



February 2018

Dear Friend,

As I write this letter I'm in South Korea, where earlier today, for the first time I stood in the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) looking through the barbed wire into North Korea, a country closed to the preaching of the gospel.

For years our church has been unable to cross that barbed wire and share the good news that Jesus is coming soon. But our radio towers from Guam—our “steel preachers”—have been faithfully transmitting the gospel through shortwave radio.

In the last few months, I've shared with you our plans to expand the coverage beyond shortwave to also include AM radio programs aired from neighboring South Korea. This is a big step forward in reaching the people of North Korea as shortwave radios are forbidden in that country. Despite this, many people still secretly own them and listen to our programs, but they do so at their own peril.

Let me share with you the incredible story Pastor Godwin* shared with me as together we stood not far from the barbed wire and looked into the snowy no-man's-land that is North Korea.

Pastor Godwin works in an unnamed country, and he often helps people who have escaped from North Korea. Unfortunately, his country has no mercy with refugees and routinely captures them and returns them to North Korea—to certain imprisonment or death. However, some of these refugees find their way to Pastor Godwin, who helps them reach South Korea—and freedom.

He shared with me one particular story that touched him deeply—the story of Kim. He asked me to share it with you, our AWR supporters and prayer partners, so you can know that you are making a difference, even in a country as closed as North Korea.

KIM'S STORY

It was during a Friday evening vespers that Pastor Godwin first saw the stranger enter his little church. She looked to be about 30 years old, and wore a determined expression. It was obvious she wanted something, and Pastor Godwin assumed she was an escapee from North Korea needing help, as was often the case with strangers who showed up at his church asking for money.

**Not his real name*



AWR president, Duane McKey (right) and wife, Kathy (center), pose with AWR's vice president for Advancement, Cami Oetman (left) at the North Korea DMZ.

When the service ended, everyone went home, except for this young lady who still sat in the empty room. Pastor Godwin went and sat next to her and waited respectfully for her to speak.

“I escaped from North Korea,” she said after a moment, “and I have a request.”

Pastor Godwin expected as much. He was sure she needed help escaping, and he would try to do what he could.

“I only have one request,” she repeated. “Please baptize me. I want to be baptized.”

The pastor was more than a little shocked. How could someone who had just escaped from North Korea know anything about baptism? So he said, “Please understand, I can’t baptize anyone without prior preparation. Do you even know the meaning of baptism?”

Kim replied, “Yes, I do. While I was hiding during my second escape, I learned about Jesus through radio broadcasts.”

She proceeded to tell the most amazing story. This was her third attempt at escape, and it would probably be her last if she was captured. But on her prior attempt, she had hidden in the home of a kind Chinese woman who didn’t understand Korean. Kim couldn’t speak the local language, so her days were filled with loneliness, unable to communicate with anyone, always hiding inside the house.

The kind woman, wanting to cheer her up, brought out a radio and searched until she found a program in Korean. Morning and evening the program came on the air, and Kim began to look forward to it. The program was none other than our very own Adventist World Radio!

That program became Kim’s lifeline. At first she couldn’t understand any of what was being said about God and the Bible, but soon her mind began to open up, and she absorbed the Bible truth she received every day. She never missed a program, and finally, one day, she accepted Jesus as her personal Lord and Savior.

She said, “This is my third escape. If I am captured again, I will surely be killed. But more than the fear of capture, all I want is to have the assurance of salvation through baptism.”

Pastor Godwin realized that reaching his church must not have been easy for Kim. How could he turn away an honest soul asking for baptism? He asked Kim to remain there for a week while they studied the Bible together and she prepared for baptism. She agreed, and daily absorbed the truth presented to her as one grasping a lifeline.

When the week was over, the little church held a secret and tearful baptism. All the doors and windows were closed and everyone sang hymns quietly in the baptistery room that held a small bathtub.



Pastor Godwin shares Kim's story with Cami and Duane.

Before Kim left, she shared her plans with Pastor Godwin. She would make her way to South Korea and to our Adventist university there—she had heard of it through the AWR broadcasts. All she wanted to do was study the Adventist message and then return to North Korea to share it with her family and friends. But Kim also understood the risk. Before she left, she said, “I am not afraid. If I am caught and killed, I know the next thing I see will be Jesus!”

A few days later, Pastor Godwin received a phone call. Kim was at the border and ready to cross. “Next time you hear from me, it will be from South Korea. Pray for me!”



North Korean refugees listen to AWR broadcasts on shortwave radio. It is illegal to own these radios, but they're a lifeline, connecting people to eternal words of truth.

Pastor Godwin knew it would not be easy—eight barbed wire fences, and then the desert of Mongolia. All he could do for her was pray.

Several months later, he received a call from an untraceable number. It was a Chinese border crossing guide. He said the night Kim tried to cross the border, she was captured and executed.

For a long time, Pastor Godwin stood unable to move, recalling Kim's baptism and her farewell words as he kept wiping the never-ending tears from her eyes, “Even though I might be captured, it will be all right, because if I die, the next thing I know, I will see Jesus.”

Pastor Godwin ended his story, and now I stood in the cold gray afternoon looking past the barbed wire into North Korea, I remembered he said something I will never forget: “I know God will save Kim. But what about her dream to be a missionary to North Korea and tell her people about the soon coming of Jesus? God will have to send somebody else to do that.”

Wow! I can tell you there were tears in my eyes, and they weren't from the biting cold. This is exactly why we do what we do at AWR. By God's grace, AWR will help fulfill Kim's dream and her prayer to tell the people of North Korea about Jesus!

That's why Pastor Godwin asked me to share this story with you. It's because you and I are making a difference in ways we may not even understand. When we share the gospel message as God commissioned us to do, He does the rest. His Spirit moves around the world, touching hearts and changing lives. Pastor Godwin told me, “I know God is with the hopeless and hears the small cries from every corner of the globe, and He uses Adventist World Radio to reach them.”

Right now, AWR has more than 1000 radio stations around the world—including a new AM station reaching North Korea. These stations are constantly transmitting God's end-time message, penetrating the most forbidden places of the world. The Guam antennas alone reach 1/3 of the world in 100 languages!





We have no idea how many thousands like Kim are being moved by God's Spirit through the programs of AWR, but we know God is working!

Thank you for joining us in this incredible journey of faith—for supporting the work of AWR. When we work together, heavenly beings work by our side, eager to help in the saving of souls, leading people from broadcast to baptism—and very soon right into the kingdom of heaven. I can't wait for that day!

Yours in the blessed hope,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Duane McKey'.

Duane McKey
President



P.S. What an incredible story! And I look forward to sharing many more with you as we begin AWR's new radio broadcast into North Korea. Please keep this project in your prayers. Let me just add that we have agreed to help Pastor Godwin with a project to take the Bible into North Korea. I wish I could share more details, but this is all I can reveal right now. Thank you for your prayers and support.

"I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." — John 16:33



A Korean broadcast is being recorded from an AWR studio.