



January 2018

Dear Friend,

“Have you slept?” the young girl asked me as I waited one morning for the local pastor outside my hotel in Kinshasa, in the Congo.

“What? Yes, of course.” I was startled by the question and a little distracted, in a hurry to get to the mission office for some meetings.

“No, I mean have you slept with a girl—have you slept with a girl like me yet?” she insisted.

I realized then that she was in the world’s oldest profession and looking for her next customer.

Having a young daughter of my own, my heart went out to her, and I kindly explained in French that I could never do what she was asking because Jesus was my Friend and I was a missionary.

This happened 30 years ago, and I still remember wishing then that there was a way to reach not only her, but countless others like her with the gospel message and the hope in Jesus.

That’s why the following story is special to me, because it proves once again that God is working in the hearts of even the most hopeless cases, using unexpected—and sometimes incredible—ways to reach people wherever they are, changing lives forever.

PAID WITH A RADIO

Bria was a young woman from the Congo who left her home village and went to the capital city of Kinshasa to find a better life. But as often happens, she found herself jobless and friendless in a strange city.

That’s when a man approached her and promised to show her a way to make lots of money—and even have extra to send back to her family. This seemed like a dream come true to Bria, so she agreed to go with him. But, alas, it was not to be. She soon found herself selling her body, with most of the proceeds going to this man, so that Bria had barely enough to get by, and no way to save up enough money to leave that way of life.



With 12 million people, Kinshasa is the second largest city in Africa. So many Congolese people hunger for a message of truth that will set them free. AWR can reach them.

Then, to make matters worse, one day the man told her he had no money to pay her. He had used up all her profits. Instead, he offered her a shortwave radio as payment. Bria didn't want a radio, but she knew she would get no money from him that week, so she accepted it.

She had never owned a radio, so she started fiddling with the knobs and soon heard beautiful music. She stopped to listen. Then a man began to speak, and Bria heard him say things she'd never heard before. The man was talking about Jesus, and how He loves us no matter our situation in life, and how we can call on Him in our time of need.



Bria used the radio the man paid her with to tune in AWR.

Bria didn't know it then, but she was listening to our shortwave broadcast on Adventist World Radio, and for the first time in her life, she heard words of hope. It seemed as if the words were meant just for her. Soon, she found herself listening every day when the program came on, and began to look forward to the messages.

But she wanted to know more about this Jesus who loved her, so one day she mustered the courage to write to the radio station and ask for the Bible studies they were offering. The person at the station gave Bria the name of a local church in Kinshasa where she could attend.

Not long after, Bria visited the church, and the members received her warmly. When they learned of her situation, instead of shunning her, they became determined to help her. Not only did she receive Bible studies, but she acquired a new spiritual family.

The man for whom Bria worked was very angry with these new developments. He saw his source of income disappearing and tried to put a stop to Bria's new associations. When this didn't work, he threatened to kill her. But now Bria had her church family, and she had Jesus as her Friend—she was no longer alone, and no longer afraid. The man attempted to kill her several times, but each time, Bria was protected from harm by unseen soldiers from her new friend Jesus. Despite the man's repeated threats, she found the courage to walk away from the lifestyle that had enslaved her.

But the story doesn't end there. This past November, Bria gave her life to Jesus and was baptized into the Kinshasa Seventh-day Adventist Church.

A NEW DAWN FOR THE CONGO

God is working everywhere—and so is Adventist World Radio! We have 1,000 stations around the world transmitting God's end-time message of truth, proclaiming that Jesus is coming soon.

Bria's story is especially significant because a few months ago, AWR received a request from the West Congo Union Mission to install a radio station and recording studio in the city of Kinshasa—and we just voted to go forward with this project!

This is important for two reasons. One is that Kinshasa is the second-largest city in Africa, with 12 million people, and the most populous French-speaking city in the world. AWR's radio station would reach not only the millions in this city, but also the 1.3 million in the nearby city of Brazzaville, as well as people in the surrounding areas, totaling approximately 20 million people! Both of these cities have little Adventist presence, and there is still much work to be done to reach the people with the gospel message.

The second reason is that radio is still the main means of communication in the Congo and in most parts of the world. The West Congo Union Mission already has a French TV station in Kinshasa that also reaches Brazzaville, but as difficult as it may be for us here in America to understand, radio is still the main means of communication. In Africa, it is due to poor electricity issues—or no electricity at all—and a pervasive poverty that prevents many people from having access to a television. Radios are more affordable and easier to distribute, plus they can run for hours on simple batteries. This makes them the most effective evangelism tool in the majority of the world, including the Congo.

But there is more exciting news! This is an unexpected development. The minister of health and the vice president of the Congo have invited Adventist World Radio to send our Godpods with the health messages to the Congo! We are now planning to do this, and to not only include our health message, but the full Bible in audio format, along with a set of Bible studies.

This came about as a result of a recent conversation Dr. Lela Lewis had with the Congo Minister of Health. Dr. Lewis is president of *Your Best Pathways to Health*, our church's health initiative. She has invited us to partner with them in this new opportunity for the Congo through our live broadcasts and cell phone evangelism. As a matter of fact, we just finished teaching cell phone evangelism to a group of Congolese members in Phoenix during the *Your Best Pathways to Health* event held there last month. These members now plan to connect with friends back in Kinshasa and elsewhere and share Bible studies through their cell phones!

I am always amazed at how God opens unexpected doors of opportunity when we are willing to go the extra mile and share Bible truths by any means at our disposal. Last year was an incredible year of opportunities and blessings as Adventist World Radio expanded its ministry to include AWR360° "From Broadcast to Baptism." By God's grace, 2017 was one of our most exciting years ever! AWR is not only broadcasting more on shortwave than ever before, but with God's help, we are also branching out to use all media platforms to communicate to the world the Good News that Jesus is coming again! This is AWR360°. God is blessing our efforts far beyond what we could have imagined.

Now, as we begin a new year with new challenges and opportunities, I can't wait to see what God will do. One thing we know for certain is that with God all things are possible, and that working together, we can expect miracles.



In crowded African cities like Kinshasa, radio is still the best way to reach people with messages of hope.



Thank you for your faithful support of Adventist World Radio as we prepare to make new inroads with the gospel message in the Congo. This will allow more people like Bria to hear the good news that Jesus is coming soon. God is opening doors so that the gospel can be preached to the WHOLE world, and Jesus can come to take us home.

Yours in the Blessed Hope,

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

Duane McKey
President



P.S. God has just opened an amazing opportunity to set up a new radio station and recording studio in the Congo, a country torn by war where more than 10 million people have died in recent years due to violence. This radio station will reach more than 20 million people living in the capital city of Kinshasa and surrounding areas. Our mission is to reach as many people as possible with the gospel message. People from all walks of life, like Bria, need a chance to hear that Jesus loves them and is coming back again. They need the opportunity to choose eternal life! Thank you for partnering with us in this adventure of faith.