

November 2021

Dear AWR Friend,

It was a hot and dusty road—more than 1,200 kilometers—from Johannesburg to Livingstone. There was a war raging between Botswana, Zambia and Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe), but our trip back to Zambia from South Africa had so far been uneventful.

Arriving at the Zambezi River above Victoria Falls—still in Botswana and preparing to cross the border into Zambia—we were surprised to find no one at the border crossing. We walked around looking for someone, and came upon some men from the Botswana military hiding in foxholes along the road.

“Where are the border guards?” I asked them. “We have to cross over to Zambia on the ferry.”

“Get out of here!” they shouted, and one of the soldiers held up a bazooka and pointed it at us. He said, “We’re hiding from the terrorists and you’re giving away our position. If you don’t leave, we’ll shoot you!”

Needless to say, Kathy and I, along with our two children Bracken and Denaë, ran back to our Volkswagen and got out of there!

We drove quickly down to the riverbank and found the ferryman hiding in the shrubbery along the river’s edge. I shouted to him, “Let’s get out of here! We don’t want to be on this side of the river when shots are fired!”

He came out of his hiding place and I carefully drove our van onto the ferry. Then slowly, he floated us across the massive Zambezi River.

We drove off the ferry and up to the immigration and customs office. When I told the border guards what had happened, and that gunfire was imminent, they laughed and said, “You probably just saw some duck hunters on the river. There’s nothing to worry about.”

Then it happened. Shots rang out nearby, and those very guards who a minute before had been laughing at us, suddenly ran into the immigration office and dove over the counter, all the while shouting at us, “Get out of here before you get shot!”

We didn’t wait to be told twice. Jumping into our van, we quickly drove away and didn’t stop until we arrived in Livingstone an hour later. Only then were we able to safely fill out the immigration and customs documents, all the while praising God for His guardian angels.

I love recalling these faith-building experiences in my life. They remind me that “He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings you will find refuge . . . A thousand may fall at your side, ten thousand at your right hand, but it will not come near you.” (Psalm 91:4, 7)



One of the soldiers held up a bazooka like the one in this picture, saying, “If you don’t leave, we’ll shoot you!”

Almost daily at Adventist World Radio, we receive news of God's amazing grace and mercy toward people around the world as He opens doors in unexpected ways for the preaching of the gospel. Let me share just two of these stories.

ENGLAND — “ALEXA” SHARES THE TRUTH

Recently, Michael, the radio manager in our north England radio station, received a surprising message on live chat that he said “carried the characteristic British soft-spoken mannerism”:

I agree with what your church presents and would like to join if I may? I would like details on how to join your church, please? —Rob

When Michael contacted Rob, it just so happened that it was Rob's birthday. He was turning 73 that day and was moved that our response had arrived on his special day. He believed it was no accident—that it was God giving him a birthday gift!

Michael soon learned that Rob, now retired, was once a high-ranking official in the British army. Due to an unfortunate injury, he was now also blind. Michael asked him, “How did you, being blind, find our radio station?”

Rob then told the following story:

One day he asked Alexa, his virtual assistant, to find a radio station for him. Alexa immediately tuned to a station that was broadcasting a sermon. After listening for a while, Rob asked Alexa what station was playing. She replied that it was Adventist Hope Radio—our AWR radio station in northern England!

Rob enjoyed it so much that he continued listening and made it his go-to station. For two years, he listened to a variety of sermons and presentations, until one day he felt he couldn't wait any longer—he had to belong to the group of people who put out these programs! That's when he sat down and composed the message Michael received.

Soon after, Michael had the opportunity to visit Rob—who lives in Skegness, the northernmost point in England. It's about three hours away from our station in Birmingham, close to the Scottish border.

“I came away blessed from the visit,” said Michael. “Here is a man who has seen and experienced much in his life. I sensed no regret, but instead, an overwhelming sense of one who has experienced God's touch of grace and forgiveness—one extremely appreciative of God's very presence in his life.”

Rob has recently started a small Bible study group in his home, and soon plans to be baptized in the local Seventh-day Adventist Church.

What an amazing story! God sees the hearts of sincere souls wherever they may be—even in a remote corner of England. And if Jesus said the stones could speak the truth, He can certainly use Alexa—and Adventist World Radio—to accomplish His bidding!

COLOMBIA — GOD CALLS AN EIGHT-YEAR-OLD BOY

Francisco was born to the Wiwa tribe, one of many indigenous groups in the mountains of Colombia. When he was eight years old, a group of Adventists came to his village to hold evangelistic meetings, teaching people health and Bible principles.



The villagers listened politely, but they weren't interested. The mountain tribes had not forgotten the years of oppression and mistreatment by the popular church in Colombia, and they were afraid of the Bible—which the church claimed as their book.

But little Francisco loved the Bible stories—especially the ones about Jesus—so after the Adventist group left, he devised a plan. Every Sabbath, he would sneak out of his hut before sunrise, and walk the two-hour hike down the mountain to the little Adventist church in the valley. He would spend the day with the members who welcomed him with open arms, and he enjoyed learning more about Jesus.

This went on for a few weeks until the tribe began to notice his absence. When they discovered where he was going, they punished him severely, but nothing could dissuade him, and he continued to slip away every Sabbath morning before his family and the villagers awakened and could stop him.

This continued for three years, and life became increasingly difficult for Francisco. He often prayed, “Jesus, please take me away from here and find me a place where I can worship without fear.”

Finally, the Sabbath of his baptism arrived, and as usual, Francisco slipped out of his village and made his way down to the church. But this Sabbath, something was different. He noticed a group of visitors from another part of Colombia. They were so surprised to see a young Wiwa boy being baptized that they spent some time talking with him, and in the end invited him to live with them and attend the local Adventist school in their area. This was a dream come true for Francisco. He accepted without hesitation!

The years that followed were wonderful for the boy who had only known the mountain jungle. His new family treated him like a son, and through a set of incredible circumstances, he not only attended the local Adventist school, but the doors opened for him to attend an excellent university in Bogotá where he obtained a chemical engineering degree.

Despite his successes, Francisco never forgot his mountain village and the Wiwa tribe. A desire grew in his heart to return and share with them the Adventist message that had changed his life.

And that's exactly what he did. One day, he traveled back to his mountain and made the trek up to his village. This time, he wasn't a helpless little boy, but a respected young man from the city. He spoke with the elders and told them he had a message for them.



Francisco as a young Pathfinder.



Francisco (far right) with a group of young evangelists wearing their AWR shirts.

Soon, the villagers gathered and sat in a circle as Francisco began sharing Bible truths. For two weeks he instructed them, beginning with Genesis and the origins of sin, and ending with the plan of salvation and our prophetic future.

This time, the people listened. After all, he was one of them. A few weeks later, several Wiwa accepted Jesus and were baptized, including five young people. They were so excited about all they had learned that they wanted to organize meetings in other villages to share this wonderful message.

In no time, these young missionaries were sharing the gospel message in other villages, and the Wiwa people were listening! But there was a

group that was unhappy with this change. After all, the Wiwa had their own gods and way of life. Who was this strange God these young people spoke of? They were destroying their customs!

One night, a few of the women got together and decided to hold what can only be described as a seance. They called on their gods and asked them to make these young missionaries leave their village. Every night they gathered for this ritual, and every night their pleas grew to a fever pitch, until one night they heard their “gods” reply with a message: “You can’t do anything against this teaching. The God of the Adventists is the true God above all gods. He is all-powerful. Do not try to stop these young men. It won’t work.”

The women were shocked and sobered. The next day, they were the first to arrive at the meetings to learn more about God!

There is so much more to share about Francisco and the work he is doing among his people (including his own mother’s conversion), but let me share one important detail: last year, during the pandemic, as Francisco waited out the lockdown in Colombia, he spent months translating the Bible into his local dialect and recorded a set of Bible studies in the local language. These recordings will soon be used not only for our AWR Godpods, but also for our cell phone evangelism studies!



Francisco with his mom, who now lives with him.

ALL THINGS WORK TOGETHER FOR GOOD

Wow! Isn’t God amazing? He saw in young Francisco a receptive heart and willing spirit and led him into a life of service. What may have appeared as a total failure to those first Adventists who held that evangelistic series in Francisco’s village turned out to be no failure at all, because through one eight-year-old boy—their only apparent convert—the message is now being shared throughout the mountain villages of Colombia and will soon be expanded through Godpods and cell phone evangelism!

If we look back on our lives, they may appear to be filled with missteps and difficulties, and we may be tempted to feel we’ve accomplished very little, but only in eternity will we understand the ripple effects of our work for Jesus. Every time we help others and support His work, God takes our efforts, and like the widow’s mite, grows them to accomplish great things for His kingdom.

Thank you for supporting the work of Adventist World Radio. Our hearts are filled with gratitude not only for what God is doing, but for your generous support, as together we proclaim to the world that Jesus is coming soon!

Yours in the Blessed Hope,

Duane McKey
President



P.S. Wow! What better way to celebrate this month of thanksgiving than by recalling what God has done and is doing for us, in us and through us! God’s children may be in the Congo, in England, in Colombia, or in farthest corners of the world, but He is right there with them, always working for their salvation—and I love it when He uses you and me—and Adventist Word Radio—to do it.