

Squid or Dog Meat?



INDONESIA | June 7

Jhon

Jhon had a busy preaching schedule in Indonesia. A pastor of a Sunday-keeping church in Papua, he had just finished a series of meetings on one island and needed to return home for another series of meetings. He was supposed to fly, but the plane was fully booked. So, he bought a boat ticket for the three-day voyage.

It was a decision that would change his life.

Jhon bought the cheapest ticket on the economy deck, a long hall where scores of passengers slept side-by-side on the floor. While awake, passengers passed the time by chatting.

Jhon chatted with a woman seated nearby. As a kind gesture, Jhon offered her part of one of his meals.

She shook her head as he held out a plastic container of steamed squid seasoned with a sprinkle of oil.

“I’m sorry,” she said. “I don’t eat that kind of food.”

Jhon thought that she didn’t like squid, so

he pulled out another container. This one had dog meat that he had bought from a street vendor just before boarding the boat.

But the woman refused it, too.

“I don’t eat that kind of food,” she said.

Jhon was surprised.

“Why don’t you eat these kinds of food?” he asked.

“It’s because I’m an Adventist,” she said.

The only thing that Jhon knew about Seventh-day Adventists was that he had taught an Adventist student at a mission school where he had worked before becoming a pastor. But he respected the woman’s desire to be faithful to her beliefs. So, he put away the food, and the two talked about other things. He learned that her name was Ingrid.

Now, when Jhon had boarded the ship, he hadn’t told anyone that he was a pastor. But Papua is a predominantly Christian island, and Indonesians who live there have a sailing tradition. At some point on a voyage,



the ship captain always asks, “Is there a pastor on board? We want to ask you to pray for us and to have a worship service.”

On the last day of Jhon’s voyage, the ship captain raised the question. Jhon made known his position and led the passengers in prayer and worship.

Ingrid was surprised to learn that he was a pastor, and she didn’t seem certain that she wanted to keep talking to him.

But when the ship docked, Jhon insisted that they exchange phone numbers. When he asked to see her again, she invited him to the Adventist church.

Every Sabbath for the next month, Jhon attended worship services with her.

Then something unusual happened. He began to feel uncomfortable worshipping on Sunday. He felt so uncomfortable that when he was asked to preach at his church, he made excuses about needing to go somewhere else.

When he told his church that he intended to become an Adventist, he was offered a higher position with a higher salary.

But he wasn’t tempted. In his personal study of the Bible, he had grown convinced that the seventh-day Sabbath was God’s true day of worship. He also had accepted the biblical prohibition on unclean meat like squid and dogs.

Three years after the boat trip, Jhon and Ingrid got married.

Today, Jhon is wrapping up his studies as a theology student at Klabat University on Sulawesi island. He is glad that Ingrid rejected his food. Through her witness, he ended up learning about the seventh-day Sabbath.

He is looking forward to returning home to Papua and teaching others about the Lord of the Sabbath. 🌍

Part of this quarter’s Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help spread the gospel on Jhon’s home island of Papua. The funds will go toward the construction of classrooms, an administrative building, a library, and an auditorium for Papua Adventist Theology

Story Tips

- Show Papua, Indonesia, on the map.
- Watch a short YouTube video with Jhon at: bit.ly/Jhon-SSD.
- Download photos for this story from Facebook: bit.ly/fb-mq.
- Share Mission Posts and Fast Facts from the Southern Asia-Pacific Division: bit.ly/ssd-2025.
- Know that this mission story illustrates Spiritual Growth Objective No. 5 of the Seventh-day Adventist Church’s “I Will Go” strategic plan, “To disciple individuals and families into Spirit-filled lives.” For more information, go to the website: IWillGo.org.

Fast Facts

- Indonesia is made up of more than 17,000 islands, including Sumatra, Java, Sulawesi, and parts of Borneo and New Guinea, making it the world’s largest archipelago.
- Indonesia was ruled by the Netherlands until 1945.
- Indonesia is the largest Muslim country in the world.
- Indonesia is a presidential republic with an elected legislature.

College in Nabire, Papua. Incidentally, Klabat University, where Jhon is studying, on Sulawesi island, received part of a 1981 Thirteenth Sabbath Offering. Thank you for planning a generous Thirteenth Sabbath Offering on June 28 to continue to support the proclamation of the gospel in Indonesia.

By Andrew McChesney