

May 2023

Dear AWR Friend,

Let's turn back the clock a few years to 1891. I've shared the story before of how my great-grandparents and my grandmother immigrated to America from the Volga River in southern Russia. Things had gotten difficult for Germans in Russia with the threat of war, and with sons being drafted into the military. As a result, many German families living in Russia moved to America as refugees, passing through Ellis Island and making their way to the Dakotas and Oklahoma, where they could get free land.

My great-grandparents joined the migration, and in 1891, when there was a second land rush in Oklahoma, they made the rush and staked out 160 acres just south of Stillwater.

The years went by, and in the 1940s, my parents bought 80 acres and started a dairy farm, diagonally across the road from where my great-grandparents and grandmother had homesteaded years before. That's where I was born. My father worked in construction and my mother ran the farm. She milked the cows and took care of the chickens, and that's how my parents paid for the farm.

My aunt lived half a mile down a gravel road, and she raised chickens. One day, my mother was cooking and realized she needed eggs, so she asked me to go to my aunt's house and get some. This was an exciting adventure for me as a five-year-old. So, mom saddled old Shorty, a full-size quarter horse, put me on the saddle and off we went down the road.

All went well at first as Shorty trotted to the edge of the property, but then he decided he didn't like what was happening and turned around and ran back to the house. He just stood there and wouldn't move. Three times I attempted to steer him in the right direction, and three times he returned!

Now, mother had been watching, and she knew Shorty didn't like to work and preferred the safety of the barn, so she finally said, "Let me take care of him." Then my petite, 5'0" but very determined German mother jumped on the saddle, took the reins, kicked Shorty on the sides, pulled the bridle a couple times, and down the road they went.

After going past the gate a ways, she turned him around and they came back trotting into the yard. She jumped off the saddle, put me back on, and said, more to the horse than to me, "Now go on down to Aunt Nelly's and get me the eggs."

Without a word—or a snort—Shorty did just that. He trotted to my aunt's house like an obedient horse!

I smile every time I remember this incident, because it has some special life lessons. My mother had true grit and determination. That's what AWR has. By God's grace, we're determined to finish God's work. Through the airwaves we go where air goes, all around the world, sharing the wonderful message of God's grace, His plan of salvation, and the good news of His soon return!

**OVER**  
**50**  
**YEARS**  
**OF MINISTRY**



*My dad with Shorty and another horse on the farm.*

Then there's Shorty. He's like many of us, wanting to go our own way or remain close to the safety of home and to what is familiar to us. But sometimes, God prompts us in the right direction to fulfill His plans.

We have experienced this at AWR many times when God has pushed us to go beyond our limits—and every time we discover that with Him, there are no walls, no borders and yes, no limits!

Let me share some of those experiences that show us God is able to do “exceedingly abundantly above all we can ask or think.”

## MIRACLES IN UKRAINE

We have so many stories from so many different countries that sometimes it's hard to decide what to share each month. But I knew right away that I had to give you an update from Ukraine. Despite the daily distressing reports in the news depicting the horrors of war, God is still there, working to save the lost—and He doesn't forget His children.

One of our AWR vice presidents, Kyle Allen, was in Ukraine a few weeks ago, visiting with our Europe region director, Vasily Makarchuk, and our team on the ground. They're ministering to the community with AWR's truck, transmitting programs through the mobile radio station, and sharing Godpods and supplies.

He shared the following story:



*Kyle, the Ukrainian pastor and Vasily in the school basement.*



*Kyle and Vasily met with a group of church leaders. All the school windows were shattered during the invasion and have recently been replaced.*

You may have heard of the massacre in Bucha, one of the hardest-hit cities that showed the depths of human depravity when Russian troops razed the city as they advanced toward Kyiv. They were eventually repelled, but not before leaving behind destruction and devastation.

What you may not know is that in this city, we have a thriving Adventist college. When word spread that the Russians were approaching, and details of the atrocities committed in the nearby city of Irpin became known, the people started to flee. Many were unable to do so in time, so where did they seek refuge?—in our Adventist

college! They knew we were Christians and felt it was their only hope.

Most of our students had evacuated in time and only a handful remained, including a few faculty members and a pastor. The people hid in several of the school basements, and at first they would gather for meetings in the chapel, but a mortar shell landed right outside the building and all the windows shattered. After that, they didn't take chances and moved everyone to the basements.



*The local pastor presented messages of hope for all the people who sought refuge in the school basement.*



For two weeks, they remained hidden, cooking food in the cafeteria and bringing it down to the shelters. The dear white-haired pastor ministered to the people, preaching sermons and putting up a sheet for his projector. All during this time, they could hear bombs falling and mortar shells landing nearby. But not a single building from our school was destroyed. Everyone was praying, asking God for protection and guidance. Most had family in other places, and their plan was to make an escape as soon as they could.

They all finally decided to leave on a particular date and made preparations. But that night, the pastor had a dream, and in his dream he saw terrible things taking place when they left: people being shot and tortured, and children killed. He woke up in a cold sweat and felt the dream had been from God. So he communicated this to the group and they agreed to wait. Later that day, they received word that a group of civilians had been killed trying to escape that morning.

### GOD SENDS A CAT

The group continued to pray, specifically asking God to show them when they should leave. Now, one thing to note is that when all the people fled to our school, they brought a few things with them—including their pets! They couldn't bear to leave them behind, and kept them warm under blankets or inside cozy bags. The animals seemed to sense the danger and their behavior was exemplary.

But on one occasion, when a bomb fell nearby, it spooked one of the cats, and he bolted out of the basement and disappeared. The children of that family were heartbroken. The pets were a great comfort not only to them, but to everyone, and now their cat was gone.

Somehow, the group made the decision that they would ask God for a sign as to when they should leave, and they decided that when the cat returned, it would be their sign. Lo and behold, a few days later, to everyone's joy, the cat returned, and they took this as the sign. The pastor also felt that God was telling them to leave.

They divided into two groups, with the women and children leaving in vehicles, and the men on foot. The scenes they encountered along the way were of devastation all around: giant blown-out craters on the road, cars and tanks burned to a crisp, corpses strewn on the frozen ground. The vehicles made slow progress as they carefully navigated the road. Suddenly, coming toward them, they saw a Russian tank.

Everyone froze and the children began to scream in terror. But right before the tank reached them, it abruptly turned down a side road. As incredible as it may seem, the leader from the school riding with them had the impression they should follow the tank. It made no sense, but that's what they did, following at a distance. The tank took them through several obstacles, and pretty soon the group realized it was leading them directly to a safe zone! They later learned if they had continued on the road they were on, they would all have been killed.

All of them—including the men on foot—made it out of the war zone and to safety.

Later, when several recounted their long ordeal in hiding, they said it was a terrifying time, but they felt peace whenever the pastor shared the Word of God with them.



*Many of those who took refuge in the school also brought their beloved pets with them.*

## AN ATHEIST IN THE GROUP

One of the people who sought shelter in our school was an avowed atheist. She was disabled and couldn't walk. Her friends carried her to the shelter. For two weeks, she was subjected to the pastor's sermons and the prayers ascending daily to God's throne. At first she was annoyed, but God was working in her heart. She was a witness to answered prayer and was in one of the cars when they were delivered from an impossible situation. But above all, she witnessed the love of the group of Adventist believers as they ministered to each other.

When they all made it to safety, they took this lady to a care home for people with disabilities. That first night alone, for the first time in her life she prayed: "God, I've never believed in you before, but if you hear me, please help me to walk again."

The next morning, she got out of bed—and was able to walk! Her family was called to come for her. They were not in the area, and when they heard this, they couldn't believe it. She hadn't walked in years. But when they learned she now believed in God, they were convinced and said: "We believe her change of heart is a much bigger miracle than the healing of her legs!"

## MOVING FORWARD

Please continue to pray for our work in Ukraine. As you receive this letter, we're in Ukraine, near the Romanian border, with a group of 12 volunteers as part of the *Christ for Europe* series taking place in 39 countries across Europe. This coming September, we will return to Ukraine with a medical clinic and another group of volunteers to again hold a series of meetings.

We've already distributed 2,500 Godpods in Ukraine, and are preparing to ship another 5,000. But this is a story for another letter, because the response has been amazing and it deserves a full telling! Just to give you a preview, soldiers in the trenches are listening to the Godpods in their own language, which includes *Unlocking Bible Prophecies*, Cami Oetman's prophecy series. The soldiers are loving the presentations and the Godpods have become a hot commodity!

Then there's news from China and the Middle East, so keep watching for our next letter where we'll share more exciting news!

Yes, God is at work everywhere, even when we don't see it. And if He can use a horse named Shorty and a cat in Ukraine for His purposes, he can certainly use you and me! There's no one so small or insignificant that He cannot use, and no one is of little importance in the sight of God. He even sees the sparrow fall, and He sees you and me. We all have a vital role to play in the salvation of others, because God has a place for all in His kingdom.

Thank you for being a part of this amazing adventure of faith. It is only through your prayers and support that AWR exists as a ministry. You are making a difference in millions of lives around the world today and for eternity.

Yours in the Blessed Hope,



Duane McKey  
President



*The AWR production team in Ukraine.*