



March, 2019

Dear AWR Friend,

HAVE YOU EVER FIRED AN AK-47?

Some time ago, I was on our farm in Oklahoma with my nephew, Kenneth. He has an AK-47 assault rifle and asked me if I wanted to do some target practice with him. Out of curiosity, I agreed, putting in ear plugs to protect my hearing. I pointed the gun at the target and gently squeezed the trigger. The gun fired with such force that the recoil kickback felt like a blow to my shoulder. Such terrible power—a power to maim and kill! After that experience, I laid down that assault rifle, never wanting to touch it again.



Through the years, I've had a few more unpleasant encounters with AK-47s—once in the Congo on the wrong side of a barrel! But let me take you to an area of the world where, right now, communist guerrillas—called the NPA—are using this type of assault weapons to continue a 50-year rebellion against the government. And let me tell you how AWR360° has penetrated their ranks to change lives for Jesus!

BORN TO BE GUERILLA FIGHTERS

It was early morning, and as usual, Jaslene* had risen before dawn to make breakfast. The sun filtered through the fronds of the palm tree in the front yard as she prepared rice, vegetables and dried fish. It seemed like the perfect day on the island of Mindoro, Philippines. Birds warbled and the nearby creek sang over the rocks.

Jaslene's husband, Antonio*, was enjoying the view from their small veranda when suddenly, the peace of the morning was shattered by rapid gunfire coming from all sides. Antonio jumped to his feet and rushed inside, grabbing his own assault weapon. He was no stranger to war. As an NPA guerilla fighter, he and his wife had seen some fierce battles. Now, the constant spray of bullets could mean only one thing—the government soldiers had ambushed them and there seemed no way of escape.

**Names have been changed.*

Antonio ran out the front door, and Jaslene grabbed the children and escaped through the back door—making a dash for cover in the jungle. Bullets flew all around them, but they knew the secret hiding places in the mountainous region that was their home, and soon found a hiding place.

As a communist rebel fighter herself, Jaslene was more angry than scared by these repeated encounters. Usually, she felt no fear at all, but on this day the bullets came thicker and faster than ever before. There were many government soldiers fighting against the NPA guerillas that day, and as she lay hidden with her children, Jaslene couldn't help but wonder if her husband would survive.

They waited for what seemed an eternity, and then the sounds of battle grew distant until finally, all was quiet.

But when Jaslene and the children ventured out and returned home, Antonio was gone. They learned he had been killed and carted off by the government soldiers. That day, Jaslene lost her husband and the children lost their father. Antonio's body was never recovered, and this experience hardened Jaslene's heart even more. How she hated the Philippine army soldiers! She decided then and there to raise her children to be the best fighters possible to avenge their father's death.

The oldest boy was only 10 years old when this happened, and by the time he turned 13, he had joined the guerillas. Jaslene was proud of him. She taught the younger children how to sneak through the jungle without making a sound, how to forage for food and how to be sharpshooters. Their young hearts hardened as well, and they looked forward to the day when they could fight in real battles.

WARRIORS FOR JESUS

But one day, just a few months ago, when Jaslene was home listening to her small FM radio, she turned the dial and paused on an unfamiliar station. The strains of a song she didn't know but found strangely appealing filled her small hut: *"Coming again, coming again, Jesus is coming again!"*



Jaslene was so angry about her husband's death, she determined to raise her sons to be the best fighters possible.

Then a man's voice came on the air and began to talk about a man named Jesus. This Jesus was kind. He loved people regardless of their economic situation. He was all-powerful. He could heal the sick and even raise the dead! Jaslene was fascinated! The next day, at the same time, she heard the music again and the wonderful words that followed.

Jaslene began tuning in daily to this new station called Adventist World Radio. Her heart began to melt as she heard of a God who loved her and offered her care and forgiveness. As she listened, a desire began to grow in her heart to experience a new kind of life. She decided to turn her life over to this Jesus, put down her weapons, and try to wrap her mind around the concept of forgiveness for even her worst enemies. Soon, her children began listening to the program with her, and one day, her son came home and said he'd had enough fighting. He, too, laid down his weapon to follow Jesus.

Just a few weeks ago, Jaslene and her family decided they wanted to follow Jesus and become baptized members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

"WHY DIDN'T YOU COME SOONER?"

When Jaslene met Pastor Dulay, the speaker for Adventist World Radio on the island of Mindoro, she asked him with tears in her eyes, "Pastor, why did it take you so long to come and tell us this good news about God and His will for our lives? If only you had started broadcasting sooner, my husband would not have died. We would have learned about God and given up our rebel-fighting ways before it was too late for him. My husband would be alive and sitting in church with me each week. He never had the chance to learn this beautiful truth."

She then added, "Oh, Pastor, please don't stop! This broadcast has to continue and must go to other villages all over the mountains! They, too, need to hear about Jesus before it is too late for them!"

Today, Jaslene and her children have found joy and forgiveness to replace the hatred in their hearts. Adventist World Radio has helped this little family with financial assistance to start a small business. Now, Jaslene and her children make brooms and sell them in the market to support themselves. Whenever they can, they encourage their friends to trade their bullets for Bibles and find



Jaslene's children started listening to AWR programs on their radio, and it changed their lives for eternity.



that Jesus brings true joy and meaning to their lives. They are now warriors of a different order, choosing weapons of much greater power than their AK-47s. Their new weapons are faith, love, hope and prayer as delivered to them on the airwaves of Adventist World Radio.

Recently, I had the privilege of baptizing five rebel NPA guerilla generals. Adventist World Radio is actively working in 91 new villages that were controlled by rebels until AWR began broadcasting in the mountainous regions of Mindoro less than two years ago. Lives are being touched in these remote and difficult-to-reach regions—because AWR goes where air goes!

There are many people like Jaslene who are living in mountain villages, hot sandy desserts, remote islands or crowded metropolitan areas around the world. They too must hear the message of salvation! They must experience that God can change their lives. He will replace their sadness with joy, their hatred with love, and give their lives meaning. And one day soon, we will have the privilege of meeting these beautiful people—former guerilla fighters, former drug addicts, former lonely souls—in our new heavenly home where there will be no more fighting, no more disease, no more addictions, and no more sorrow ever again, for “God will wipe away all tears from our eyes.”

Thank you for supporting the work of Adventist World Radio. It is only as we work together that we can make a real difference in the lives of people like Jaslene and her family.

Yours in the Blessed Hope

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

Duane McKey

President, Adventist World Radio



P.S. As this letter was going to press, we received word that a group of NPA rebels bombed a Christian church in the Philippines killing many innocent worshippers. With your prayers and support, Adventist World Radio will continue to expand its reach so that more communist rebel villages in the Philippines and other similar groups around the world will have a chance to learn about Jesus. Thank you for making a difference!