



August 2021

Dear AWR Friend,

MIRACLES IN AFRICA

Since the 1970s, I've had the privilege of seeing amazing miracles across the African continent. As missionaries there for 10 years, my wife Kathy and I were given many insights that strengthened our faith as we experienced God's power.

I shared with you in previous letters (May 2018 and Feb 2021) the miraculous event we witnessed in the Kasai Province of Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of the Congo), when our church grew from 300 members to more than 100,000 in a short time. This was all God's doing, as are all the events I will share in this letter.

There have been many personal miracles throughout the years, but another remarkable evidence of God's intervention took place in 1999 in Mwanza, Tanzania, when we organized a satellite evangelistic series with Pastor Jere Patzer as speaker. It was broadcast across Africa, and hundreds of video projectors were purchased by the North Pacific Union Conference for the downlink sites. According to Geoffrey Mbwana, the then-union president, close to 100,000 people were baptized.

Then in 2016, our AWR/TMI team took on the project in Rwanda, where 100,135 people were baptized. This was a first—a fantastic event that made a huge impact on the whole country and on the East African Division, as they learned new ways to reach the masses. Recently, the Rwanda Union President, Pastor Hesron Byilingiro, shared that the reason they have retained most of those who were baptized was due to the fact that new members were assigned their own churches, their own choirs and their own Sabbath School classes. They not only believed and accepted the message, but they felt useful and needed—so they stayed!



During AWR/TMI's last major event in Africa, more than 100,000 were baptized.

MORE MIRACLES TODAY

What about more recent miracles? Just last Sabbath, more than 30,000 people were baptized in Tanzania as a result of AWR Cell Phone Evangelism, and radio and TV broadcasts.

And there's an update on Liberia. Last month, I shared with you the story of "the quiet listener" and the charismatic churches. Three Sabbaths ago, three large churches took down their signs and replaced them with Seventh-day Adventist signs as a result of listening to our AWR broadcasts!

Then in Ghana two weeks ago, a young lady who had learned cell phone evangelism from an AWR training we held in Israel organized a series of meetings, and 1,300 people were baptized!

AWR
50
YEARS
OF MINISTRY

SOUTH AFRICA AND AWR'S DIGITAL EVANGELISM CENTER



An AWR360° Digital Evangelism Center is nearing completion in Pretoria, South Africa.

But what about South Africa? The work has traditionally gone more slowly on that part of the continent. That's why three years ago, we decided to build an AWR Digital Evangelism Center in Pretoria. The pandemic last year slowed down the project, but what is happening now is fantastic! The center is almost finished, and it will be used to train digital missionaries. We will broadcast in English 24/7—reaching the whole world with direct gospel and prophetic truths from the Bible, plus health messages and children's stories. But the most amazing thing is how God's Spirit is preparing the way—opening doors and touching hearts.

Let me share a very recent update we received from Neville Neveling, our AWR pioneer in cell phone evangelism in that part of the world.

Since he began sharing our programs through his cell phone in 2017, the reach of this method of spreading the gospel has exploded with hundreds of thousands of people listening to the messages on their cell phones and making decisions for Jesus.

A few Sabbaths ago, Neville was at the Adventist church in Pretoria, where he met several people who had joined the church through cell phone evangelism and shared how they, in turn, are sending the presentations to others. Many people gave testimony of their conversion through this remarkable method, but one story stands out above all others.



A cement worker reveals the AWR360° logo in concrete at the entrance of the new center.

MACHIEL VAN WYK, THE AFRIKANER FARMER

Machiel came from a Dutch Reform background, but over time, he realized that some things he'd been taught were not correct, especially when he discovered that baptism was by immersion. So he left the Dutch Reform Church and joined the Apostolic Faith Mission.

But after a while, he said something didn't feel right with his new church either. So he prayed to God and said, "Lord, please send someone my way who will guide me in the truth. I need the truth—nothing other than the truth."

In that very moment, as he opened his eyes, he received a message on his phone through WhatsApp that said, "I would like to send you Bible studies."

Machiel didn't know the sender. He would later learn it had come from Neville's phone, but the interesting thing is that neither man knows how this came about. Machiel says he never spoke to anybody nor asked anyone for Bible studies, and never gave his cell phone number to anyone. And to this day, Neville denies ever sending him that message, or even having his number. But the message was on Machiel's screen, and he immediately responded, "Yes." He had just prayed asking God to send someone, and he accepted it as God's answer.



Meet Machiel Van Wyk

Machiel joined the Bible studies, and very soon he was convinced he'd found the truth. He shared that when he first learned that the Sabbath was on Saturday and not on Sunday, he was very upset. "I grew up in the Dutch Reform Church and they have a love of the Ten Commandments. I love them myself, too. They would read them every Sunday. I consider them the heartbeat of the Scriptures! So I was decimated when I found out that people have been lying to me and to the world for such a long time about something that is so important as the Sabbath. I immediately decided I would honor God's Sabbath on the right day."

There was something else that Machiel had wanted to know for a very long time. He wanted to understand the book of Revelation. "I desperately needed to understand that book, and no matter where I went, nobody could explain it to me. And then here, in this cell phone evangelism study, the book of Revelation was explained, and that has been an amazing experience for me."

Being an Afrikaner farmer in South Africa is dangerous. In recent years, many farmers have been killed by marauding rebel groups. When Machiel was asked if he was worried about security on his farm, he said, "Yes, it's bad. They have attacked farms all around us. But I've always lived my life in a very simple manner. God always comes first, and I don't do anything without first asking Him and letting God lead me." He then shared two incidents in which he saw God's hand intervene on his behalf.

THE BULLETS THAT DIDN'T FIRE

"Once a group of men came to the farm. They were shouting as they walked toward me. One of them had a gun that he pointed at me and started firing even as he walked and shouted. The bullets were flying out of the gun, but they were falling to the ground. Not a single shot went off, and when the man had emptied the magazine and there were no bullets left, they all looked in astonishment at the gun that hadn't fired a single round."

Machiel said he picked up those bullets and put them in a gun that carried the same type of bullets, and every single one of them fired correctly when he pulled the trigger. He said, "I'm sure that God and His angels protected me, because I allow myself to be guided and directed by the Lord and only the Lord. I trust Him 100 percent, and was probably not ready to die that day."

WHO PUT OUT THE FIRE?

Some time passed, and the men decided that if they could not shoot Machiel, they would set his farm on fire. "It was a windy day, and those Highveld red grasses burn so quickly that the flames can easily reach two stories high. When I looked out over the field and saw the fire, I looked up to the sky and said, 'God, please, no animals and no humans. Please protect us and don't let any harm come to my family or my animals.'"

The flames were raging toward the cattle corral and the houses, and the wind was blowing. "I was trying my best, but there wasn't much I could do. The flames came right up to the fence of the cattle corral, and right there they stopped and the fire went out. The burn marks are still there, and if you look at the fence, the fire side is scorched black, but the other side is normal."

But that wasn't the end of the fires, because more fires were set that day and into the night, and Machiel struggled to put them out. By 2 a.m., he was too tired to continue, so he said, "Lord, I can't do it anymore. I'm tired and need to sleep. I leave it in Your hands."

He went to bed and instantly fell asleep, but two hours later, he woke up and looked out. His neighbor's farm was burning, so Machiel phoned him and said, "Why haven't you called me to help you? Your field is burning!"

And the neighbor replied, "I didn't call because I figured you were busy. I saw the veld burning on your side, and saw you had your hands full with your helpers busy killing the flames and putting out fires."

In that moment Machiel understood. "I realized the Lord had sent a team of angels, because I wasn't there. I was asleep, and I didn't have any helpers."

God had fought the fires for him, because he trusted his life and everything he had to Jesus.

CONCLUSION

This story is especially moving because it confirms again that God has children all around the world who are waiting and ready to hear God's final call and respond. They will be among those who, when the time comes, will not bow down to Baal but will stand with God's people. By thousands of voices all over the earth, the final call will be given, and the earth will be brought to take a stand.

When reflecting on this story, Neville said, "Nobody gave me Machiel's name or cell phone number, so it must have been God who called him."

Yes! And God calls each one of us, maybe not by cell phone, but with opportunities He places in our path—opportunities not only to know Him better, but to help others learn His wonderful truth.

Thank you for joining us in this challenge, and for helping us reach people like Machiel and millions of others who are waiting to take a stand, as together we proclaim that Jesus is coming soon to rescue us from this old ball of mud and take us home!

Yours in the Blessed Hope,



Duane McKey
President



P.S. These are the stories that fuel our mission and inspire us to keep sharing this wonderful message. Soon God's Spirit will be poured out in full measure and the world will be lighted with the glory of God. Thousands like Machiel will stand under God's banner. What a privilege and what an opportunity to share this message today! Thank you for your generous support that makes it possible, and for joining us in the greatest calling ever—the saving of souls for the kingdom of heaven.