

June 2020



Dear AWR Friend,

Several years ago, while Kathy and I were missionaries in the Congo, I was scheduled to fly to eastern Zaire for some youth meetings. On our way there, we stopped by Bukavu, to see the famous mountain gorillas.

Upon arriving at the mountain gorilla park and paying our entrance fee, the security guards gave us clear instructions as to what to expect. They explained it would be more than a three-hour hike each way—over hills and valleys through the jungle mountains—to search for the gorillas' exact location. But the one thing they stressed was, "When we reach the troop of gorillas, the silverback—the dominant gorilla—will give a false charge. Whatever happens, **don't run!** Otherwise, he will pursue and attack!"



A silverback gorilla, similar to the one Duane encountered in the Congo jungle.

One of the guards pulled up his pant leg and showed us a large scar and said, "I ran, and the silverback did this to me." Then he added something disturbing, "Last week, a group from Belgium was here and one of them ran and the silverback killed him. So whatever you do—don't run!" Believe me, we got the message!

Finally, we set off on an unforgettable trek up the jungle mountain trail in pursuit of the gorillas. Several hours later, we were informed we were getting close, and just then, my friend Perry Parks, the division youth director who was just ahead of me, fell through the jungle! That's right—he fell right through! That's when we learned the jungle was so thick that in many places, we were actually on top of some trees. Thankfully, we pulled Perry out unharmed and continued on our way.

A few minutes later, we rounded a corner and came to a clearing. The guards whispered, "We're close now, remember—**don't run!** Just then, a 350 pounds of furry fury crashed through the jungle and let out a shrill scream. Instantly, the guards with their AK-47s jumped behind us! I'm not sure how they did that, but we were left facing the charging gorilla!"

Unfortunately, I wasn't able to get a picture of the event with my camera—because I was shaking so much! It would have made for some stunning photography. But despite everything, we stood our ground and did not turn and run. Thankfully, it was a false charge and the silverback lost interest when he saw no reaction on our part.

Recently, I was reminiscing about this with Perry—who, by the way, is now one of our AWR ambassadors—and he said it has an application for us today during this worldwide pandemic. He said, “It is no time to turn and run!”

That’s exactly right! God has given all of us a mission—and He’s given a mission to Adventist World Radio as well. It is not a time to run but to move forward.

One of my favorite quotes says, “Often the Christian life is beset with dangers, and duty seems hard to perform. The imagination pictures impending ruin before, and bondage and death behind. Yet the voice of God speaks clearly, ‘Go forward!’” (*Christian Service*, p. 110)

Adventist World Radio has a mission—we must go forward. Recently, 20 AWR evangelistic meetings began in Moldova, and 38 in Ukraine—all remotely on Zoom and YouTube! Initial reports confirmed that thousands are watching. What a time to be alive!

By the time you receive this letter, our very own Cami Oetman will be conducting an international online evangelistic series, titled *Unlocking Bible Prophecies*. Interest is huge for this event—because the world is locked at home searching for answers, and God is opening new ways of reaching people. (Watch for yourself at awr.org/bible!)

Let me share a story of someone who did not run and hide when he discovered truth and faced impending ruin. It’s a story of how God can change hearts and restore relationships if we trust in Him and move forward in faith.

THE SUNDAY PASTOR

Pastor Hmar was an ordained pastor in the Nagaland Christian Revival Church, a charismatic church in India. He was also an evangelist in 14 different states, having more than 400 charismatic churches under his charge.

Born a miracle baby, Pastor Hmar always understood he was destined to serve God. His mother delivered him prematurely at four and a half months, while his twin brother continued to full term some four months later! He was the 10th child in the family, and his survival was considered a miracle, so his parents dedicated him as a special gift to God.

In the year 2000, Pastor Hmar was ordained as a minister, and dedicated his life to proclaim the Word of God. As time passed, he made contacts across India and was well known in many churches.

For 17 years, he preached the truth as he knew it, but two years ago, he heard a sermon on his cell phone by one of our Adventist World Radio speakers, Pastor Biacchuana. The message was about grace and the law of God. As he listened, Pastor Hmar said, “I tasted the truth and immediately knew I wanted to hear more.”

He searched for all the messages from our AWR speaker, and soon became convicted about the Sabbath and other new Bible truths. He was so excited about what he was learning that he wanted to



share it with others. When he learned his brother was interested in the presentations, Pastor Hmar gave him his own cell phone so he could listen. Providentially, someone gave him a replacement phone, and Pastor Hmar knew God had intervened to provide it.

But soon, word got around that Pastor Hmar was sharing new ideas. A prominent Protestant pastor told him, “You may join any church, even Catholicism, but do not become a Seventh-day Adventist!”

As time went by, his family and friends began to treat him differently, and some turned away from him, declaring him dead to them. But his greatest trial came from within his own home—his wife. She was convinced he’d lost his mind and she threatened to leave him unless he abandoned his strange beliefs.

This was a dark period in his life. By now, he had lost his church connections and much of his influence. His friends and his relatives shunned him, and now he was about to lose his wife. What could he do?

DON'T RUN; STAND YOUR GROUND

It was clear to him that God was leading him to a greater truth than he had ever known before, and God’s approval was more important to him than anything else in his life. He knew he must not give up, but stand on the side of truth. On the other hand, he also didn’t want to lose his life companion. So, he began to ask God to help him reach his wife. As he prayed earnestly for her, the answer came from God. It was simple: love her.

Pastor Hmar was overjoyed. Loving her was something he could do! And he did. Every day he shared God’s love with her in many different ways. At night, while she slept, he would often softly lay his hand on his wife’s head and pray for her.

Slowly, it began to dawn on her that her husband really loved her deeply, and this melted her heart. One day she told him, “If you can show me from the Bible that the seventh day is the true Sabbath, I’ll accept it.”

With her heart and mind now open, they began to study the Bible together. After four months of study and prayer, she also accepted the Sabbath truth. Pastor Hmar was so happy! He said, “Now we can serve the Lord together and share the Three Angels’ Messages for these last days!”

It was a wonderful day, just over a year ago, when AWR’s Pastor Biacchuana baptized Pastor Hmar and his wife Zumoni into the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

LIVES TRANSFORMED

But the story doesn’t end there—it was just beginning! After their baptism, they returned to Nagaland and began traveling and sharing with former friends, teaching them the truths they had learned. During this last year, God has blessed them with 100 people who have accepted the Sabbath truth through their ministry and made decisions for baptism. This includes friends, former charismatic church members, and 10 Sunday pastors!



Pastor Hmar on the day of his baptism.



One of those pastors who accepted the Sabbath message was so excited that he began sharing his newfound faith with everyone. Unfortunately, he lived in an area where Christian witnessing was restricted and he was arrested for sharing his faith. But soon after, he was released and continues to share with others!

Pastor Hmar and his wife have a burden for the charismatic churches they once ministered to, and God is blessing their efforts. They continue to share the new truths they've discovered. He recently said, "We know Jesus is coming soon, and we love to share this with others!"



Pastor Hmar and his wife (fourth and fifth from left) on the day of their baptism.

GOING FORWARD

What an inspiring testimony! It's always thrilling to see how God uses AWR to reach people—who in turn reach many more! Nothing can stop God's Word from going forward, because God's Spirit is working, transforming hearts.

At Adventist World Radio, we're all about going forward—and God is opening the way. If you go to the drug cartel-ridden jungles of South America, AWR is there. If you go to the highest mountains in Nepal, AWR is there. If you go to life-threatening areas of the world, AWR is there. And if we're not there, by God's grace we soon will be! Because our commission is to "Go into all the world."

Yes, the needs are great, but God is opening doors like never before. From radio broadcasts to God-pods and podcasts, to cell phone evangelism to public evangelism—and now worldwide evangelism via the internet—we're willing to do it all! Plus, we love to support people like Pastor Hmar and others who have a passion to share their newfound faith with others! Like Solomon said, "Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might!"

Thank you for supporting the work of AWR—for joining us in taking the gospel of the kingdom to people like Pastor Hmar, and watching it multiply as the ripple effects expand to the ends of the earth. Let's stand our ground and proclaim that Jesus is coming soon!

Yours in the Blessed Hope,

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

Duane McKey
President



P.S. What an inspiring story, and what a time to be alive! As distress increases in the world, so does God's grace. His Spirit is working in new ways to reach as many people as possible before His return. Thank you for making a difference and standing with us, because as we work together, miracles happen!