

Claiming India for the Cause of Christ

The Spirit of God approaches each person in mysterious ways. As my father walked in the Hindu religion, he repeatedly questioned other Hindus, including priests and sages, to ask whether they had ever seen god. He never received an encouraging word, confirming what Augustine said many centuries ago, that “the heart is restless until it rests in Thee.”

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Out of 330 Million, One

I give all the glory and honor to God and the Lord Jesus Christ for saving me, my family and for allowing me to participate in His kingdom work. I was born and brought up in an orthodox Hindu family in the state of Andhra Pradesh, in South India. Hindus claim to have 330 million gods and goddesses. My grandfather was a Hindu priest and my parents were staunch Hindus. My father was the most religious in my immediate family, getting up before dawn to perform family devotions and to observe Hindu rites such as taking a holy bath in the waters of a sacred river, reciting mantras and burning incense to the Hindu gods. My mother also clung to her idols, garlanding them morning by morning. As a family, we made pilgrimages to sacred temples to please the gods and to obtain divine favor.

Early in my childhood, I suffered from a fever which paralyzed my legs from the waist down. Just as you might have seen on TV, I had to drag myself around. I felt cursed. But God, in

His mercy, used this evil and the natural love of my parents to find a way, not just for healing, but for the salvation of my whole family and the extension of His kingdom.

My parents took me to various and famous doctors only to be told there was no remedy. They visited several famous Hindu temples in India, even taking a sacred vow to offer my hair if I was healed, hoping to gain favor or to make an expiation for some supposed transgression. Despite their desperation, sincere devotion and ceaseless worship, however, the Hindu gods never responded.

This seemingly hopeless situation was aggravated further by the appearance of a demonic spirit troubling my father at nights. The spirit would come like a rushing wind with intense power and fall on my father, making him breathless. To ward off these demonic assaults, my father would keep and read from the Anjaneya Dandakam, a Hindu religious liturgy. This too was no relief.

Then, mysteriously, a Christian gave my father a Bible to protect him against the demon. To my father's great surprise, the demon stopped bothering him. A seed of faith was planted in my father's heart.

Out of desperation, my parents took me to a Christian minister. This in itself was a momentous step. For centuries, the Hindu caste system has been stubbornly resistant to Christianity. Christians are considered to be outcasts and unclean, untouchable, unapproachable, restricted to the most degrading occupations and forbidden even to enter a Hindu temple.

The Christian minister shared the gospel with my parents, telling them that my crippling disease was meant to reveal the glory of God. He prophesied my healing as a testimony to the nations, anointing my feet with oil, laying hands on me and praying for my healing. He told my parents to keep applying

the oil and to keep praying. He also prophesied that my father would become a minister of the gospel, but my father responded by saying that this would never happen. Still, strangely, my father acknowledged that his son might become a Christian if in fact I was healed.

Since we were Hindus, we did not understand this minister or his prophecies. They did not make sense. Nevertheless, on that day, my mother responded to the gospel by accepting Jesus Christ as her Savior.

As for my healing, little by little, day by day, over three months, as my mother continued praying and anointing me with oil, my crooked feet were straightened and my paralyzed condition was totally healed. Though bound to a wheelchair for three years, today no symptom remains. Jesus healed me.

As a result of this miracle, my father renounced idol worship and accepted Jesus Christ. Also, many of my staunch Hindu blood relations saw this miracle and also came to know Jesus as their Lord and Savior.

Hearts Captured Into the Kindgom

God does not forget His prophecies. Regarding my father, although he was engrossed in business, God kept pursuing him. On the 4th of December 1970, my father had an encounter with the Lord. In his own words, "I saw a dazzling light that filled the room that I was in. I heard a voice saying, 'You are ungrateful despite the miracle in your son's life.'" My father was gripped with the conviction of sin, wailing and weeping. The next morning, while having a cup of coffee, he was baptized in the Holy Spirit and began speaking in new tongues. None of us knew what was happening; we had never even been to a church. Some thought he was possessed by a demon. A local Pentecostal minister, however, said that it was baptism in the Holy Spirit. On that same day, my father received the call of God to ministry and a commission to heal the sick,

cast out demons, and proclaim the gospel to Hindus. My father left his business then and there to follow his call and has since been in the ministry for almost 50 years.

As it turned out, I was even more stubborn than my father. I considered Christianity as a western religion and Jesus as a god only for the downtrodden. I argued that India was the birthplace of two of the world's greatest religions, Hinduism and Buddhism, and that the Hindu gods were born in lofty palaces, whereas Jesus was born in a degraded manger. I mocked Christianity and was very nationalistic. Even as my parents went forward in Christian ministry, I accepted the traditional Hindu thinking that Christianity belonged to the low caste people.

Then there came a point in my life where I lacked peace. I heard the voice of Satan saying that I was worthless and hopeless, that there was no purpose for my life, and that I would not be successful. Satan prompted me to commit suicide and one day I decided to kill myself. It was the turning point in my life. My father and mother prayed for me and led me to the Lord. My father said: "Son, God has a great destiny for your life. That is why Satan is after you."

The minister who prayed for my healing prophesied that I will be a testimony of His healing power to the nations. God opened my blind eyes and I accepted Him as my Lord and Savior.

Later, I too was called to the ministry. I attended an Assembly of God Bible College in India, then travelling to America to enroll in the Church of God Theological Seminary in Cleveland, Tennessee, and finally Luther Rice Seminary in Lithonia, Georgia, where I received a Doctorate of Ministry. Subsequently, I spent 13 years with Charles Stanley at InTouch Ministries, including as the Director of International Outreach, travelling to many countries.

I had tried to resist God, but His grace goes far beyond the

horizons of human comprehension. He sought me, found me when I was lost, set my feet upon solid ground, and through His Spirit graciously allows me to participate in His good works. I travelled to over 40 countries to share the good news of the gospel.

Since 2014, I have been pastoring in the city of Vijayawada, India, where God has built a most beautiful church, touching thousands and serving the community. We have evidenced countless miracles. In 2015, my wife, Jyothi, and I returned to Vijayawada and began pastoring my father's church. It has now grown to more than 1,200 in weekly attendance—and thousands more curious seekers watch services on YouTube. We have been blessed to plant 12 satellite congregations of Messiah Fellowship in nearby towns.

Awakening In India

My sincere desire and hope is that you are encouraged. God works in mysterious ways, bringing us to Him, and into deeper love and relationship. God has gone out ahead that we might fully participate in the glorious plans and future He has, here and now, and eternally.

Please pray with us as we pray for you, that we might reach the entire nation of India, many Hindus, that we would know His perfect will, complete His sufferings, finish the race well, advance from one degree of glory to another, and that many souls would be added to the Book of Life.

Please pray for the federal government and leaders of India, that our great and mighty God may visit them in mysterious ways, just as with my family, and turn their hearts to the gospel. Currently, Christians in India are experiencing significant persecution and the central government is controlled by extreme Hindu nationalists.

In Vijayawada, India, the book of Acts is still relevant. Miracles still happen there. And the Holy Spirit still uses

miracles to spread the gospel in a nation dominated by Hinduism. I hope the American church will learn from our Indian brothers that we need both God's Word and His supernatural power to reach this generation.

Dr. Ratna Sajja, is the senior Pastor of the Messiah Fellowship Church in Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh, India. God miraculously healed him and laid a calling to reach the unreached Hindus with the good news of the gospel. He is blessed with three daughters and a wife.