

THE SIPADAN PEACE MISSION

An Excerpt from the book, *Miracles in Moroland: A Journey of Faith, Love and Courage (The Inside Story of the Sipadan Hostage Crisis)* authored by Sam Smith, published on January 30, 2015

Evangelist Wilde E. Almeda and the JMCIM became involved with the actors of the second major Abu Sayyaf attack on innocents involving Commander Robot's Sulu faction and the Sipadan hostages. During this crisis, the beloved Pastor Wilde Almeda and the Jesus Miracle Crusade became "house-hold names" when he and his twelve Prayer Warriors went into the dangerous interior of the mountainous region of Jolo Island on a *mission of peace* to minister to the Moro terrorists and their 21 captives. The list of hostages continued to grow to as many as 38 prisoners as the Abu Sayyaf, motivated by greed and fame, snatched up more and more people who dared to enter the territory controlled by the dreadful Moro insurgents.

There have been many misconceptions about Evangelist Wilde Almeda's Sipadan Peace Mission. The beloved Evangelist was mocked and ridiculed by the media. Some journalists even called him a "firebrand" during the time he spent with the Abu Sayyaf. His life and safety were automatically written off by many Filipino politicians and some elected officials even remarked that if he was "beheaded" then he got what he deserved because he should have calculated the risks.

The beloved Evangelist and his Prayer Warriors were even abandoned by many ministers belonging to other Christian congregations. These preachers questioned the Evangelist's wisdom and judgment from their pulpits during their Sunday sermons. While Pastor Almeda and his laymen were in the "belly of the beast" these reverends hid like snipers in the safety of their churches and took random shots at a "man of great faith." Some preachers sarcastically referred to the beloved Evangelist as the "man of miracles" who was too impotent to save himself or his prayer warriors...so how could he deliver the hostages, they theorized.

The JMC Has Been Criticized for Evangelizing the ASG

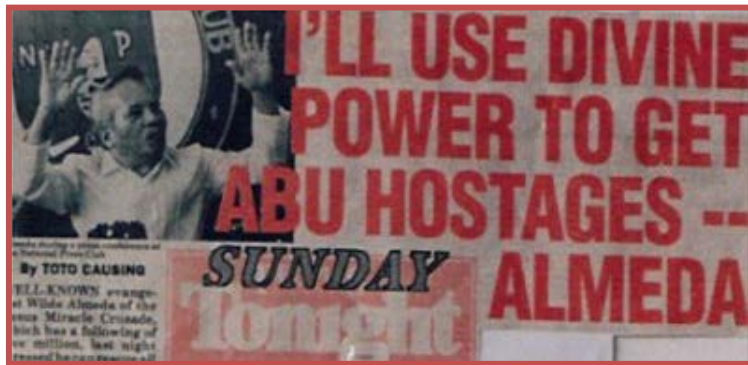
Craig Winn, author of *Prophet of Doom*, a well-documented book on the life of Muhammad, also criticized the JMC Sipadan Peace Mission. Winn wrote:

In the Philippines, 13 Christian pastors were kidnapped by the Sword of Islam, the Abu Sayyaf Group. These members of the Jesus Miracle Crusade International Ministry were abducted while attempting to visit with the ASG and negotiate the release of other hostages the Islamic terrorist group was holding. The Bibles and prayer leaflets they brought with them were burned. While it is clear that these Christians meant well, it's past time folks prepare before they engage. Ignorant of Islam, these men just made a bad situation worse.¹

The bottom line is that the beloved Evangelist and the JMC Prayer Warriors freely chose to undertake a missionary journey into the ancient, Islamic heartland to minister to

the Sipadan hostages and witness to a band of wild Moro savages. During the three months that the beloved Evangelist and the Prayer Warriors lived among the Moros in the Talipao jungle camp they were at the mercy of the *most evil of men*; men who hated Christians; men who only weeks before brutally decapitated a Claretian priest and tortured and murdered five Catholic teachers on Basilan Island as they dementedly chanted “*Allahu akbar, Allahu akbar.*”

The JMC Crusaders risked their lives taking the Gospel of Christ into Moroland, the territory that Commander Robot named the “Kingdom of Allah.” They physically suffered by denying themselves nourishment as they prayed and fasted for the release of the hostages. They were tormented and persecuted for preaching to the wild mountain men of Jolo Island.



The survival of all thirteen missionaries is an incredible account of God’s planning, design, and providence. The Prayer Warriors’ testimonies and personal experiences are stories of salvation and redemption on the level of *Through the Gates of Splendor*.*

The Abu Sayyaf had a history of raping, killing, beheading, kidnapping, starving, executing and bombing Christians long before the Sipadan Hostage Crisis had begun and long after it had ended. The Philippine government had written the Abu Sayyaf off as a mere criminal organization made up of small, independent bandit gangs that collected funds through piracy, kidnap-for-ransoms and other criminal activities. On the other hand, the Abu Sayyaf Group members and sympathizers insisted that they were secessionist holy warriors whose main purpose was to wage *jihad* against the *kafirs* of the infidel Manila government and establish an independent Islamic state in Moroland.

One of the miracles recorded in this book was when the beloved Evangelist confidently announced to the Philippine press and to the world that he was taking a “Mission of Peace” to the Abu Sayyaf. He promised that he would stay with the hostages inside the Abu Sayyaf lair until all of the captives were safely released. His prophecy came true.

JMC minister, Brother Hermie Limpin said that the JMC Peace Mission accomplished two miraculous objectives:

1. They were able to negotiate the release of the Sipadan Hostages.
2. The ministers were able to escape the Abu Sayyaf and the Philippine Army’s relentless air bombardments and ferocious

* *Through the Gates of Splendor* was a bestselling book published in 1957. It told the story about the martyrdom of five American missionaries who were murdered by natives by the Huaorani tribe of eastern Ecuador. Afterwards, their widows and children went back and lived among the Huaoranis and won them to Christ.

ground assaults. After two weeks on the run, they emerged from the swamplands on Jolo Island, alive and unharmed.

“To God be the glory!” he enthusiastically added.²

The greatest miracle of this book is the chronicle of a man of faith, accompanied by twelve courageous JMC missionaries, who went into the bailiwick of the Abu Sayyaf and faced down the Demons of Sulu.

The bloodthirsty Abu Sayyaf gunmen could not harm them. The JMC ministers survived at least three assassination attempts and the ruthless Commander Robot protected the beloved Evangelist and would not let the other ASG commanders execute him.

In the end, the Word of God had softened the hearts of Commander Robot and several of his men. The beloved Evangelist and his Prayer Warriors were successful in taking the Christian “Gospel of Peace” to the Moro cronies who claimed to be followers of the “Religion of Peace.”

For the purposes of this book, the author has documented through official sources the violence of the Moro Muslims against the Filipino Christians before and after the JMC Peace Mission. He has also validated the Philippine Army’s aggressive offensive on the Abu Sayyaf seeking to destroy the annoying Abu Sayyaf Group. Military officials stated that the rescue of the JMC ministers and remaining hostages became a “secondary concern” compared to the extermination of the Abu Sayyaf vermin. The Philippine government declared an all-out-war on the Abu Sayyaf Group and sent in thousands of invading troops, bombed the small island with tons of explosives, and killed and captured hundreds of the guerrillas while displacing tens-of-thousands of Moro families.

The author has been able to verify many of the JMC brethren’s experiences through media sources. However, he cannot authenticate all of their testimonies, but has attempted to make an effort to tell their stories in their own words.

Whether or not the readers will accept it...will be a matter of faith.

¹ Winn, Craig, *Prophet of Doom: Islam’s Terrorist Dogma in Muhammad’s Own Words-Islamic Terrorist Timeline-2000 July-August*-http://www.prophetofdoom.net/Islamic_Terrorism_Timeline_2000_July-December.Islam, retrieved 11-01-2008

² Hermie Limpin, interview with author, Holiday Inn, Manila, Philippines, October 27, 2008