

"Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near." (Luke 21:28)



April 2020

Dear AWR Friend,

In the last few weeks, our country and the world have been gripped by fear over the coronavirus pandemic that has threatened millions of lives and the global economy. Now there's a race to find the antidote that will save lives.

What should our response be as Adventist Christians? Should we cower in fear, or boldly disregard health warnings?

The answer is: neither. Jesus said, "See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. There will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes. And the gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come." (Matthew 24:4-9, condensed)

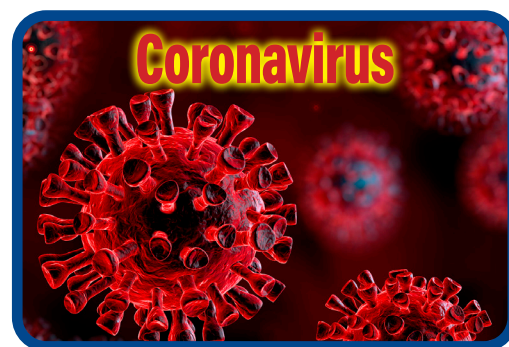
We are not be troubled. Instead, we must continue to preach the gospel as a witness to all nations—because only then will the end come!

That's what Adventist World Radio is all about. We cannot be distracted from our mission. Soon, God's last-day message will spread faster than any virus ever could, until it reaches every nation, kindred, tongue and people. What a day that will be!

At AWR, we are seeing things we've never seen before—amazing things—and we continue to move forward in faith as God opens doors.

Let me share one story. For many years, we've been trying to make inroads into a Muslim geographic cluster called the "Stan" countries: Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

There's no Adventist presence in one of those countries, and we thought we were having no success with our shortwave broadcasts despite our efforts, until just a few months ago when we received the following story.



THE UNUSUAL DREAM

Six month ago, Mohammed* had a vivid dream. He dreamed that he heard a voice telling him to come out of the darkness and into the light.

In the Middle East, people from Islamic backgrounds believe in dreams and visions much more than those in the Western world. This dream troubled Mohammed. He asked his wife about it, but she didn't know what it could mean. The only other person he could think to ask was his father. So, Mohammed shared the dream with him.



Mohammed dreamed that he heard a voice calling him out of the darkness and into the light.

Unbeknownst to Mohammed, almost two years before, his parents had been listening to the radio one day when they lost the radio signal. As they turned the dial searching for their program, they came across one of our broadcasts intended for the country of Iran. The languages are similar, so Mohammed's parents understood the message.

They enjoyed it so much that they began listening regularly. Eventually, they contacted the radio station and began receiving Bible studies. As a result, last year Mohammed's parents were baptized—the first two people we're aware of who became Seventh-day Adventists in that country!

Meanwhile, Mohammed had no idea about this. The penalty for becoming a Christian is so severe in that part of the world, that everything is done in secrecy. So, when Mohammed approached his father and shared his dream—asking for the meaning—his father surprised him by saying, "I know exactly what your dream means. The voice you heard is the voice of Jesus. He wants you to accept Him. You must become a Seventh-day Adventist."

Wow! Mohammed was shocked. But then a memory came to him from 15 years before. He'd known a nurse who was a Seventh-day Adventist. He remembered how different she was, and how she exuded joy and peace. It had affected him in a strange way back then, and he'd always wanted to know more about what she believed. Now was his chance!

Mohammed's father gave him a Bible, and together they studied with an Adventist pastor from a neighboring country. As a result, just three months ago, two AWR team members traveled to an undisclosed location to witness the baptism of both Mohammed and his wife!

We were amazed by what God had done. But He was not finished—because that's not the end of the story!



Mohammed's parents were secretly meeting with a large group of people to study the Bible.

THE IMAM

Mohammed learned that his parents were regularly meeting with a group of people, and they were studying the Bible together. Since their baptism, the group has been steadily growing until now there are 80 people meeting and studying together. How are they finding people interested in studying the Bible? With extreme caution! They're in the middle of Taliban territory, and the danger is so high that even Mohammed didn't know about his parents' conversion until he confided his dream to them.

After his baptism, Mohammed knew that the danger for him was even higher than for other people. You see, Mohammed's wife's father is an imam—a Muslim religious leader. These men are not only highly respected, but also feared. What would the imam do if he found out his daughter had become a Christian? Mohammed and his wife lived in fear of this, and were always very careful.

THEN THE UNEXPECTED HAPPENED

One day, Mohammed's wife was visiting her family when they began talking about Abraham. Muslims are descendants of Abraham through Ishmael—the son of Abraham and Sarah's maid—so they claim Abraham as their father just as much as Jews do. However, most of what has been written about Abraham comes from Jewish writings and the Bible, so their knowledge from Islamic writings is limited.

As the family discussed the life of Abraham—mostly from hearsay—Mohammed's wife found herself filling in tidbits here and there from her Bible readings.

This happened several times on different occasions, until one day her father, the imam, pulled her aside and said, "There is only one way you can know these stories from the Bible. You're studying to be a Christian, aren't you?"

Mohammed's wife was alarmed, and for a moment considered denying it, but then she felt that God was asking her to be courageous. She said, "Yes, father, I am."

The imam then asked, "Do you have a Bible?" And she replied that she did.

That's when her father said something that amazed her: "Bring it with you the next time you come so that we can study together."

Isn't that amazing? That's God's Spirit working in ways we don't understand behind these seemingly impenetrable walls! God's Word through the airwaves truly knows no walls, no borders and no limits!



Both Mohammed and his wife lost their lucrative jobs in health-care when it was noted that he no longer prayed toward Mecca five times a day. They are looked at with suspicion, but they are not discouraged. We hope to begin a health clinic in their area that can be a beacon of light.

Mohammed and his wife believe—as do we—that there are thousands of people in this cluster of “Stan” countries who are ready to accept Jesus but are just too afraid to come forward. This year, we will begin broadcasting into their country in their own dialect. Our *Revelation of Hope* sermons have already been translated, and we can’t wait to see what God will do next!

Yes, we can’t deny we are living in a time of fear. “Men’s hearts are failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth.” (Luke 21:26) But if we must fear, let us fear the deadliest virus of all—sin. This earth is infected and doomed to destruction, but heaven sent an antidote—Jesus Christ. His blood is our only hope!

That’s our message to the world! That’s the only virus we must fear! Everything else is a distraction. We need to bring hope to a perishing world that fears sickness more than sin—frantic to find a cure for the body, but ignoring the deadliest virus of the soul!

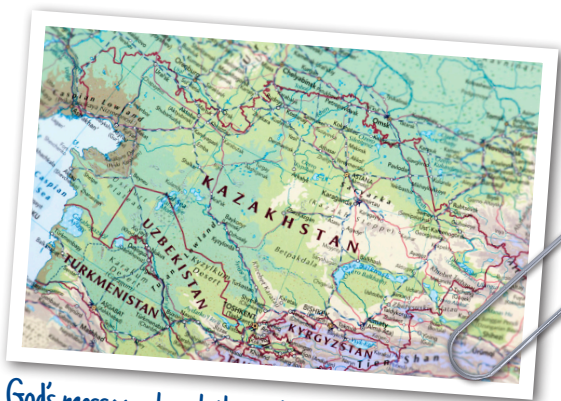
Stories like Mohammed’s fill us with joy and courage to move forward, knowing God is working even when we don’t see it.

Thank you for working with us in this ongoing adventure of faith. Jesus is coming soon—and that’s the best news of all!

Yours in the Blessed Hope,

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

Duane McKey
President



God's messages break through barriers and borders as they touch hard-to-reach areas like the "Stan" countries.

P.S. What a time to be alive! Yes, there is distress in the world, and we know troubles will increase. But what an opportunity to shine God's light and share hope with a world in anguish! Stories like Mohammed's are like glimpses behind a curtain that show us what God is doing all around the world, even when we don't see it.