



June 2021

Dear AWR Friend,

I have some amazing news to share with you! Things are happening that we never dreamed possible. But first, let me give you an overview of what led up to the unprecedented event taking place right now.

AWR
50
YEARS
OF MINISTRY



Five years ago, I was the speaker at a camp meeting on the island of Mindoro, Philippines. I was there as assistant to the General Conference president for Total Member Involvement, also known as TMI.

The concept of TMI is based on a statement from the Spirit of Prophecy that states the work of God can never be finished until church members unite their efforts with those of ministers and church officers to work together.

Even though I was in the Philippines, the dream of this particular project was to jump-start the work in Japan. The idea was to bring a group of pastors and members from Japan—where evangelism was not being done—to a place where the work was going well so they could catch the vision and be inspired to do the same back home in Japan. We had seen this work well many times with ASI, Share Him, and other projects.

During my camp meeting presentation, I challenged the members and leaders with this plan: the group from Japan would visit Mindoro and preach an evangelistic series—many for the very first time. To ensure the success of the meetings, I suggested that in preparation, they broadcast our TMI radio sermons across the island.

There was resistance to this approach, because they had tried something similar in the past without success, but since this was now coming from the office of the General Conference president, our leaders agreed to try it, all the while insisting, “It will not work here!”

They began broadcasting, and sure enough, they were right: it didn’t work! But after three weeks with no success, Pastor Robert Dulay said, “I’m going to try a Question of the Day.”

His plan was simple: before airing the day’s sermon, a question would be asked on the air about the prior day’s sermon. The first 10 people to call and get it right would receive a free gift delivered to their home.



Pastor Robert Dulay is the AWR coordinator for the Philippines.

Did it work? Did it ever! The competition was fierce, and there was a furor to be the first to call in with the right answer! But as they competed, they also listened, and soon they were hooked on the messages. Now, five years later, more than 10,000 people have been baptized!

It's amazing how God leads the circumstances of our lives, because at the time, I had just been given the added responsibility of taking on the leadership of Adventist World Radio—and got to experience firsthand the power of radio.

But that's not the end of the story! Because that story was just beginning, and it's been five years of miracle after miracle. Let me share with you what is taking place right now.



Entire villages have been baptized after residents were touched by AWR broadcasts.

VILLAGE AFTER VILLAGE

Every time we think we're finished with good news from the island of Mindoro, it seems like God says, "Not so fast—I have others who need to know Me!"

If you have been following my monthly newsletters, you know that the 50 evangelistic series held in Mindoro by the group from Japan were a success. There was so much interest in Bible truth that we decided to continue airing programs and blanketing the island with radio waves sharing our prophetic Biblical message and health principles.

We were amazed when deep in the jungle, one village after another contacted our AWR headquarters in Mindoro asking for someone to visit them and share more of what they were hearing. Entire villages were requesting baptism en masse, and I shared the wonderful news with you every step of the way. It was a time of celebration as village after village surrendered to Jesus and thousands were baptized.

We were overjoyed at the success of God's Word and ready for our next challenge, but again God said, "Not so fast—there's more!"

THE REBEL GROUP HIDDEN DEEP IN THE JUNGLE

There is a saying that we often like to repeat at AWR: "I can't wait to see what God will do next!" And more often than not, He surprises us.

I shared with you back in 2018 how one day Pastor Dulay was arriving home when he saw a group of men waiting for him. The story they told him was beyond belief: they were communist guerrillas in the Philippines known as the New People's Army. For more than 50 years, the NPA has been fighting to overthrow



In 2018, Cami Oetman interviewed the first of the rebels who had been converted by listening to AWR broadcasts on the radio.

the Philippine government. These rebels would hide deep in the mountain jungles and only come out to fight and kill, armed to the teeth with AK-47s. Many of them had been assassins all their lives.

These men all told the same story: they had been listening to the radio messages and wanted to surrender their lives to Jesus and be baptized. Could someone come to help them?

Could we ever! We lost no time in organizing a whole contingent to travel to the mountains with medical supplies, food, radios and solar-powered Godpods with the Bible recorded in their native tongue. The villages were hidden so deep in the mountains that some of us had to travel by helicopter, while others trekked for hours carrying thousands of pounds of supplies.

It was a time of great rejoicing as whole villages waited anxiously for our arrival. But the best part was that the Philippine military got involved. They saw hope for a possible resolution to the never-ending hostilities, and they joined us in this project!

REBEL GUERRILLA LEADERS SURRENDER

But there was more—so much more! Last year I shared with you how one by one, the top communist generals from the NPA have been moved by God to give up their AK-47s and surrender their lives to Jesus. We shared pictures and videos of their baptisms, but always with their faces blurred, because these were wanted men, criminals and assassins being hunted by the authorities, and still they wanted to follow Jesus.

The truth is that when God takes over the heart and the life of a person, He never leaves them where they are. He changes the

desires of the heart. Now these men wanted a new life for themselves and their families. Their hearts longed for a peaceful existence, and to be right not only with God, but with the authorities. So they asked AWR to help them negotiate a surrender to the Philippine government.

What has been taking place in the last few months is nothing short of a miracle. Not only was God working on these former rebels' hearts, but He was also working on the hearts of the government authorities and the military. When we approached them, they were more than eager to reach a compromise and end the hostilities!

As part of the agreement, AWR offered to give each former rebel family \$500 to facilitate their new life and invest in a business. When the government heard this, they were thrilled and decided to offer each family one acre of land as well. The former rebels could use it to build



Last month, a long line of former rebel soldiers marched into this Adventist church to surrender their lives to God and the government.



Pastor Dulay had carefully planned with high-ranking government officials to ensure the day would go smoothly.



Each former rebel fighter received a light blue T-shirt to commemorate this miraculous event.

a home, plant gardens, raise livestock or establish a business. We realized then that the government was just as anxious and eager as the rebels to end the conflict. This was God working a miracle!

A date was set in May 2021, when the rebel leaders with their families would come down from the mountain straight into the Adventist church. Careful planning went into every detail. This was a joint venture between Adventist World Radio, our church and the Philippine military. Teams were assigned, with one church member and one military representative per former rebel.

The plan included spending one week on the church grounds, with meetings during the day with orientation and counseling provided, along with meals and programs for the children. During the evenings, an evangelistic series was held—and the best part was that the military would join us in the series!

Right on schedule on the appointed day, the rebels and their families began coming down the mountain and entering the church. This was such a huge event that the national media networks were there to witness it!



The joy was palpable as the rebels and the military embraced. The best way to describe how we felt in that moment is through the Psalmist when he said, “Those who go out weeping, carrying seed to sow, will return with songs of joy, carrying sheaves with them.” (Psalm 126:6)

And there was a lot of weeping! The former rebels wept unashamedly during the evening meetings, and not just when the call was made to follow Jesus, but during the song service as they sang the hymns, during the special music, and as they listened to the story of Jesus. God’s Spirit was felt throughout the days they all spent together.



Former sworn enemies have now become friends.

In the afternoons, the former rebels shared their testimonies:

the sorrow for the people they had killed, and the pain of running, starving and fighting—only to discover they were fighting for the wrong reason. It was amazing to see these former rebels and the military praying together and pledging to keep in touch. This has ended a 50-year rebel civil war that cost the lives of more than 30,000 people on the island of Mindoro!



Rosielyn Galario, the representative of the former rebel fighters shared her moving testimony before signing the treaty with Adventist and government officials

A top military leader told us, “From now on, we will partner with Adventists for programs like this all over the Philippines.”

They have already requested to have these meetings twice a year, and right now we are planning another one with former rebels in Occidental Mindoro.

LOOKING AHEAD

If we thought this was over, we were wrong again, because God is still saying, “Not yet!” Doors are opening right now for us to do the same on the island of Mindanao—the second-largest island in the Philippines. We’ll be starting from scratch, just as we did in Mindoro, blanketing the island through the airwaves—and *I can’t wait to see what God will do next!*

Thank you for being part of this story—for making a real difference in the lives of so many people. What a privilege to know Jesus and be able to share His wonderful truth with others. Soon, the end will come, and what will matter most is those we brought with us into the kingdom of heaven.

Yours in the Blessed Hope,



Duane McKey
President



P.S. There is no greater joy than leading others to the feet of Jesus, and the story of the rebels from Mindoro is one of the amazing miracles of God’s grace. Thank you for partnering with us in the greatest calling ever—the saving of souls!



After signing the peace accord, Philippine Brigadier General Jose Villareal expressed his sincere thanks to the Adventist Church for orchestrating this historic event.



At the end of the event, the entire group raised their hands and shouted, “Thank you AWR 360!”