

"See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland." (Isaiah 43:19)

October 2021

Dear AWR Friend,

Throughout our years in ministry, my wife Kathy and I have experienced many miracles of God's providence, some of which I've shared with you. One such incident happened just at the start of our service in the mission field.

Our youngest was only six months old, and our eldest three, when we flew from New York to Geneva, Switzerland—our first transatlantic flight—and from there by land to Collonges-sous-Salève, France. The plan was to study French for six months before shipping out to the African jungle in the heart of the Congo.

When our studies were completed—and after some delays and postponements—we wrote to the General Conference letting them know we were ready, and asking them to send us the plane tickets for our trip to Africa.

To our surprise, the reply was not long in coming: "You already have the tickets. They were given to you with the rest of the paperwork."

This was serious. Back then, before the electronic age, a paper ticket was cash. If we lost those tickets, we would be losing our flight and thousands of dollars that could not be replaced. I asked Kathy, "Do you know where they might be?"

She said, "You know, some time ago I cleaned out everything. I think I may have thrown them away."

With a sinking feeling, we did another search of the apartment, but to no avail. The tickets were gone. Then we did the only thing we could do: we knelt down to pray, asking God for the impossible.

After the prayer, we decided to find out where all the city's trash was taken. But when we explained the reason, people were incredulous. "Are you serious?" they said. "Have you ever gone to the city dump? It's a mess—a junkyard with mountains and mountains of trash! It's impossible to retrieve anything once it's gone!"

We went anyway, and when we arrived at the site, we realized they were right. It seemed useless to even try to find anything in that huge field of foul-smelling discards. But we prayed again, asking God for the impossible.

As we stood surveying the rotting mess, we noticed a pile of trash to the side, away from the rest. Then we recognized one of our children's toys, so we ran over, and that's when the impossible happened: we found the tickets! They were all there—all four of them!

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When we arrived at the dump site, we were faced with mountains of garbage.

We were so excited! Right then and there, amid the rubble, we thanked God for helping us find them. A few days later we were on our way via Swiss Air to Kinshasa, then Lubumbashi, and then on to Lulengele Mission.

This incident at the start of our mission service was one of many that strengthened our faith, enabling us to face ever greater challenges.

GOD'S SPIRIT "MAKES A WAY"

Today, the world stage is rapidly changing, and we're seeing things that God's people through the centuries—and especially our Adventist pioneers—longed to see. We can no longer deny the signs of Christ's imminent return!

In the last few months, America and the world have been riveted by the events in Afghanistan and the Middle East. Every day, the media news outlets bring us fresh images of suffering and devastation, wars and conflict, and new atrocities to stun the senses.

But while the unrest in the world has been foretold, the greatest indication of Christ's soon return is not in the chaos being created by the devil, but in what God's Spirit is doing. It is the "God news" that's the greatest "tell" of all—and it is often the most overlooked.

Let me share with you some amazing "God news" we just received from one of the most controversial places in the Middle East.

WISAM ALI UPDATE — THE GAZA STRIP

For years, Adventist World Radio has been beaming the gospel message into the unreached places of the world. One of those especially targeted is the Middle East. And while from time to time, we receive moving reports of lives changed, most of that part of the world is still closed to Christianity.

During the last two years, I've been sharing the story of Wisam Ali, a formerly devout Arab, whom God "plucked from the burning," and who is now an Adventist pastor in Nazareth, Israel, in charge of the West Bank territory of Palestine. We have been working on a joint project to establish an evangelism center in Nazareth that will reach the Muslim world.

Just recently, Wisam shared something that reminds us that while a task may seem impossible, we are not working alone, because "He who began the good work in us will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus."

A few months ago, Wisam visited a rural area looking for interests, and he came upon an elderly couple who welcomed his visit. They lived in an extremely run-down home with unsafe and unhealthy living conditions. To make matters worse, the man's wife was terminally ill, and the husband couldn't afford to buy the medication she needed. Wisam was moved to compassion by their plight and contacted a doctor friend who visited the couple and determined the wife was suffering from kidney failure due to diabetes, and that the man was severely malnourished.

Wisam and the doctor tried their best to help them with food and medicine, but sadly, soon after, they received news that the wife had passed away. A month later, the husband died as well.



Pastor Wisam Ali enjoys sharing stories of God's amazing miracles.

That seemed to be the end of that. It appeared that one of the few contacts Wisam had made had ended without yielding fruit.

Six months later, Wisam received a call from a man from the West Bank asking to meet with him. He was very insistent, but requested that Wisam come alone.

As Wisam was driving to the location indicated, he received a call with instructions to go to a different address. So, he headed in that direction. But then the phone rang again, and the caller changed the address to yet another location.

This confused Wisam and made him suspicious of the man's intentions. He seemed to be playing games.

Finally, Wisam pulled over and started praying, asking God to give him a sign as to whether or not he should proceed to the meeting.

After the prayer, and as Wisam opened his eyes, there was a knock on the car window. A man stood there, and he asked Wisam to follow him.



When Wisam arrived at the designated location, he was greeted by four masked men with machine guns.

That was the sign Wisam needed. He followed the man through the mountains to the middle of nowhere, until finally they arrived where four men waited, their faces covered, with machine guns at the ready. They apologized for the trouble but said they had wanted to ensure that Wisam wasn't followed.

Then a fifth person arrived, and it was apparent this was their leader. He approached and greeted Wisam, then he removed the cover from his face and began telling a story that took Wisam completely by surprise.

It was the story of his parents, who had received help from men who were "different from other men." The man said he thanked God that his parents didn't die hungry because of Wisam and his doctor friend's visits.

"I invited you here," the man said, "to thank you that my parents died with a full stomach. But not just to thank you, but to know why you are different."

Wisam replied, "I worship the true God, the Creator of Heaven and Earth, the Redeemer."

The man replied, "Don't we all? Aren't we all worshipping the same God?"

Wisam said, "Give me a chance to share my God with you so you can understand why I am different."

Then Wisam, who is a big man and neither shy nor hesitant, shared the plan of redemption—from Creation all the way to God's ultimate plan for mankind.

When he had finished, he told the group of men listening, "This can't be explained in one meeting. There is much more to share, and we must meet again."

The leader readily agreed. Then Wisam added a condition: that at the next meeting there would be no weapons. Surprisingly, they agreed.

Before departing to return home, Wisam asked the men who they were. The leader replied, "We belong to a rebel group whose mission is to 'free the land from occupation.'"

Since that first meeting several months ago, Wisam has been meeting with them every two weeks, sharing Jesus with them. He has also given each man an AWR Godpod, so they can listen to the Bible in their own language.

When Wisam told me this story, he said, “Please keep me and them in your prayers, because this mission can be very challenging and dangerous to both sides, and please remember them in prayer, so that they will soon make a decision and give their lives to Jesus.”

STREAMS IN THE WASTELAND

What an amazing story! This is God’s news! It is His Spirit moving hearts and opening doors that we could never open on our own. In His time, God is creating streams in the desert, in places where the Living Water has yet to reach—because the world needs to know that Jesus is coming soon!

Adventist World Radio has more than 1,000 radio stations and studios beaming God’s Word around the world, with multiple projects taking place right now—including the evangelism center in Nazareth with Wisam Ali. But without God’s Spirit, we would be spinning our wheels. We trust in God’s promise that if we faithfully do our part, His Spirit will go before us touching hearts and changing lives.

One day soon, like the 10 virgins in the parable of the wedding feast, we will all be called upon to draw from the oil of our past experience and walk by faith alone. God’s Spirit will be poured out, and the world will be lighted with the knowledge of His truth. Every person will be called to take a stand—even in the now unreached places of the world. But if experience has taught us anything, it’s that God is the God of the impossible—whether it’s lost tickets, closed countries, or hardened men, He can always make a way.

Thank you for supporting the work of Adventist World Radio, for your prayers that encourage and bless, and for standing with us as together we proclaim that Jesus is coming soon!

Yours in the Blessed Hope,



Duane McKey
President



A studio in the new AWR Evangelism Center in Nazareth.

P.S. What an amazing story! God is making a way—creating streams of Living Water in the desert places of the world that are parched for His Word. This is the “God News” that we love to share! Thank you for making a difference around the world, even in places as unlikely as the Gaza Strip. Working together, we are changing lives for eternity.