



December 2020

Dear AWR Friend,

This month we celebrate the most joyous holiday of the year. It's a time for gratitude, thanksgiving and family. We have all faced many challenges this past year, but we praise God because He has not only seen us through, but given us a year of miracles.

The light of hope that shines through the ages from Bethlehem is what drives everything we do at Adventist World Radio. And while the world may focus on the chaos around us, we have our eyes fixed on Jesus.

Throughout the year, we have seen that light shining miracles in the darkness, and as I share a few of them with you, we can rejoice in the knowledge that this world is not our home and that Jesus is coming soon!

THE CHRISTMAS GIFT

Erma was born into extreme poverty. One of the youngest of eight children, she often saw her father walking in the hot sun, looking for people who needed things repaired—broken umbrellas, shoes, water jugs—anything to put food on the table. Her mother would often catch fish to feed the family, but there was never enough.

As a child, Erma remembers often walking the two kilometers to school on an empty stomach, and on one occasion feeling so weak with hunger that she fainted upon arrival. But she was proud of her parents who struggled so valiantly to provide for their children.

There grew in her a burning desire to help her family, and she felt the best way to do it was by applying herself in school. She studied hard, determined to never give up even when others did. Her older siblings often told her, "You want to keep on studying, but just wait, you'll end up pregnant like everyone else, and it will all be for nothing ... a waste of time." But Erma kept pressing forward.

Throughout her early years, Erma had often prayed to God, but as time went on, her knowledge of God was so limited that she prayed less and less. Her family was Roman Catholic, and she supposed she was, too, though her parents had never gotten around to baptizing her as a child.

One day, shortly before her graduation, a young man whom she liked invited her to attend a religious meeting. It was none other than Adventist World Radio's evangelistic series held in Mindoro in 2018.



The home where Erma grew up with her parents.

Erma enjoyed the presentation and didn't miss a single meeting after that. She said, "I got the chance to listen and learn about baptism, the Sabbath and the Second Coming. Suddenly, I felt God's Spirit touching my heart. It was a struggle since I didn't have permission from my parents, but I decided to follow God even if they got mad at me."

On August 25, 2018, Erma was baptized on the beach along with hundreds more at the end of the series. Her parents were not happy and didn't want to learn about Erma's new religion. She began to pray every day for her parents and her family.

A few days before her graduation, her nephew was climbing a tree to harvest mangoes when he slipped and fell, hitting his head on a rock. Despite efforts to save him, he died, and the funeral was scheduled for the day of her graduation. She was torn about what to do, but her friends encouraged her to attend the graduation. She had struggled for so many years to complete her education that she finally agreed to go.

She didn't expect any of her family members to be present due to her nephew's funeral, but to her great surprise, her mother was there, and when Erma saw her, they both hugged and cried with heart-wrenching sobs—their emotion too deep for words. This helped heal the rift that had grown since her decision to be baptized, and recemented the bond with her mother.

After her graduation, Erma's family expected her to earn money to support the family, but she felt the call to be a missionary for Adventist World Radio at our Center for Digital Evangelism. Erma told us, "It was hard to explain to them that this was not my plan, but God's, and it took them months to accept the work that I do now. They didn't understand, and all I could do was pray for my parents to open their hearts and minds."

There was something else she could do for them in addition to praying. Erma bought them a radio so they could listen to Adventist World Radio every day.

Then the pandemic struck, and Erma worried about her family more than ever, but she continued to trust and pray. One day, Erma heard a song that mentioned "tears in heaven." The words touched her heart, especially the part about families in heaven. She wanted her family to be saved, and convicted by the words of that song like never before, she felt impressed to again ask her parents if they wanted to receive Bible studies. To her big surprise, they said, "Yes!"

The studies began in earnest earlier this year, but then another tragedy struck the little family. This past October, Erma's niece Zavhia—her sister's seven-month-old daughter—got sick with a high fever, and despite efforts to save her, she died. The family was devastated and Erma was heartbroken. All she could do was pray and trust in God's love, knowing He had a plan for her family.

Then just a few weeks ago, Erma got a surprise call from Pastor Dulay, our AWR coordinator on the island of Mindoro: her parents had decided to be baptized and become a part of the Seventh-day Adventist Church! Erma shouted for joy, and then she couldn't stop herself and began to cry.

When she talked to her parents, she asked them, "What made you decide to be baptized?"



*Erma's parents holding their radio—
a precious gift from their daughter.*

They said, “You never gave up on us. We listened to the radio programs and knew it was the truth, so we agreed to the Bible studies. But our decision was made when little Zavhia died. We want to see her in heaven!”

Erma’s parents will be baptized this month, and Erma is walking on air. She said, “After two years of praying and crying, the Lord has answered my prayer. I know there are tears of joy in heaven as well. This is the best Christmas gift I could’ve ever hoped for!”

THE CHINESE BIBLE WORKER

Wah-Chin had been a Bible worker in China for several years with little success. When he heard that AWR would be holding evangelism training sessions in the Philippines, he decided to attend.

When he arrived, he was anxious but excited. Every morning, he attended the training with AWR’s Pastor Louis Torres and his team, then in the afternoon he spent time going over his sermon. It was challenging to learn the English lessons and speak through a translator, but every night, Wah-Chin would do just that. Night after night, he continued to preach to those who came to his meetings.

When he made his first appeal, he was amazed at the response from the audience. God’s Spirit was with him and blessed his efforts. He was overjoyed to see that what he was learning was

actually working! Then came the day of the big baptism in Mindoro, in which 1,800 people were baptized. It was a life-changing experience for Wah-Chin to see those who had made a decision for Jesus be baptized along with hundreds from other groups.

Wah-Chin returned to China to work among Buddhists, communists and atheists. God blessed his efforts, and he went on to plant several churches. Today, he’s working with several small groups in his community.

But there is an added blessing from Wah-Chin’s experience and his willingness to be used by God. One of those who attended his meetings in Mindoro and was baptized was a young girl named Erma.



Pastor Wah-Chin baptized many new believers, including a girl named Erma.

A MODERN-DAY WITCH

Commander Liam (not his real name) is in charge of the armed forces in a country under a dictatorship. He’s a powerful, decorated commander who has complete control over all military operations of the government, and he daily carries out the wishes of the country’s dictator.

The commander is many things, but “kind” is not a word that would come to mind if you met him. However, something interesting and unexpected happened. Someone began sending him messages of hope straight to his cell phone. These messages spoke of a God of love and forgiveness—a God who can change lives and knows the future, and a God who sent His Son to die for us and is coming again soon!

At first, Commander Liam was annoyed that someone had found his private cell number and was sending these video presentations to him, but then he found out it was an acquaintance of his, and he decided to watch. Pretty soon he was hooked and fascinated by the series! You see, he was



watching AWR's *Unlocking Bible Prophecies* series with Cami Oetman, and each presentation was more compelling than the one before.

Commander Liam has many enemies, and he's very aware of them, so to protect himself and his family, he hired a witch to cast spells on his enemies. She was known as a powerful witch, and he appreciated her help.

One day, as the commander was in his living room watching one of the video presentations, the witch strode in and said, "Stop! I need to talk to you!"

The commander put down his phone and waited. The witch said, "Who's sending you those videos, and who is that woman preaching? I can tell she has a magic more potent than mine!"

When the commander began sharing the content of the videos, the witch said, "I want some of that power, too! It brings me a strange sense of peace I haven't known before. Can you please tell the person sending you those videos to sign me up as well?"

Today, Commander Liam and his witch are both listening to AWR's presentations and learning the full prophetic Adventist gospel message—whether they realize it or not!

Truly, the messages from Adventist World Radio know no borders, no walls, no limits, and no dictatorships. God's Word is like a sharp sword that can penetrate to the soul in every corner of the world!

A YEAR OF MIRACLES

Yes, as we review the year and look to the future, we can see a past filled with miracles and a brilliant future for the preaching of the gospel. We can look around us and talk about darkness, or we can focus on our mission—because Jesus is coming soon and a glorious future awaits all of God's children.

Thank you for supporting the work of Adventist World Radio—for helping people like Erma, Wah-Chin, Commander Liam, and even the witch. Heaven is open and waiting for all who are willing and ready to hear God's truth and accept Jesus as their Lord and Savior.

If you feel impressed to do so, please fill out the enclosed card and return it with your gift. It is your loving support that makes all of these stories possible and will allow Erma to have the best Christmas gift ever—her parents' new birth into the kingdom of heaven.

Yours in the Blessed Hope,


Duane McKey
President



P.S. We may look at the world around us and feel discouraged and distressed, but if we fix our eyes upon Jesus and the light of hope that comes down through the ages from the Christ Child born in Bethlehem, we will see that bright light shining into the future—leading us home. Yes, 2020 has been a year of challenges and miracles, and we could not have done it without you, so fasten your seat belts—I can't wait to see what God will do in 2021!

P.P.S. What a fantastic time to be alive, with millions watching our *Unlocking Bible Prophecies* series and many of our topics being the top results on YouTube! Plus, I hope you've been joining me for the new weekly series I'm hosting, *Earth's Final Countdown*, which will continue weekly through mid-March 2021. Watch and subscribe at awr.org/prophecies.