

## A portrait of Christianity in Kerala, India

*Over a century ago, when The Salvation Army arrived in Kerala, a state on the southwestern tip of India, they quickly became known as the only religious institution to accept and embrace those in the lowest castes in Indian society as part of their biblical mission to love and serve all peoples without discrimination.*

*Much has changed since then, but the caste system is still prevalent, and Christians are still an impoverished minority group facing significant challenges. Add to that, in the small community of Aryanad, a 2018 flood completely destroyed The Salvation Army church building.*



*As luck would have it, many church members work in construction as their day jobs. See this touching portrait of a multi-generational Christian community, persevering and thriving against all odds.*

*Below is a transcript of the video edited for readability.*

**Sajeev:** There's a big river flowing near us. There's also a forest nearby, so this is a beautiful place. We're located in the state of Kerala, in India.

My connection to this church began with my great-grandparents. My father and grandfather were also members of this church, and now I am a member of this church.

Before our country's independence, the caste system and slavery were both very prominent. In fact, our ancestors were not allowed to commute on public roads or go to school.

About 100 years ago, Salvation Army missionaries came here and built a church for us. The Salvation Army played a major role providing education and health care among the poor and excluded people of India, especially in Kerala.

From that day on, all the lower caste peoples in this area have been associated with this church. The caste system is still promoted by people in the upper classes.

In our Indian democratic system, we are lower caste people. Also, because we're Christians, it's very hard to get help from the government. So there are a lot of Christians in poverty, suffering without

money.

Our region has a good climate, which is well-suited for construction projects. Our church was made of all black stone. Nothing else. Our roof was in a very bad state and was dangerous. While we were fixing the roof, the 2018 flood happened.

The stone was tied with soil and mud, not cement, and it collapsed and was destroyed when it rained. When we saw the building had been destroyed by the flood, we were devastated.

We were heartbroken that we'd failed to maintain the building that [our ancestors] gifted us. We believed God would provide us with a building to worship. So we prayed for that.

All the construction work on the new building was done by our church members. I found so much satisfaction and joy working on the renovation of this church. I also used my skills which makes me proud of my job.

We consider this church a place for everyone, where all can come for their peace of mind and pray, and also share their problems. Everybody is welcome in this church. We don't prohibit anyone coming here.

God is not only for us, but for everyone. We remember the suffering that our ancestors endured, to give us the freedom to come here and worship God. We enter this church with joy in our hearts, cherishing their memory.

"The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want."

[download now](#)

### **Do Good:**

- See more videos like this in our [video feed](#).
- Are you a Do Gooder, someone who cares about bringing goodness into the life of your family and community? Subscribe to [The Do Gooders Podcast](#) to be inspired by those doing good and find tangible tips for simple actions you can take today.