

"Do you not say, 'Four months more and then the harvest'? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest." (John 4:34, 35)



May 2020

Dear AWR Friend,

Most of the world has been on lockdown for more than a month now—something completely unheard of just three months ago! The virus is taking a deadly toll in almost every country of the world, and many people are asking, “Where is God in all of this?”

We may not always discern a purpose in the chaos around us, but we can be “confident of this, that He who began a good work in you will continue to perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 1:6)

God is working on our behalf! He has promised blessings even in the difficult times—preparing His church and the world to receive the final invitation before Jesus comes. Everything is pointing to that blessed hope!

But while the world is shuttered and captive, there is something that cannot be contained: radio waves! Adventist World Radio continues to air messages of hope and salvation—because radio knows **no borders, no walls, no limits—and no virus!**

I just received this message from one of our stations in Jinja, Uganda:

“This is a time when almost everyone has called upon the name of the Lord. In Uganda, almost all stations are fighting for Adventist preachers to go and preach in their stations at no cost. And this has made our worship easy in Uganda during this lockdown. Radio stations have given churches opportunity to go and preach the message of salvation. They have discovered that it is not a time to make money but to save souls. Pastor Duane, pray for me that I may be a great AWR evangelist.”

—Obuli Zacchaeus

When I read Obuli’s message, I praised God for our programs that are now reaching more people than ever before. There is distress in the world. People everywhere are searching for hope amid the crisis—and we have the hope they long for! It’s the best news of all: Jesus is coming soon!



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There is something else that continues to work uninterrupted, and that's God's Spirit. Let me share what God is doing even as the world wrestles with this pandemic—because His Spirit is always at work!

A VOICE IN THE NIGHT

Ellen and Simon are from Papua New Guinea (PNG), and until recently, they were pastors in the Evangelical Brotherhood Church of Jiwaka. They had both attended Bible college, and when they graduated, were assigned a church in that city.

One Sunday morning, a few months ago, Ellen was preaching to her congregation, reading from Luke 23. When she came to verse 54, she stumbled on the words as she read, “It was Preparation Day, and the Sabbath was about to begin . . .”

She paused in her reading, realizing that she and Simon always skipped verses in the Bible that mentioned Saturday as the Sabbath day. This bothered her. Why did they worship on Sunday if the Bible said Saturday was the day of rest? Like many times before, she let it go and continued preaching.

But God didn't let it go. His Spirit was at work, and that Friday night, when Ellen and Simon were home, they heard what they can only describe as “a strong voice” impressing them with urgency that they must find the truth about the Sabbath day, and once they found it, they should follow it.

They had heard of only one “Saturday church”—the Seventh-day Adventist Church. So the next morning, they searched for that church in their city, and that very morning attended the services!

It just so happened that on that Sabbath, a special offering was being collected for AWR's Total Member Involvement (TMI) project in PNG. Ellen and Simon felt God had sent them at just the right time to participate in that TMI event!

But they didn't stop there. When they returned home, they decided to dismantle their home and build a Seventh-day Adventist church in its place!

A HOUSE DEMOLISHED SO A CHURCH CAN GROW

We visited Ellen and Simon in late February—our last trip just as the world was shutting down. **Where their house had once stood, there is now a church structure being built.** Ellen and Simon live in a temporary makeshift thatched-roof hut on the back of the property—*with their seven children!*

We asked Simon why they are doing this, and he said, “We felt the call of Jesus to do it, so we must give it all to Him. And I want to give my family and my life to God. We are waiting for the coming of Jesus.”



Even though they were pastors for another denomination, Ellen and Simon were determined to find the truth about the Sabbath!



Simon and Ellen with part of the AWR team in front of the Adventist church they are building where their house once stood.

Their precarious living conditions don't worry them one bit, because they have given their house to God and they know He will take care of them. Wow, what faith!

Now they have a burden for their former members from the Evangelical Brotherhood Church where they once pastored. They want to bring them into the Adventist Church and are studying with several of them. Ellen and Simon are building the church big enough to accommodate all of them!

But that's not all! The local Adventist church leadership has helped provide materials for the building. Just this week, we spoke with Elder Elijah, who has been helping them.

He said the roof is already on, the walls are partially up, and they hope to start on the floor soon.

If that isn't amazing enough, let me blow your mind: Ellen and Simon have not been baptized yet! Their greatest desire is to join the Adventist Church, and they were planning to do so this month when we arrived in PNG for the massive TMI evangelistic event that had been planned.

I am humbled by Simon and Ellen's faith and sacrificial commitment. It reminds me of the words of Jesus when He said of the centurion, "I have not found such great faith, not in all Israel!" (Matthew 8:10)

UNEXPECTED CHANGES

We had been working hard for more than two years organizing the event in Papua New Guinea, planning for more than 2,000 preaching sites throughout the country this month. Then flights were cancelled and PNG closed its doors to countries with the coronavirus, forcing us to postpone the event until next year. But Ellen and Simon are not discouraged. They continue to move forward, unwavering in their faith—because God is building His Church, calling His people to gather for an event much larger than TMI: His Second Coming!

We are seeing this all over the world. The truth is, we're not running the show—God is—and I can't wait to see what He'll do next! I'll keep you posted as we plan for this dedicated couple's baptism.

AN UNDISCLOSED LOCATION IN A CLOSED COUNTRY

Now let me share something that is happening right now in another part of the world. Just this week, we spoke with Lily* (our "secret weapon") who lives in an undisclosed location in a country closed to Christianity. She told us the most amazing story. She is sharing Bible studies with a 23-year-old Buddhist woman from a neighboring country also closed to the gospel. Due to the pandemic, Lily has been unable to visit this lady personally, but has been sharing Bible truths through AWR's cell phone evangelism program.

*Lily is not her real name.



This young Buddhist woman is so on fire with what she is learning that she is sharing the messages with her sisters and other family members who are also very receptive. She shared that some months ago, her infant daughter was having trouble sleeping. After Lily prayed for the little girl, she gave her mother an AWR Godpod with the spoken Bible and a set of Bible studies.

What happened next was completely unexpected. Whenever the little girl had trouble sleeping, her mother would play the Godpod and the girl would fall asleep. Not only was her daughter sleeping—but the mother was learning about Jesus!

But there's more. Her husband's family comes from a Hindu background, and her mother-in-law is an influential woman in the village who also practices witchcraft. Although his family is not very happy with his wife's new religion, they are open to listening because of the positive changes they have seen in her! Lily said this young mother believes her mother-in-law can be won to the truth—and if she is, the whole village will follow. Keep them in your prayers as we follow this unfolding story!

Yes, things are changing in the world. We've been far too comfortable for far too long, and God is calling His people to wake up, because "the bridegroom cometh." Let's keep that extra oil handy, so we can confidently say that "He who is in me is greater than he who is in the world." (1 John 4:4)

Thank you for supporting the work of Adventist World Radio as we continue to share—uninterrupted—the good news that Jesus is coming soon!

Yours in the Blessed Hope,

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

Duane McKey
President



Whenever Lily's friend listened to the Bible on her Godpod, something amazing would happen.

P.S. Nothing can stop God's Spirit, and certainly not a virus! These stories encourage us as we continue to air the good news around the world, because God's Word through the airwaves knows no borders, no walls, no limits—and no virus!