

When Andre*, a university student, decided to become a Christian, he knew it would not be easy.

"I am the only one in my family who believes in Jesus," he said. "They see me reading the Bible and say I am crazy."

Andre is the son of his father's third wife. He spend his youth in a typical African Islamic school where he was whipped by the Muslim leader and forced to memorize verses from their holy book in Arabic, a language he does not even understand. He is the grandson of the area's most influential Jula chief, so he is expected to guard Jula traditions—especially Islam.

"They say I disgrace the Jula," he said. "I feel alone because nobody in my family wants to talk to me, but it is up to God to do something."

God brought Andre peace when he heard the testimony of the man who helped him become a Christian. Stephen Haber, a missionary, is Andre's modern-day example of a disciple following Jesus.

On a long truck ride through the rugged Jula territory of West Africa, Stephen told Andre how Jesus is making a difference in his life.

"It gives me courage to see someone like Stephen who can leave his country and come here to serve God," said Andre. "That shows God is great."

"My wish is for other Jula people to believe in Jesus," Andre said. "I would like my parents and my people group to know the truth about Jesus."

What could cause Andre to be afraid? What about Stephen? How did God work in their lives? How did Andre and Stephen show they trust God?

*Name changed.

They came for him in the afternoon. With torches in hand, 250 of Gabriel Mugmal's neighbors threatened him and his family in the town on the side of a mountain in the Ecuadorian Andes. Gabriel felt gasoline run down his face and arms as the mob of people prepared to beat and burn him. The only way to save his family was to say that he did not believe in Jesus.

For months, the then 27-year-old Gabriel had been preaching from house to house about Jesus, in whom he and his family had come to believe. Gabriel told people about the sin of idol worship, in which many of the people of his village participated.

Very upset, a local priest demanded that Gabriel renounce (give up or say it is not true) his words about Jesus. But Gabriel was not afraid and began preaching from the Book of Genesis. The people became silent.

The priest was surprised that Gabriel was willing to die for Jesus. The priest raised Gabriel's Bible before the crowd and declared freedom to preach.

"The Word of God shall be preached throughout the entire world," the priest shouted. "Keep preaching the gospel so that everyone can know Christ."

Today, more than 250 villagers meet for church each Sunday less than 600 feet from where Gabriel was about to be burned in 1982. The people of Naranjito now tell about Jesus among the 300,000 Quichua people of northern Ecuador. Gabriel and those he has helped become Christians have begun approximately 30 Bible studies and churches.

What could cause Gabriel to be afraid? How did God work in his life? How did Gabriel show he trusted God?