a traditional story which includes a character mentioned briefly in the Bible. We are reminded that those in ministry are not in those positions as a career only nor as a result of their talents/intelligence/skills/expertise only but because God has chosen them to deliver certain ministries and services to certain groups of people and societies. Of course, their talents, intelligence, skills, expertise, and loyalty - all of these - are very important but are not commitment and dedication even more important? As Christians, we are called to deliver our duties with utmost sincerity and dedication so we can best represent Christ and serve the people around us.

Christ said, "...whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister: And whoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all. For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister,...." (Mark 10:43-45, KJV). In the traditional story, Monaen left the king's court, denying the luxurious life of comfort and prosperity and instead chose poverty and a life of sacrifice; Biblical example Moses likewise lived a life of sacrifice and service in his later years - to the point of leading a nomadic people for decades with no permanent home or accolades. The Bible says, "By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sins for a season." Leaders and members alike can benefit from the examples of selfless living that show this concept of servant leadership and true essence of Christianity. ■ BENJAMIN RAKSHAM, BAUM COMMUNICATION DIRECTOR

1st International Adventist Student Services Conference



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Director of Student Activities
Loma Linda University



Nancy Guerro
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