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He Didn't Give Up Praying for His Father!

By Andrew McChesney

Samuel Saw, president of the Seventh-day Adventist Church's Southern Asia-Pacific Division, grew up without a relationship with his father.

The two never spent time together in their home country of Myanmar. They didn't talk about things. "He never hugged me," Saw said. "I was a boy without a father."

Saw, who was raised by his grandparents, went on to study in an Adventist school and graduate as a pastor from the Myanmar Union Adventist Seminary in Myaungmya, a city of 280,000 people located about 140 miles (225 kilometers) west of Myanmar's capital, Yangon.

Church work was challenging in the southeast Asian country where just 4 percent of the population is Christian. Buddhists account for about 90 percent of the population, and Muslims comprise 4 percent.

As a pastor, Saw told many people, "Reach out to your non-Christian family and other relatives." But he never reached out to his father.

Saw got married, had two children, and served as a pastor and church administrator in Thailand, Singapore, and the Philippines.

Two years ago, while serving as executive secretary of the Southern Asia-Pacific Division, Saw attended a week of prayer that prompted him to think hard about his father. After one of the meetings, he shared his childhood story with the speaker. The two men prayed together, and the speaker said, "You've got to reach out to your father."

Saw prayed to God to give him strength. He felt pain when he thought about his father, and he lacked a desire to connect with him. He kept praying — and the unexpected happened.

"I was privileged to baptize my father at the age of 76," Saw told an audience of about 3,000 people attending a November 2017 event at his former school, Myanmar Union Adventist Seminary, to celebrate 115 years of the Adventist Church in Myanmar.

Saw still remembers what his father said after the baptism.

"Son," the elderly man said, "I want to be a Christian who goes to church with a songbook and

the Bible in my hand. Please buy a songbook and a Bible for me, so I can carry them to church.” He added, “Don’t worry about me. I will keep seeking God.”

Saw choked up on the platform as he remembered his father emerging from the water of the baptismal tank and wrapping his arms around him.

“It was the first time that he hugged me in my whole life,” Saw said.

Saw, who was elected president of the Southern Asia-Pacific Division in 2016, encouraged the audience to ask God for help in overcoming any biases and prejudices in their lives.

“We need God’s power to overcome the bitterness and hurt that we sometimes carry our whole lives,” he said. “We are just human beings without God’s transforming power. But with His power, we can be a difference to the world.”

Andrew McChesney is editor of Adventist Mission. This story is reprinted with permission.

World Church Prayer Requests for Dec. 17-24, 2017

- **PRAYER REQUEST:** Please continue to pray for the Holy Spirit to be poured out in a powerful way on the upcoming Ten Days of Prayer, running January 10-20, 2018. Pray that many new churches become involved, and that thousands of lives are changed for eternity as church families come together seeking a closer walk with God. To be a part of this life-changing event, visit: tendaysofprayer.org
- **PRAYER REQUEST:** Please pray especially for those relationships in your life that may be estranged or in need of a special miracle of God for restoration and healing. God is waiting to work miracles in your life, just like He did for Samuel Saw, the Southern Asia Pacific Division president.
- **PRAYER REQUEST:** Please pray for God to open new doors for the gospel to go forward in restricted nations around the world. Please pray especially for those living in impoverished countries and territories who are being actively persecuted for the gospel. Pray for church members who are currently imprisoned (we cannot share names) because of their faith.
- **PRAYER REQUEST:** Please continue to pray for the country of Japan and the Total Member Involvement events happening in 2018. Pray for the young adults who are going door to door sharing literature and selling books. Pray that hearts will be open and prepared for the upcoming meetings. Pray for adequate funds to be raised for the translation of more literature and Ellen White books into Japanese.