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The “peace talks” and negotiations between the Cubans, Angolans and South Africans had led to the unusual situation of having Joint Military Monitoring Commission (JMMC) posts along the South West African/Angolan border by January/February 1989.

This seemed like a God-given opportunity for Frontline Fellowship to preach the Word of God to the soldiers on both sides of the border. Accordingly, our field team travelled by helicopter, vehicle and foot to reach various JMMC posts along the Southern Angolan border. Taking full advantage of the cease-fire, we even walked into Angola and preached the Gospel to the Angolan troops.

As the SADF troops stationed at the JMMC posts were from 32 Battalion (a volunteer unit formed from Black ex-Angolan refugees who had fled Marxist rule in their home country for freedom in SWA), we could communicate through Portuguese interpreters to both sides at the same time.

By God’s grace, one of our team members was Colonel Jan Breytenbach, who recently joined Frontline Fellowship after his retirement from a distinguished career in the SADF. Colonel Breytenbach had not only founded the South African special forces (the Reconnaissance Commandos, or “Recces”) and 44 Parachute Brigade, but 32 Battalion as well. The 32 Bn troops listened to their first commanding officer with great respect and awe as he testified of how he had come to realise his need of God’s love and mercy, how he had turned to Christ in repentance and faith and how each one of us needs to turn away from sin and turn to God.

Then, turning to indicate the interested FAPLA troops who had gathered around within hearing distance, leaning against Soviet vehicles and fingering Soviet weapons, Colonel Breytenbach declared:

“You see these communists over there. They are cowards. I have fought these miserable specimens many times since 1975, and every time they ran away. Not once did they beat us. We won all our battles against them. We never had any trouble killing them — the problem was finding and catching them — because they always ran away.

“Now why do these FAPLA run away?”

It is because they are cowards. They don't know how to fight against real soldiers like 32 Battalion. The communists are only brave when they're burning churches, bayonetting defenceless civilians, and shooting ministers in the back of the head. But when faced with South African soldiers they run away like the pathetic cowards they are. We've killed thousands of these communists in Angola — these Bible-burners, these murderers and persecutors of the Church.

“Now, why are these communists such cowards?”

“It is because they are afraid of dying. They know that when we fight they lose. And because they do not worship God — they are afraid of death — because those who reject Christ will face God's judgment— and they will all be eternally condemned.

“Yes, look at them,” Colonel Breytenbach pointed at the uncomfortable and self-conscious FAPLA troops. “They are all going to hell! They are the army of Satan. Their commissars are the priests of the devil. Their god is Karl Marx. Their religion is atheism. They are all going to hell!”

Then he looked directly at the South African troops and challenged them: “God has placed you here so that you can be His soldiers in the spiritual battle of bringing these communists to repent of their sins and be converted to Christ. You should actually feel sorry for them because they do not have the religious freedom which we enjoy. They are deceived. Pray for them to be converted and use your time up here to serve God.”

I also presented to the 32 Bn and FAPLA troops a testimony of what God had done in my life.

Standing amidst the bullet-scarred wreckage of a destroyed Angolan town, spoke of the persecuted Church. Pointing at the communist troops, I related what their “comrades” had done in desecrating churches, tearing up Bibles, burning villages, and crucifying pastors.

Then I posed the question:

“These communists, they call themselves atheists. They say they do not believe in God. They teach children that God does not exist. Why then do they spend so much time and effort fighting against this God?”

“Why do they forbid evangelism? Why do they destroy churches? Why do they burn Bibles? Could it be that they know in their hearts that God exists? They see it in creation. They see God in the eyes of the pastors they have shot. They have seen the evidence of God in the faith of those believers who they’ve tortured. Surely these Marxists know that there is a God? They are not atheists. They know there is a God. But they hate Him.

“You who are Christians must thank God for the privilege He has blessed you with. God has given you the opportunity to so live and work in the sight of these heathens that they may daily be confronted with the reality of God. Sing Gospel songs. Have regular prayer meetings and Bible studies. Speak often of your faith. Share with them the Gospel literature and Bibles which we have brought for you. You could be the channel that God uses to save some of these Marxists —away from the lies of the devil to the truth of God’s Word.”

At each of the JMMC posts we were well received by the 32 Bn troops and listened with great interest by the Marxist troops.

*“Come, follow me,” Jesus said, “and I will make you fishers of men.” Luke4: 19*

*“He who sows with tears will reap with joy.” Psalm 126:6*

*“Therefore, go and make disciples.” Matthew 28:19*