

January 2024

"The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shone." (Isaiah 9:2)

Dear AWR Friend,

We've just returned from the island of Mindanao, Philippines, after an absolutely thrilling weekend! A total of 1,729 people gave their lives to Jesus and were baptized—many of them connected with the rebel units and assassins on the island.

The stories of lives changed are just thrilling! We learned seven rebel tribal chiefs had walked 15 hours to get to the meetings, give their hearts to Jesus and surrender to the authorities. Another group walked six hours to attend the meetings!

We also learned that a few hours after the baptism, there was a bombing and people were killed by rebels on another part of the island. Then early the next morning, our hotel began to shake, and we learned a 7.4 earthquake had hit the island, followed by a 7.2. Many people jumped out of bed and tried to run outside, but Kathy and I were so tired we slept right through it!

We praise God that in the midst of earthquakes, bombings and killings, God's Spirit was at work and many people gave their hearts to Jesus and were baptized.

Let me share some of the highlights from this amazing event.

THE MINDANAO REBELS

As you will recall, after AWR's evangelistic work in Mindoro, which led to the mass surrender and conversion of the New People's Army (NPA) rebels, we were asked to do the same on the island of Mindanao. There are many rebel factions on the islands, and in Mindanao, the majority are not like the rebels of Mindoro with communist leanings, but even more dangerous rebels with ties to Abu Sayyaf, a jihadist militant group that follows the Wahhabi doctrine of Sunni Islam.

That's why for this project we partnered with our AWR SULADS, a group of local missionary students who agreed to work with us. We gave them solar-powered projectors with solar panels, and trained them for work in the mountains. If you remember Rose, the rebel general from Mindoro, she helped train the SULADS on how to best approach rebel groups and reach them with the gospel message.

All this began a year ago, shortly after the great celebration in Mindoro when a large number of Former Rebels were baptized. The SULADS were dispatched to different areas on the island of Mindanao, and we kept them supplied with materials throughout the year, and provided for their needs. Several months passed, and last July, we heard from Dexter, one of the missionaries. He informed us that his whole community where he had been working and presenting God's Word had decided that if AWR would help them, they would surrender their guns and ammunition to the government and turn themselves over to the authorities. They wanted to follow Jesus and change their lifestyle.

**OVER
50
YEARS
OF MINISTRY**



Duane, Kathy, Robert Dulay and others with the seven chiefs who walked 15 hours to attend the meetings.

Pastor Robert Dulay, AWR's director for the Asia region, immediately contacted the Philippine military and we arranged for their mobilization. That following Monday, Pastor Dulay, along with military generals, the governor and the local mayor, all went up the mountain and picked up the group, along with their weapons, and took them to a place where a mass surrender meeting was held. A total of 85 warriors had surrendered with their families.

Since then, the numbers have increased, and more are added every day among other tribes and villages. "In one location alone," said Pastor Dulay, "we baptized 200 families—about 1,200 people."

The miracles have also continued, with more rebels and villages deciding to surrender their lives to Jesus and abandon the life they were leading. As we did in Mindoro, we provided continued support and help with reintegration into society, including new jobs. And, of course, we provided spiritual support and Bible studies.

The celebration we just now concluded with 1,729 baptisms was one of the highlights of this massive Mindanao project. But the work is not finished yet. Let me explain.

THE UNREACHED AREAS

"There are parts of Mindanao and surrounding islands where outsiders and white people are not allowed to enter," said Pastor Dulay. "Only Seventh-day Adventists are allowed. They trust us, because we have held several medical missionary events in these areas with a local AWR team, and have provided medical assistance to the ground commanders of the rebels. And also, we're welcomed because we don't consume pork products. As a result, they're open to listen to the Adventist message, and already 900 rebels have surrendered in these remote areas. We have support programs for all of them."

The interesting thing is that these remote villages and rebels will not accept Bibles, but they will gladly accept Godpods, which hold the recorded Bible and Bible studies! This year we plan to translate the Bible into their local dialect. Hearing God's Word in their own language will make them even more receptive to the message.

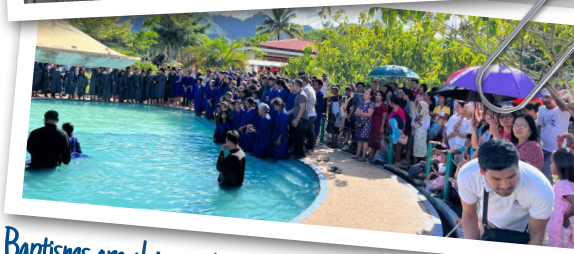
Just like in Mindoro, we are seeing unexpected ripple effects from this project. Two military generals from the Philippine army have decided to give their lives to Jesus. Seeing God's Spirit at work and lives changed greatly impacted General Cabangbang and General Villarreal. They decided to be baptized next year during General Conference session in St. Louis. We praise God for every triumph of His Word as it touches people's lives.

MARY AND THE REBEL SOLDIERS

One story that stood out is that of Mary, who lives in Manila. At a young age, she joined the Gabriela movement, which is a progressive women's Filipino political party with representation in the Philippine Congress. She loved doing community work and defending the oppressed and downtrodden. This party has leftist leanings and is sometimes a front for rebel soldiers.



Large groups enthusiastically responded to each altar call.



Baptisms are always a time of rejoicing. Especially when those making decisions are choosing redemption over guns and violence.

Just eight months ago, she was recruited, along with a friend of hers, to join a rebel group in Mindoro. There were active recruiters trying to recover the rebel members lost when the vast majority surrendered to the government thanks to the work of Adventist World Radio. They took her to the mountains and she lived there, trying to recruit supporters. But she was soon disenchanted with the group. She kept hearing about AWR and the work we were doing: helping the poor, establishing sources of income in the community and providing medical help.

That's when Mary realized she had been brainwashed into fighting and bearing arms, when really, her goal had always been to do exactly what AWR was doing! She kept hearing reports about AWR and about Adventists. Mary talked it over with her friend. She later said, "We realized we couldn't beat AWR in winning the hearts of the people in the community."

In the end, three young people, all university students and scholars, along with Mary, said, "Let's find a way to escape and look for Adventist World Radio and the Adventist Church."

One day, Mary and her friend were sent to get provisions, and on the way, they saw some military soldiers on the road. The two women approached them and said, "We're NPA. We want to surrender, and we're looking for Adventist World Radio."

Meanwhile, none of us at AWR knew any of this until last month, when on December 4, Pastor Robert Dulay and I had dinner with General Cabangbang and other military leaders while visiting the Philippines. That's when they informed us about Mary, "a very promising lady who is looking for AWR." The general said Mary wanted to join the Adventist movement, and especially Adventist World Radio!



Mary (center) with Duane, Kathy, Cami and Robert.

We interviewed Mary and invited her to dinner the following day, when she told us her amazing story.

By the time you receive this letter, Mary, along with her two university friends and a group of other newly-surrendered rebels, will have been baptized. A celebration baptism will have been held on December 30.

Now Mary plans to study and finish college and become a lawyer to defend the poor and the oppressed. "I will be AWR's lawyer in the Philippines!" she said. AWR has established a scholarship fund for our

Former Rebels and their children to help provide them with a good future.

THE FINANCIAL OFFICER OF THE NPA

Let me slip in one more bit of good news from this amazing project. The financial officer for the NPA rebel group was the one in charge of collecting "revolutionary taxes." He was also the person who originally threatened our Former Rebels after their mass surrender, saying he would burn our churches and kill Pastor Dulay if they surrendered.

With all the rebels deserting the ranks, this man was upset that he no longer had a place of refuge in the mountains. But God was working on his heart. He witnessed a lot of corruption and extortion within his ranks, and when we held an evangelistic meeting with the military in his village, he attended the meetings and felt God calling him. He surrendered his life to Jesus and searched out our AWR team and asked Pastor Dulay to baptize him!

THE SAMBURU MORAN WARRIORS

I have to add one last report we just received from another part of the world. Some time ago, we provided 500 Godpods to Mara Vision, a sister ministry, for the Samburu Moran warriors from Kenya, and we just received an amazing report. Let me share the highlights in their own words:

Thrilled with Adventist World Radio's investment in Mara Vision. We received 500 solar-powered Godpods with the audio Word of God that we gifted to the Samburu Moran warriors who attended the literacy classes. Oh, how happy they were to receive them!

After the Friday festivities, the warriors took their Godpods with them as they returned to the African bush. Their hearts exploded as they listened to the powerful Word of God about the love that Jesus has for them.

As they arrived Sabbath morning at church, the warriors shared that they had listened to the Holy Bible all night. Proudly still wearing the Godpods around their necks, these Morans declared, "Now we know you are telling us the truth!" These warriors are being tamed by the love of God through the power of the Holy Word.



Samburu Moran warriors are carrying Godpods around their necks and listening to God's Word.

CONCLUSION

What a thrilling report! We are seeing things we've never seen before. God's Spirit was promised in a special way to those living and working for Jesus in the time of the end:

"In the future the earth is to be lightened with the glory of God. A holy influence is to go forth to the world from those who are sanctified through the truth. The earth is to be encircled with an atmosphere of grace. The Holy Spirit is to work on human hearts, taking the things of God and showing them to men." (*Testimonies*, Vol. 9, p. 40)

We are seeing that grace now! Before the great tribulation, God's amazing grace will be felt around the world like never before, calling all who will stand under His banner, preparing them to meet Jesus. What a time to be alive! There is no greater blessing than accepting that grace and leading others to the foot of the Cross.

Thank you for supporting the work of Adventist World Radio, for joining us as together we proclaim to the world that Jesus is coming soon!

Yours in the Blessed Hope,



Duane McKey
President



P.S. What incredible reports! We can only stand in awe as we witness God's amazing grace. His Spirit is being poured out all around the world, reaching the most remote, unreachable places. Like AWR's radio waves, God's Spirit know no borders, no walls and no limits! Thank you for being a part of these miracles. It is only working together that we can make a difference for the kingdom of heaven.