

Evangelist Survives Plane Crash

Injured and alone for 11 days, Venezuelan Carlos Arteaga says God miraculously protected him in an Amazon forest

A Venezuelan evangelist's story of his remarkable survival of a deadly plane crash in a South American jungle three years ago has turned thousands of people in Latin America and the United States to Jesus and led others to receive divine healing.

Carlos Arteaga said that during his ordeal in the Amazon rainforest in 1999, God dispatched angels to protect him from wild animals and evil spirits, and supernaturally provided him with food, which enabled him to survive 11 days until he was rescued.

"I believe God performed this miracle not just to save my life, but He did it to change the life of many and encourage people," Arteaga, 37, told Charisma.

Since being rescued and recovering from what doctors say should have been fatal injuries, including one that caused him later to lose his right leg, Arteaga has shared his story with millions. He said thousands have accepted Christ, rededicated their lives to God and experienced divine healing after hearing his story.

On Oct. 12, 1999, Arteaga was aboard a flight from his native city of Ayacucho, Venezuela, to the town of Manapiare. The aircraft experienced engine trouble and crashed five minutes before the end of the 45-minute flight.

The plane plunged into the dense Amazon jungle, killing on impact five of the eight people on board. Arteaga said he and the two other survivors—an 11-year-old Pentecostal girl and an 18-year-old Baptist man—were Christians. Amazingly, the two younger survivors escaped major injury, but Arteaga was not as fortunate.

The top of his head was cracked open from the impact, and he was badly cut on his arms and hands. A severe injury to his lower right leg forced him to crawl in order to move about on the forest floor.

After three days, Arteaga said the group agreed that the two able survivors would seek help and leave Arteaga with a loaf of bread and a tree branch to fend off animals. Arteaga, who is married with five children, didn't know if he would survive, but he kept reminding himself of God's promises of protection from Psalm 91.

Soon after the two left, Arteaga said God placed a rainbow near the site of the crash, which he believes miraculously prevented any stench from the bodies of the dead passengers. The crash site also was near a brook, which allowed him to drink water.

In addition, God provided "a warm cloud of air" at dusk, he said, that allowed him to sleep through the night, despite harassing insects and his own fear of the sound of animals in the jungle. Later he said he saw a vision of God dispatching a sword from the heavens to drive away evil spirits that were tormenting him. God also sent two angels who brought him meals of meat, bread, salad and juice, Arteaga said.

Ten days after the crash, a search party of nine people found him.

“When they arrived, they saw the rainbow, one of the angels and lots of vultures on the treetops,” he recalled. “They thought everyone was dead. I was black from being covered with dried blood and dirt.”

After the group carried him out on a stretcher, vultures swooped down to feed on the dead carcasses. “The group realized that I was supernaturally protected by God,” he said. “I told them that the angel of Jehovah was around me.”

The next day, Arteaga was airlifted to a hospital, where he underwent nine surgeries and spent nine months recovering. He received a prosthetic to replace his amputated right leg, and doctors implanted a protective metal plate and screws to help heal the severe injuries to his head and arms.

“Twelve of the best doctors in Venezuela came to me in the hospital and told me that they had 12 reasons why I shouldn’t be alive,” Arteaga said. “They said it was impossible that five dead bodies surrounded me and I survived. I told them Psalm 91:3, which says, ‘Surely He will save you from the fowler’s snare and from the deadly pestilence.’”

To fulfill a covenant he made with God from the crash, Arteaga gave up his career as a TV- and radio-tower installer to become a full-time evangelist. On Oct. 12, 2000, a year after the crash, he shared his testimony with 14,000 people in a Caracas bullfighting arena, and 3,800 accepted Christ.

“I’m not sure why God chose to spare my life,” said Arteaga,

who has traveled five times to the United States to share his testimony in churches. "The Lord knew my passion for lost souls. He preserved my life to fulfill His purpose for my calling."

Eric Tiansay

A South Korean mother of two believes the street ministry she founded in Toronto has been God's way of preparing her to return to Asia and minister in atheistic North Korea, a country where Christianity is illegal.

Although it has been prophesied that the diminutive, yet fiery Young Wha Kang would one day minister in her native land, she said God has had to "reconstruct" her as a Korean so that she could obey His call and be filled with His love for her people.

Kang was born in South Korea and immigrated to Canada in 1975.

She founded Follower's Mission, a daily ministry to street people in Toronto, in 1992. She says the ministry's work in some of the city's roughest areas reaches some 400 people per year for Christ.

Yet God surprised her four years ago, she said, when He instilled a longing in her to return to South Korea and do the same in her homeland.

"I felt a real burden for Korea, but I ignored it because I thought it was just a popular place to pray for and wasn't sure if it was really God calling," she told Charisma.

Kang became firmly convinced that God was calling her to the Korean people, however, when a group of students from the Asian country visited Toronto in 1999 and stayed in her home.

“They came to experience Holy Spirit revival, and when they were all slain in the Spirit, a boy who needed some deliverance told me he needed me to minister to him,” she said. “It was at that moment that God showed me I needed His love for my people.

“It was the first time He spoke to me in Korean. Before that it was always in English. He said, ‘Let’s go,’ in Korean, and all I could do was weep.”

She began to intercede for the entire Korean Peninsula every day at 5:30 a.m., as did other intercessors at the Follower’s Mission. God gave one of the intercessors a vision of the border between North Korea and South Korea collapsing and many young people entering North Korea by skateboard.

Since 1999, Kang has visited North Korea twice, once as a tourist and once as a sponsored guest. She has been in China three times and was, according to some, the first person to bring the complete Bible into Mongolia. She obtained some of the first copies translated into the Mongolian language and took 16 of them across the border.

Kang became a Christian in 1980 but said she wasn’t close to the Lord until her marriage broke up in the mid-1980s.

“I then began to seek God on a deeper level and went on my first short-term missions trip in 1990,” she said. “I knew then that God was calling me to the nations, and I said, ‘How

can I do this, Lord?' He said, 'Open your front door, and there are the nations.'"

She started Follower's Mission after participating in a summer street-outreach with her children through Youth With A Mission. "That outreach was the first time I ever saw the destitute people of Toronto. I didn't even know such people were out on the streets," she said.

That fall, Kang ministered for the first time in one of the roughest parts of Toronto—Queen and Sherbourne streets.

"I came down with my mother—all we had was a huge thermos of coffee and a dozen doughnuts, but we prayed as we sat on the bench, and a lot of people came by," she said.

Soon, they were ministering on the street weekly, handing out hot dogs and words of encouragement from the side of a van. In 1994, Kang started renting a building, and the ministry became a full-fledged mission.

She credits the ministry experience she's gained through Follower's Mission with preparing her to take revival to North Korea. "[God] keeps showing me that ministering to people in a country which forbids Christianity is no different than ministering to the street people in Toronto," Kang said. "The people who come through [our] doors represent nations from all over the globe. I believe it's a training ground for me as God launches me out to minister in my native Korea and to other nations."

—Josie Newman in Toronto

South Korean Woman's Toronto

Ministry Prepares Her for North Korea