

September 2023

Dear AWR Friend,

Two days ago, I had knee replacement surgery, and as I sit here recovering, I'm reminded of my dad who went through the same thing when he was 78 years old. The vet had gone to my parents' farm to take care of one of the ailing cows, and when he gave it a shot, the cow fainted and fell on my dad, breaking his knee.



Duane's parents owned a dairy farm much like the one pictured here.

That's when my parents finally decided to sell the dairy. Mother had just turned 83 when she sold the cows from their Jersey farm. The milkers were gone and the farm felt empty without the cows around. She'd bought some beef cows and black Angus, but they still didn't take the place of her beloved Jersey cows. Momma had milked cows since she was a little girl in Central Oklahoma, and she loved cows. It was her life.

After that, she turned to planting a large vegetable garden, but she still missed the dairy. A few years went by, and then my father passed away. When my mother turned 90, we decided to have a special party for her. I was with her on the farm, and early the next morning we were walking around the grounds when we passed near the barn where the dairy used to be. The place had always been noisy with the sound of pumps. It was a stanchion-type barn, and it had been hard work milking 70 or 80 cows at any given time.

Mother would have to kneel down and wash the

udders, then wipe them off and put the milkers on. Sometimes the cows would kick them off, and she would have to bend down and put them back up. My dad used to say that everything he had, he owed to udders. It was funny, but true.

Mother wore down her knees, and her hearing was bad from the constant noise, but still, the memories were there—the joy was there—from milking those old cows. They had been her pets.

As we walked by the barn, she turned to me and said, "Son, I just wish I had an old Jersey cow out there to milk again."



Duane's mother at her 90th birthday party.

I thought, *Oh, Mother! Why wish for all that work?* But I understood her, because we never want to give up and quit on the things we love to do.

That's how it is as Christians. As we work and witness for Jesus, we never give up—we continue. We pray for others and keep the hope that we will see Jesus and our loved ones very soon when He comes.

Last month, my wife, Kathy, and I were in Kansas City, MO, for the ASI Convention. We had a chance to visit with Pastor Al Oetman, Cami's father, who was one of the best pastor evangelists in North America. He may be retired now, but he's not finished. He still preaches and gives Bible studies. You see, when we have a passion to see Jesus—all of us,

lay members and church employees alike—will work together to finish the preaching of the gospel. Think about it: If approximately 99% of all Adventists are laypeople, we have to work together. Church leaders can't do it alone. I know we certainly can't at AWR; we also need you!



AWR Vice President Cami Oetman with her father, Pastor Al Oetman.



Duane (R) with Pastor Al Oetman in Kansas City.

OVER
50
YEARS
OF MINISTRY

That's why I like to share the exciting stories of what God is doing—because we're in this together, and they're your stories, too. We believe God is calling people all over the world, from all walks of life, to the light of His truth.

Below is one such moving story we just received, which confirms what Jesus said: "And I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to My voice." (John 10:16)

THE PENTECOSTAL PASTOR

Soman was raised in a Hindu home. His father was the president of the SNDP, a high-ranking Hindu group in Kerala, India. As a young man, Soman was an active "evangelist," seeking to convert people to Hinduism. He was also a singer for the temple services.

But as the years passed and he became a young man, he got heavily addicted to alcohol. It got so bad that his parents didn't want him to stay at home anymore, and Soman fell into a deep depression. There was an emptiness in his life, and he decided the only way out was to commit suicide.

To do this, he determined the best way would be to climb a pole and grab a high-voltage electrical wire. But as he began to climb, and just as he was about to reach out and grab the wire, his older brother, who had followed him up the pole in an attempt to stop him, seized him and pulled him down.



Soman grew up attending Hindu rituals like this in his hometown of Kerala, India.

THE ASTROLOGER'S COUNSEL

The family didn't know what else to do, so they hired an astrologer to find out why Soman was doing this. The astrologer said he needed to spend more time in the Hindu temples, and for a while, Soman tried, but the temples brought him no peace, and he finally concluded that despite the more than 33 million "gods" in Hinduism, there was really no God.

One day, a friend invited Soman to an evangelical meeting. He didn't want to go, but after a few drinks, he decided to attend.

THE CALL TO FOLLOW JESUS

Soman found that he enjoyed the Christian songs, and the pastor's message was intriguing. The subject was the wise man and the foolish man. It caught his attention, and when the pastor closed his message by saying, "I know there is someone here today who is a foolish man and needs to give his life to God," Soman knew the pastor was speaking to him. And when the pastor said that Jesus had not died just for Christians, but for everyone, Soman decided he wanted to give his life to Jesus.

In that moment, he realized the reason he had wanted to commit suicide was because there was no Jesus in his life. When the pastor made the invitation to come forward, Soman stood up and walked to the front. As he did, a huge weight was lifted from his soul. He decided that instead of singing to the Hindu gods, he would sing the story of Jesus.

True to his decision, Soman began sharing Jesus with others, including the customers at his family's liquor shop. He advised them not to drink, and some were impressed and followed his advice. But his father was not happy. He threatened Soman, and insisted that he live secretly as a Christian and not share his new beliefs with anyone. But Soman couldn't do that. He responded that he had to share what he had learned. So taking the Bible they had given him at the meetings, he left the house.

An evangelical pastor, learning of his plight, made arrangements for Soman to attend a Bible seminary. Soman stayed there for five years, and during that time, he read the Bible from cover to cover more than 20 times!

SOMAN DISCOVERS THE SABBATH TRUTH

Soon, Soman became a respected pastor in one of the largest Pentecostal denominations in India, with headquarters right there in Kerala where he lived. He married and had a family, enjoying the love and respect of his church and community.

Years passed. Then last year, in the spring of 2022, a lady who worked with him in church administration decided to travel abroad, and while away, she learned about the Sabbath truth. She was so impressed that she shared it with Pastor Soman, who immediately rejected it, telling her the Sabbath was for the Jews. But the woman kept calling him, telling him the seventh-day Sabbath was correct. When she finally returned to India, she shared with Pastor Soman a paper tract on the Sabbath.

Pastor Soman studied the topic from every possible angle for five months. He wanted this new truth to be wrong, but at the conclusion, he realized the seventh-day Sabbath was biblically correct.

SHARING HIS FAITH

He shared his findings with his wife first. She became enraged against this new truth. His daughters had the same reaction when they found out, and refused to believe, though they could not prove him wrong. They felt their whole life and standing in the community was being threatened.

But Pastor Soman was not discouraged. He began sharing what he'd discovered with his church every week. The people didn't want to accept the Sabbath and leave their Sunday worship, so Pastor Soman told them: "For three months I'll share with you everything I've learned about the Sabbath, and then you decide. But if no one accepts the truth, I will stand alone."

He then contacted the Seventh-day Adventist Church headquarters in his area, and expressed his desire to be rebaptized now that he had learned and understood the Sabbath truth.

PASTOR SOMAN IS REBAPTIZED

At the beginning of this year, on January 25, 2023, Pastor Soman was baptized into the Seventh-day Adventist Church. There were 300 people from the community who attended the service, and for 30 minutes, he shared his testimony with everyone.

Pastor Soman's decision has shaken the entire Pentecostal community. At a major meeting of their General Conference in Kerala, where thousands came together, a main topic of conversation was why Pastor Soman had become a Seventh-day Adventist. Pastor Soman's testimony regarding the Sabbath truth was recorded on YouTube, and it generated 30,000 views in a short time, going viral in the Pentecostal community.

When the vice president of his former church organization called him to ask why he was doing this, he replied, "I have come to know the Sabbath truth and no one has ever shared this with me before, not even you. Now I have understood this is the truth and I will follow it."

PLANTING A CHURCH

Pastor Soman now desires to start a church right in the place where he lives. Kerala is where Thomas the disciple traveled and ministered as a missionary, and where he lost his life, impaled by a spear as he knelt in prayer. There is no Adventist church in the area, and Pastor Soman wants to plant a church near the people he loves. He has lost all family support and all support from his denomination, but the local Adventist field is providing him with a monthly stipend.



Pastor Soman recently attended a leadership training event hosted by the Southern Asia Division.

We at Adventist World Radio have a plan to support Pastor Soman's ministry by providing technical support that will allow him to preach about his newfound faith to a wider audience through radio and YouTube.

Please keep Pastor Soman in your prayers, and pray for his family, that they may also be won to the truth!

Stories like his are being repeated with ever-increasing frequency. And we know that as we near the time of the end, "the question of Sabbath and Sunday observance will be agitated everywhere." (EGW, *Review & Herald*, April 15, 1890) God is calling people to take a stand for truth, and His Spirit is at work in places never entered or reached before.

REACHING THE "UNREACHABLE"

Just this week, we received a report from a closed country we've been asked not to identify, where the Godpods are being distributed through an underground church network. The amazing thing is that the Godpods are in high demand there, and people desperately want to get their hands on these audio Bibles.

This is something that would never have happened just a year ago. But barriers of prejudice and mistrust are being torn down as God's Spirit moves to use all who are willing to share His message.

One man from an extremist group in this particular country confessed that he had no peace, and that his greatest regret was killing his wife and children to prove his loyalty to his warlord. He broke down and said that the one thing he longs for above all is peace in his heart. The gospel of forgiveness—a concept foreign in his society—blew him away. For the first time in his life, he felt just a glimmer of hope and gladly accepted a Godpod.

Yes, God's grace is sufficient for all. That's the incredible message of the gospel, and it's what God wants us to share with the world! And the more we share, the more amazing the stories of what God is doing. We just received another report that left us speechless—and it's not from a closed country, but from right here in America. It almost defies belief, but I'm out of space in this letter and you'll have to wait until next month!

Thank you for your continued support of Adventist World Radio. I know I say it every month, but we couldn't do what we do without your prayers and commitment—without your dedication to seeing the gospel reach every nation, kindred, tongue and people. God's Spirit is being poured out, and this is only the beginning of the amazing things that will soon take place. What a blessing and a privilege to have a part in the greatest calling ever, the saving of souls.

Yours in the Blessed Hope,



Duane McKey
President



A young boy and his mother hold their prized possession: An AWR Godpod.

P.S. Yes, amazing things are taking place around the world as God is calling people from all walks of life into the light of His wonderful truth. Thank you for making it possible for people like Soman—and even for seemingly hopeless cases like the tormented man in a closed country—to have the opportunity to choose Jesus, forgiveness and salvation.