

# FATHER SHOOTS CHILD

Isaac lives and works in the Central Region of Ghana, West Africa. He is married to Agatha, and they have three children.

**B**eing a child can be dangerous! As a young boy, Isaac suffered many bad things which he remembers well:

*"When I was seven years old, I was hunting animals with my brother in the bush. My father thought my movements were those of an animal and fired several gunshots. When he reached me, I was unconscious. At Cape Coast hospital, I had an operation on my back and chest."*

## "Voices in my head"

*"At the age of eight, I heard voices speaking to me inside my head. One voice told me that if I could jump over a fire, I would be a powerful man in the future. I tried to jump over a fire, but fell in."*

*"One day returning from school, I needed a toilet, and fell down a 'pit latrine'. Some people heard my screams and came to get me out. You can imagine how bad this experience was!"*



Isaac's father was worried and called in the Chief Imam to pray for him and give him special liquid to drink. Isaac remembers, *"None of these things worked, and I began to think that Satan wanted to destroy me. Yet looking back over my life, I know that God was looking after me."*

## University

After middle school education, Isaac went to study in the University of Legon. Success in the course gave him a job at the school. Yet it did not bring him peace and happiness.

*"Several people talked to me about Christianity, but I remained strong in my own beliefs. I wore 'good-luck charms' to protect me from Satan's attacks. None of this gave me any peace in my life. A Christian woman in my office told me I must receive Jesus Christ into my life. I said bad things to her about Jesus and I told her to stop preaching at me."*

Back in his home town, he went to pray in the Mosque. *"On my way back, the words 'You will perish' came into my mind. I became afraid and my heart was pounding. Another night in bed, I heard the same voice say three times 'You will*

*perish.' I decided that, next day, I would buy a Bible."*

To start with, Isaac was afraid to read it. Yet when he began, everything that he read seemed to "do him good". He realised his work friend only wanted the best for him! He went to her to say sorry for his rudeness, and she asked him to go to a Christian meeting with her.

## Was it planned?

It seemed to Isaac that everything in the meeting was speaking just to him. "I felt certain the whole thing had been planned." Isaac went home realising that he had a problem — he was bad and sinful inside. "I begged God to forgive me. I cried many tears. During the next three days, I discovered that there were many changes in my life." Isaac had found the amazing truth that God actually loved him, and could forgive him and change him inside.

## Family problems

Isaac's Muslim father begged him not to leave Islam. Isaac said he would follow Islam again if his father could take away what Jesus Christ had given him. "But this was impossible, because no one could take away the joy and peace I had found."

Later Isaac's father became seriously ill. He chose to ask for a Christian leader to pray for him. Now of his father's 30 grandchildren, 20 have found Jesus as a friend and helper in their own lives.

## Words for English learners

**operation:** repair or removal of body parts by a doctor usually in hospital

**unconscious:** to appear to be asleep, usually after a hit to the head, accident, or illness. The word can also be used to mean 'without thinking', as in "I gave a quick unconscious reply".

**perish:** to be completely destroyed

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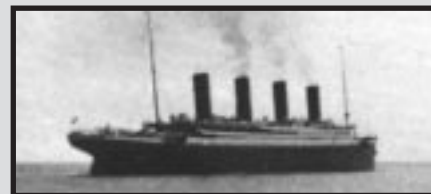
No. 160

SOON Magazine — helping to make sense of life

## TITANIC — A night to remember

**M**any other ships have sunk—yet *Titanic* is the one that everyone remembers. The story has given us many books and films: James Cameron's film *Titanic* is the latest and most costly. Why do people remember this disaster?

*Titanic* was designed to be the biggest and best. Other ships were faster, but she was built for comfort and luxury. When *Titanic* was made in 1912, science and engineering were developing very fast. People believed they could do anything, make anything, be anything. They thought God was not needed any more. This beautiful ship was a picture of pride. The makers wrote in a 1910 leaflet that she could never sink. Yet three days into her first journey, she hit an iceberg and sank in three hours.



The last known picture of Titanic

## Why did she sink?

There were many different reasons. Not enough lifeboats were fitted. **'Watertight**

*Continued...*

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compartments' (metal safety sections inside the ship) were not built high enough. The 'lookout men' did not have **binoculars**. Captain Edward Smith took little notice of warnings about ice. After the crash, the nearest ship, *Californian*, did not switch on its radio even when it saw rockets sent up by *Titanic*.

### Being prepared

No one on the ship that Sunday night expected anything to go wrong. The sea was as flat as glass. Yet one traveller on the ship believed people must be prepared to die at any time. He was John Harper, a Christian preacher from Glasgow, travelling with his six-year-old girl, Nan. She escaped in a lifeboat, but John gave away his **lifejacket**. As he struggled in the cold water, he shouted to a man floating on a piece of wood.

John did not scream for help, but to ask the man if he was trusting in God. "No," said the man. "Trust in Jesus and you will be saved," John told him, then he sank under the water. This man was **rescued**, and told other people the story. To him, being 'saved' did not just mean to escape death by drowning. He had been rescued not only from the sea but also from his old life and ways. He turned to God and found a new life and a new reason for living.

The *Titanic* is just the same as today's world. So many of us travel through life, not knowing where we are going. One day we will hit the iceberg — trouble, problems, finally death. We do not need to face these things alone. God wants to help us. Just as John Harper gave his **lifejacket** to someone else, Jesus died in our place. In the film story, Jack gave his life so that Rose would live. So too we can be rescued. Jesus has made a way for each of us to be with God for ever. We can know God as a friend to help us, even today.

### Words for English learners

**luxury**: something not necessary, but which gives comfort and enjoyment

**iceberg**: very large piece of floating ice

**watertight**: So that water cannot enter. Can also mean: no fault can be found in it, e.g. a watertight plan

**binoculars**: small hand-held telescope adapted for use with both eyes

**lifejacket**: it helps people float in the water

**rescued**: to be saved from harm or danger

# RAM'S STORY

*Shobha Ram Sharma comes from Nagpur in India. He was born into a religious family and as a child visited many holy places in India.*

**I will throw myself under a train," I thought. "My life has no meaning or peace. I do not want to live." My family worshipped many idols. When I was a child, I learned to worship idols too. I went to the temple every day but I did not have peace in my mind.**

### NO GOD

I studied the holy books of Eastern religions. I read in these books that man does many wrong things. I thought, "I will die because of my wrong doings," but I did not find any way of escape from them. So I told myself, "There is no god," and I became an **atheist**. I began to do many bad things which became bad habits that I could not stop. My bad habits did not help me. When I was alone I felt lost and my life had no meaning. Then one day in 1972, I decided to kill myself. I walked to the railway station to wait for a train to come so I could throw myself under the wheels.

### STOPPED

At the railway station I met two young men. They gave me some papers. One of the young men said, "Read them, there is life for you". I looked at these papers — one of them said, "God wants to be your friend." As I read, I saw these words from the Bible: "God loved the world so very, very much that he gave his only son. Because he did that, everyone who believes in him will not lose his life, but will live for ever."

### NEW LIFE

After reading one paper seven times, I did not want to kill myself any more! I went home and

read the second paper. It showed me how Jesus Christ came into the world to forgive our wrong doing. He died on a cross and was **buried** but after three days he rose from death. Now I can say, "Jesus Christ is the only living God." That day in 1972 God gave me a new life. I left all my bad habits behind me. Since then, I have had peace in my life and God helps me in everything I do.

### HARSH WORDS

I told my family what God had done for me. My father **scolded** me **harshly** and told me that now I could have no place in his house. He turned me out and warned me never to come to his door again. I suffered much but God was with me. He helped me in all these troubles. God helped me with this promise from the Bible, "The young lions sometimes go hungry but the people that go to God for help will have every good thing."

### Words for English learners

**idol**: a god made by men of wood, stone or metal for them to worship

**temple**: a building where people can go to worship their gods

**atheist**: a person who believes there is no god

**buried**: put a dead body into the ground

**harsh, harshly**: behave in a way that will hurt a person's feelings

**scold**: speak in an angry way because a person has done wrong

### Did you Know?

**An elephant's trunk contains 40,000 muscles. The human body has only about 650 muscles.**

The trunk is really the long lip and nose of the elephant. About 2 metres long, it may weigh 140 kg. Elephants use their trunks to do many things: to pick up food and water, to smell and to communicate. The end of the trunk has two strong tips like fingers which can lift a heavy log or a single piece of grass.



### Words for English learners

**muscle**: all movement in animals and people happens by the pull of muscles in the body

**communicate**: to talk with someone using speech, signs or noises

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