



SABBATH 4—JANUARY 27, 2024

## Adopted As Orphans

John 14:18—“I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you.”

It was midnight. Lufthansa Flight 758 had just landed in Chennai, India. I got off the plane with the strange feeling of being completely alone. For the first time in my life, I felt like an orphan. Everything I was familiar with seemed like a world away.

Standing in the endless lines at immigration, where the only people who looked like me would soon be heading to five-star hotels or business meetings, I wondered if I'd made a bad choice. The thought that I didn't belong there crisscrossed my mind.

With my passport stamped, I went down the escalator to wait for my bags. As I left the air-conditioned airport, I felt the stifling heat. Later that same day, we took an overnight train headed to what would be my pseudo-home for the next eight months: an orphanage—undoubtedly the most appropriate place for my new life without my family.

Many people have noted that I changed a lot that year. I'm a little disappointed that it wasn't the life-changing experience I dreamed of. I hoped to have one of those “radical” life stories to tell when I got home.

I asked God why I didn't feel remarkably different, and in response, He asked, “Did you come here to change your life or to change the lives of others?” Ouch!

I immediately recognized that I had been viewing this entire experience from a self-centered perspective. Deciding to put an end to my selfishness, I tossed my list of personal goals in the trash and started focusing on the kids. That missionary journey taught me that none of us are orphans because God has adopted us all.

**Appeal:** The identity of this volunteer cannot be revealed to protect his ministry. He is involved with Adventist Volunteer Service, which facilitates missionary service by church members around the world. Volunteers ages 18 to 80 can serve as pastors, teachers, medical professionals, computer technicians, orphanage workers, and more. Your regular offerings help support the ministry of more than 400 missionary families around the world.

