



The Great Commission Fund

FRUIT THAT ABOUNDS TO YOUR ACCOUNT - PHILIPPINES 4:17

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From Pujari* to a Preacher of the Gospel

*A pujari is typically a Brahmin Hindu priest who serves in a temple where he performs pujas (worship rituals) each day and takes care of the cleaning and feeding of the idols. Their life is spent in the service of their gods, maintaining sacred and secret traditions. These traditions include burning incense and candles and chanting mantras.

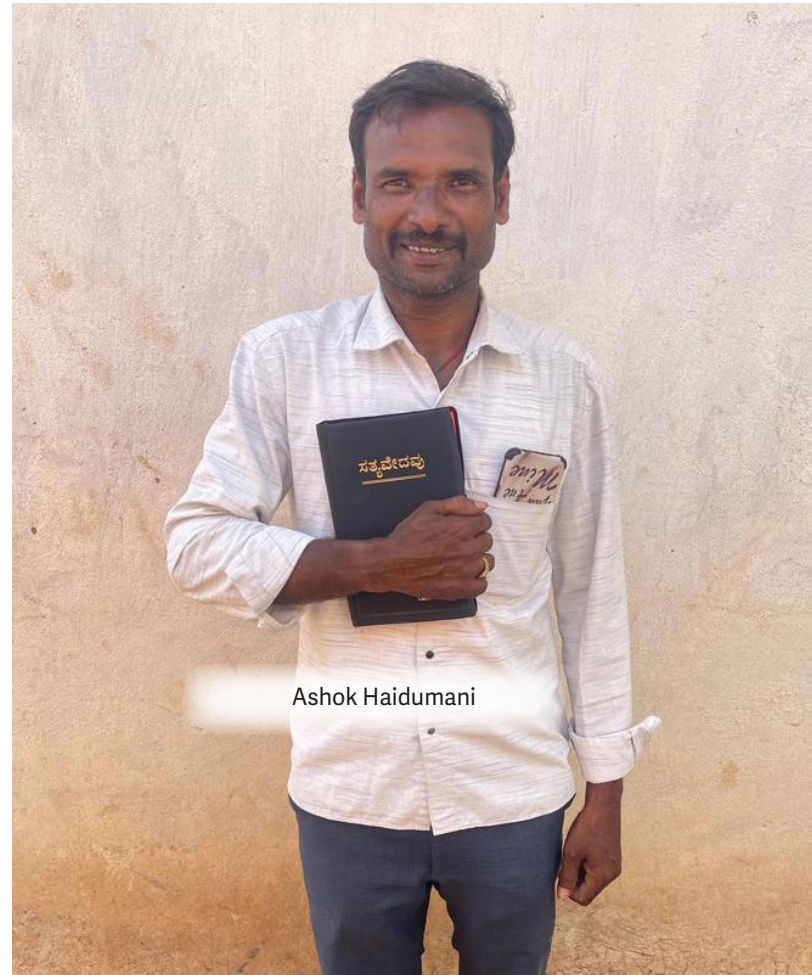
Through the link below, you will see inside an actual Hindu Temple and observe a former Hindu priest reenact the making of prayers and pujas to the idols he used to worship. Brother Ashok, a national missionary, reenacts his old profession as a priest and how he found Christ through the preaching and witness of an Indian missionary who gave him a Bible to read.

The Testimony of a National Missionary in India, Ashok Haidumani

I am married and have two sons, ages 11 and 12. I was born in a middle-class Hindu family; my parents were the most religious in our village and would often



<https://youtube.com/shorts/1PDRBQTUElg>



Ashok Haidumani

take me to receive religious training from my adolescence. Later, after completing my education, the local temple leaders observed my passion for Hindu traditions and sent me to different temples, where the concerned Purohit (clergyman) equipped me with the skills to perform rituals authentically, fostering my spiritual growth and preserving our religious culture.

After two years of learning, I embarked on an influential career as a priest, spiritual guide, and a guru at a village temple. There, most of the devotees were illiterate, while some had a little education. Their source of income was agriculture; therefore, the temple's revenue was low. While there, I faced a lot of discrimination and oppression by the Brahmin caste, who chose to serve in the temples of the higher-income castes, which are normally based in towns and cities. Non-Brahmins like me are appointed as pujaris (priests) for low-income temples.

My mom would garland* (place garlands of flowers on) the six different Hindu images, while my dad would perform various rituals to different gods/goddesses every morning. This influenced me to dream of becoming a temple priest. Life was comfortable; I had enough income as well as grains, coconuts, bananas, and flowers, which I would sell to vendors for profit, besides my regular salary.

*Putting garlands on an idol is a way to show that god/goddess respect, to display your devotion to him/her/it and offer a sincere welcome for their presence.

Somehow, I was not happy; and many times, I would prostrate myself before countless idols to pray but would receive no

response. Later, I began to feel bad because I knew I was deceiving every devotee who came to seek blessings, since I knew the gods would not answer. In this position as a pujari, I felt that if any good came my way, it was only financial gain, and giving me free access to women, drugs, etc., which are free for pujaris. I felt guilty and tired. But in my heart, I felt some form of spirit was driving me to seek the truth.

One day, a preacher came to my village. He was holding a small prayer gathering. I sat on the porch and heard the meaningful songs being sung, followed by a short sermon on John 3:16. This verse touched my heart and at the same time, troubled me. I saw the preacher go from person to person to speak with them, and I was afraid to converse with him, so I quickly moved out of his view to avoid him.

Following that sermon, I could not rest or sleep well until the tender love I heard and felt within forced me to seek counsel from the preacher in secret. One fine night, I rode on my motorcycle to meet the preacher. He welcomed me into his house, shared a few Biblical truths, and patiently answered all my questions from the Bible. At the end, he gave me a copy of the New Testament. I had never held such a Book as this and was eager to read it all.

As I read, I was strengthened by Roman 6:23, "The wages of sin are death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus our Lord"; and another verse, 1 Jn 1:7, which declared that the blood of Christ, the Son of God, could cleanse me from all my sins. These verses touched me and forced me to



preacher, I would still read the Bible daily, and secretly, while hiding in the corn fields, because of the fear that the temple authorities would punish me. Finally, I decided to openly testify to our temple committee that I was resigning from being a Pujari. They asked me several questions and accused me of not being faithful to the temple. For ten days, they constantly inquired as to why I was giving up comfort; I told them that I felt peace and confidence that Jesus Christ was the only and ultimate sacrifice for the remission of my sins.

I walked out without taking a penny. Being led by the Holy Spirit, I began to evangelize my family members, who agreed with my decision. My parents and my wife also came to the Lord Jesus. By the grace of God, I have continued sharing my testimony and explaining the gospel from village to village. The result is that I have already evangelized 17 villages under the guidance of Preacher Sumanth. I have planted a church in 8 of these. At each, I am passing on my training to men who want to be church leaders and preachers. Some have already become missionaries like me and take the gospel

examine myself. As a priest, I had sacrificed hundreds of animals at the temple on behalf of the devotees, hoping to remove their sins and satisfy our silent gods; but not one sacrifice assured them or me of the forgiveness of our sins. **So, it was while reading those verses, over and over again, that I firmly realized that only one blood, that of the Son of God himself, Jesus, could cleanse my sins. I followed Him from that moment on and gave up my service in the temple.** When people would question why I was no longer serving idols and sacrificing animals, I shared with them that only the sacrifice of the Son of God can wash away my sins and their sins, and so I follow Him.

After eight months of interacting with the





to other villages. So far, I have converted nearly 270 people to Christ.

After losing my monthly salary along with the people's offerings of grains and fruits, my parents and my wife were worried whether I would still be able to feed them. At that time, the good Lord spoke to a farmer from my village, who never questioned me over my walking out of the temple; he offered to allow me to be a sharecropper on his land. I agreed to prayerfully cultivate the farm and give 70% of the returns to my Lord's service and keep 30% for myself and the needs of my family. It is not enough because I inherited my grandfather's debts to moneylenders who charge high interest

rates. Now my wife can't believe how the God whom we believed is such a miracle-working God. Even though we do not have much, we have enough.

Please pray that I shall continuously minister and strengthen the newly established flocks in my seventeen branches.

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