



WITH A NEW LOOK

## WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING

BY ROBERT MUÑOZ

G.O.D. Int'l receives numerous emails of encouragement and praise for what Jesus Christ is doing through the people of this ministry. The people of G.O.D. Int'l are constantly ministering to people all over the world through the community service of SLAM (Students Living A Mission), the music of UnNamed Servant, through the teaching at the Institute for G.O.D. Int'l and the Global Epicenters in Kenya, Mexico, India and Nashville, TN. The following quotes are taken from thankful people from the U.S. to Africa:

- You made me realize how important it is to have a relationship with God. Thanks again for all you've done and God bless. - Jenni, Colorado
- The bible teachings are good and they have changed our life already. Japhet & Rispa, Kenya (*below*)



- Thank you for your radical passion for Jesus. It has helped change lives in my youth. I pray they are never the same. -Barry, Minnesota
- Your recent mission here [Ensenada] was such a blessing for our family. - Pastor Serrano, Ensenada, Mexico (*below*)



- As G.O.D. you have done a lot to us Kenyans. Your equipping our people in the word of God and with many other materials, be it money, clothes etc. Thank you for the training center, though not finished, we are making great use of it. - Pastor Elias, Kenya
- Thank you for such an awesome experience for our youth. It was my pleasure to serve on an adult ministry team. I hope to get to go again in the future. May God bless this ministry! - K. Helms, TN
- Your songs just touched me to the point that I wanted to have a fresh start in life. I have been doing well since I have left the training school [juvenile hall]. Thanks for the inspiration and for giving me the hope of a brand new day in life in Christ's love. - Aaron, Iowa
- I was blessed by your humility and

your willingness to listen to the voice of God. God truly used you, his unnamed servant, to bring the gospel message of Jesus Christ to Richard this weekend. Thank you once again and may God bless you! - Diane, MN

- I just wanted to say thank you for everything. That was my first mission trip and it was the most awesome experience. - Kay, North Carolina

• Your music and thoughts touched me to the point that I actually cried. - Sonja, CO

• God really worked through ya'll. Thanks for your encouragement to be on fire for the Lord! - Jessica, TN

• God used Gregg and the people who work with the SLAM ministry to touch my life in such a positive and encouraging way. - Tanessa, TN

• I thank God for this training I have received in the bible. Through your teaching I have been changed. - John, Kenya

• Thank you for pouring so much of God's love out on our group. God used you to do some life changing events in the lives of several of the youth. - Dave, IA

• Thank you for all your encouragement, I was getting weak in all the weights of this world. - Hali, TN

• You were so cool and led worship with hearts full of love for God... you gave me a passion for showing God my love for Him. - Julie, TN

• I just wanted to say thanks. We really loved you guys last time we can't wait to hear you guys again. - Katie, IA

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• God is good to have brought you to us so that you can be able to teach us and equip us in the word of God. I have no words to explain my joy that you may teach us the things that we have never heard to enrich our lives, if it were possible I would follow you wherever you go to continue the teaching. - Pricilla Njeri, Kenya

Thank you to all who have given us such kind words. Let us shine for Jesus Christ together as one body, so this world may know what a wonderful God we serve!

## A REVIEW

BY ROBERT MUÑOZ

### **Briarcrest College Mexico Trip - March 5th-10th.**

Seven students from Briarcrest College in Saskatchewan, Canada, journeyed to Mexico. This was the 2nd year that Briarcrest has sent a college group to serve with SLAM. The students, led by Joel Olson and Jason Roufs, served the community of Ochenta Nueve through community service and cross-cultural relationship building. The team did roof repairs, bonded with people through games and conversation, and shared testimonies of Jesus in their lives with their new family in Mexico.

**UnNamed Servant @ Hope To Carry - March 8th-10th.** For the 4th consecutive year, UnNamed Servant has had the privilege of leading worship at the annual "HOPE TO CARRY ON" youth revival in Knoxville, Tennessee. Gregg Garner was the main speaker for each evening in which over the course of 3 days there were over 1,500 students in attendance including 25 different churches and 7 different denominations.

**UnNamed Servant @ Fellowship Church - Knoxville, TN March 11th.** UnNamed Servant rocked the house when over 100 people were in attendance for a dynamic evening of Jesus style rock n' roll and intense prayer. This was the 2nd time US has ministered at Fellowship Church.

**Matt and Tricia Jones Visit - March 11th-13th.** Matthew and Tricia Jones, along with their children Meghan and Dakota, came to Antioch, TN to help setup a new computer system and network for our entire office and school. Skylar Aaseby and Matt spent the weekend working together installing new equipment and repairing donated equipment. Matt and

his family donated \$6,500 worth of computer equipment and time. Praise the Lord!

**DCA Spring Mission - March 14th-16th.** This week Jen Gifford and Michael Davis directed their first SLAM community service project. They directed a team of our staff and interns to organize 70 students from Donelson Christian Academy in a time of service to a community developed to provide housing for the homeless in the Nashville area. This was done in partnership with Campus for Human Development and Urban Housing Solutions. The DCA students organized a library, performed intensive cleaning of the kitchen areas, painted around both properties, landscaped and assisted a resident in moving into another apartment.

**The Summit Morristown Trip - March 28th - April 1st.** 33 students and leaders from The Summit Church in Little Rock, AK, gathered in Morristown for a 3rd straight year to serve the community and Iglesia de Morristown. The group spent their time renovating 2

mobile home trailers which are being used by Iglesia de Morristown. Besides painting, cleaning and remodeling, the group visited local low-income apartments to share the gospel of Jesus Christ with Hispanic children through games and VBS.

### **UnNamed Servant @ Estes Park, CO - April 1st-3rd.**

1,000 people were in attendance as US preached the word of God and led worship for a 3 state wide youth conference called "Up with Youth."

**K-Town Bible Study - April 9th.** The G.O.D. Int'l staff visits our friends in Knoxville, TN, for a once a month bible study on a regular basis. Of the 30-40 people who attend, many have had experience with the ministry and some are brand new. The bible study is currently on a path through the book of Mark.

**Elias send off BBQ - April 23rd.** A community wide invitation was made for Elias Rukenya's fare well BBQ. It was a rainy day for BBQ, but it didn't stop anyone from celebrating Elias' 5 month visit with burgers, games and story time.

**Elias preaches at Lakewood - April 24th.** Pastor Keith (Lakewood Baptist Church) said, "It was a great delight to have Elias share the word of God and provide a 'Taste Of Kenya' as the staff and students from G.O.D. Int'l shared songs in Swahili. It was a great experience for Lakewood Baptist Church. We will all heed the message Pastor Elias shared with us that 'Christ Must Be The Center' of all things!"



# THOUGHTS...

BY GREGG GARNER

It's amazing how much a visual people we are in our American society.

On May 19th, literally millions will line up at movie theaters across the nation to witness an "Epic Event"; STAR WARS EPISODE III. George Lucas' saga about the battle between good and evil will come to an end with the final episode of a three series prequel connecting a new generation of Star Wars with an old. The dazzling special effects will wow people into buying the DVD collector set even after they've already spent \$10 to see the flick at the theater.

After the movies release people will say things like, "Hey, did you see the new Star Wars?" People will respond in a variety of ways; perhaps with anticipation of seeing it or reminiscing their favorite scene. But no one will get upset with anyone for bringing it up. No one will feel guilty for having a scene reenacted for them. In fact it might even be the water cooler topic of conversation for a week or two and whoever has seen it could be the hero of the break time banter.

This type of behavior is in amazing contrast with that of our friends from 3rd world countries. I say this in light of the 2-D reality which makes us think we are experiencing life. When Elias (our Kenyan Director) was here I couldn't even get him to watch "The Passion" without falling asleep. This was the movie that our American Pastors were saying was the "greatest evangelism tool in history" and it just wasn't a reality for him; at least the 2-D aspect of it and not to mention he is part of a holistic/oral/experiential culture (I had the same response trying to show this film in Uganda; no interest).

How much of what we know comes through these pseudo-realistic mediums; literature, film and oration. I describe them as pseudo-realistic because sometimes we can think that when we've seen a movie, read a book, or heard a testimony we actually know what we're talking about, but once experience has triggered a reality in the human heart and mind, transformation is ignited with such a force that the person subjected to the experience is forever ruined to their former reality. (A formal reality which was most likely based upon pre-conceived notions, imagination and ignorance.) It's these kinds of transformed people that I work with day to day. I am this kind of person; ruined in many ways to my former reality.

The enigmatic reality of experience has the power to change a person's paradigm reaching into their day to day living; something that knowledge through books, films and oral communication can not do.

Some people want to discount experience and write it off as inferior in comparison to the doctrines of this that and the other. In their ignorance they fight a battle that God never intended for them to spend their energy on. It seems people are more concerned with arguing over things that

exist in the realm of thought, rather than contend with the reality of humanity and its behaviors in the day to day. For example, do you know what it's like to be hungry? Do you know what it's like to lose your child due to your inability to stop her diarrhea? Do you know what it's like to be without any option to feed, clothe, provide shelter, or educate your family? Unless you've experienced these things, you know nothing about it. Experience counts...

**Romans 8:15b-16** ...when we cry, "Abba Father!" 16 it is the Spirit himself bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God,

The above verse testifies to the experience of the witness of the Spirit confirming we are children of God.

**1 John 1:1** That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon and touched with our hands, concerning the word of life --

This verse shows that the credibility of John's letter was found in the testimony of those who had experienced Jesus.

**2 Corinthians 1:5** 5 for as we share abundantly in Christ's sufferings, so through Christ we share abundantly in comfort too. 6 If we are afflicted, it is for your comfort and salvation; and if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which you experience when you patiently endure the same sufferings that we suffer.

The experience of comfort is affirmation that in the midst of enduring sufferings we are sharing in the experience of the sufferings and comfort of Christ.

**Galatians 3:2-4** 2 Let me ask you only this: Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law, or by hearing with faith? 3 Are you so foolish? Having begun with the Spirit, are you now ending with the flesh? 4 Did you experience so many things in vain?

In this text Paul calls attention to the experience of the Galatians to bring remembrance to the fact that their salvation in knowing God was a product of faith and not works of the law.

Experience is perhaps the most intense of teachers in that you can't evade its lesson without paying the price. With experience lecturing you, all pre-conceived notions are challenged with that which is in front of your face. Experience with God can move a person to believe in the impossible and live the illogical when confronted with the chaos of circumstance.

Experiencing God is more than just reading about him, watching his life in a movie or listening to an orator's explanation of his attributes. To EXPERIENCE God is to KNOW HIM! Jesus is alive and we His children can give a living testimony to the fact that we are growing in our relational knowledge of Him day to day. There is no book, film or oration that can have an impact on a person like an encounter/experience with the only living God; Jesus Christ

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# TAKING THE JOURNEY WITH US

BY TARA GARNER

Celesta, Heather and I have been meeting twice a week for the last couple of months to prepare for our seminars in Africa this upcoming summer on nutrition, primary health care, HIV/AIDS, female genital mutilation, pregnancy and child care. It has been a continually humbling process. It seems each time we come together to share our compiled research a feeling of helplessness sets in and if we're to do anything that would make a difference we realize that God Himself must intervene.

When you read the statistics mentioned in this newsletter the numbers are so overwhelming that it makes it easy to treat these people as just numbers. But when you've gone and seen their faces and held their calloused hard working hands. When you've prayed for their ill bodies and been embraced by their tearful welcome, you would know that behind every number is a face, a face just like yours and mine. Let's no longer keep ourselves from feeling for them for if we, the body of Christ, do not suffer with the poor and underprivileged then who ever will? Here we are Lord, send us...three young women ready to give it all so that your African daughters will know You in their bodies and in their hearts.

In the summer of 2000, I was given a most humbling opportunity to travel to Kenya, East Africa for the second time and facilitate health seminars for impoverished, rural Kenyan women. I remember feeling completely helpless as I stood in front of almost a hundred Kenyan women who ranged from ages 17 to 70. Suddenly my handy red medical notebook full of notes and information I had been preparing for months prior to the trip meant nothing and I realized how desperate I was for God's help.

There I stood a 5 foot 4 white girl, just out of my teens; never been pregnant, never finished nursing school, never experienced life the way they had and I was going to inform them about their bodies and their health. Taking a few deep breaths before starting to talk, I was suddenly ripped out of my own selfish world of feeling helpless and afraid and I heard the Lord whisper to my heart, "Just open your eyes" and so I did.

I saw these women, each one as an individual, every one of them as a child of God, made in His image, placed on this side of the earth by His plan; and He loved each of them so much - and I saw them the way He did. Each of them became immediately dear to me as if they were my own mother, my sister, my cousin, my closest friends; they were family. I thought to myself if my own mother was in need of information and teaching that could very well save her life, or keep her from unnecessary pain and suffering, I would do anything, pay anything and go any where to get her the help she needed. Jesus' piercing words, "Love your neighbor as yourself" rang in my head and soaking in the moment I remembered why the Lord had me there - to give myself and to suffer with. (The definition of the word compassion is "to suffer with.")

After what was just 3 hours of teaching the simplest of things, such as informing women that wiping from front to back after using the restroom prevents urinary tract infections, these women were literally rejoicing at all they had learned. At first, they reacted shy and quiet, unsure of how to respond to my expressive openness to speak on such intimate issues, but as they started getting answers realizing their questions and lives were important and actually mattered to us, their straight faces turned to smiles and their smiles to out loud laughter! By the end we were like family loving on each other with grateful hearts.



These women had great need. Some of their families were suffering from an illness they believed to be Malaria and were treating their symptoms by not eating or drinking for days. Eventually their family members died, from what was only diarrhea. Dying, ceasing to live - because of dehydration, caused by diarrhea. Dying - because they just didn't know!

This might seem unreal or maybe even foolish to some and perhaps even reading about suffering doesn't affect them that much, perhaps because it is not them. Well for me, it is me, my family, my mother, my brother, my sister and I am responsible. NO ONE should ever have to die from diarrhea and I write these words with tears of intense love. Why are we so quick to find our life, when there are people losing theirs for unnecessary reasons because they are simply uninformed? There's no excuse.

Why do we keep ourselves "safe" thinking it's God-given "wisdom", when just one trip to inform people who don't know could save lives, give hope, and give Jesus! It is not their fault.

While we sing, "God bless America" remembering our freedom, our family in Africa cries out to the same God as they bury their newborn baby who never had a chance to live because it died from a complication at birth related to the mother's genitals being mutilated and it was unable to have a proper birth. Are we free? If you've said yes, then let's do something with that freedom that helps someone other than ourselves. If you say no, then I would have to agree with you.

I know that so many of you who read this newsletter share in this burden with us. Thank you for your help. This article is written from my heart and it sometimes feels as if I've seen too much.

No, I know I have seen too much and because of this privilege to have been sent by you all and to have seen what I've seen, I will live compelled and driven by what I've seen. I will fight my flesh every day living in this comfortable nation try not forget our family around the world who is suffering unjustly; and I don't want to just "not forget" them, but I want to live to give myself for them; to be a voice for them!

Please, we beg of you, as God has allowed us a way to go and be sent to offer help this summer, love your neighbor, give of yourself in any way you can. I refuse to be silent and I refuse to be afraid to ask you for help. We need money and we need a lot of it because there is a lot of need. We need resources. We need you!! Would you be willing to go too so you can see too much and be the next person writing a letter on behalf of so many without a voice? If not, then would you help us in going? I promise we won't spend your money in dishonest ways. We won't spend one dime on ourselves because trust me, we know we have enough. We have enough, but they don't. They are OUR responsibility. We will always see it this way, so please pray to God and cry out to your Abba Father, just as they do in their desperation. Ask Him how you can help, what can you give? He just might speak to your heart the same words He did mine that day in front of the Kenyan women, "Just open your eyes".

James 1:27 Religion that is pure and undefiled before God and the Father is this: to visit and care for orphans and widows in their affliction...

Please help us to visit and care for these wonderful people of God...

**LEFT TO RIGHT) Heather holds a young child while Robert cares for her feet; Our Kenyan sisters; Tara takes care of Gene, an AIDS patient; Celesta bandages up a wound**



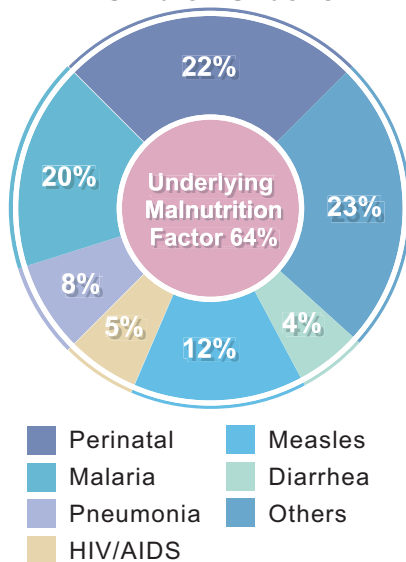
# A RESPONSE TO THEIR CRIES

BY CELESTA BARGATZE

What is your biggest concern for your family? Is it education for your kids, money for a new car, or just some time to spend together? Survival has probably never been something you would worry about, but if you lived in Sub-Saharan Africa it would be something you thought about everyday. When a baby is born in the U.S., parents start college funds and plan for the future, but what if you knew that your child would not live past the age of two? Would you be angry? Would you demand justice? Would you cry out for help?

With 11 million children under the age of five dying each year in third world countries, the problem seems insurmountable. Please don't stop reading. Don't put this newsletter aside with a sigh of regret for the loss. Please don't shut this problem out, but let it stir you to action.

## Leading Causes of Death in Children Under 5

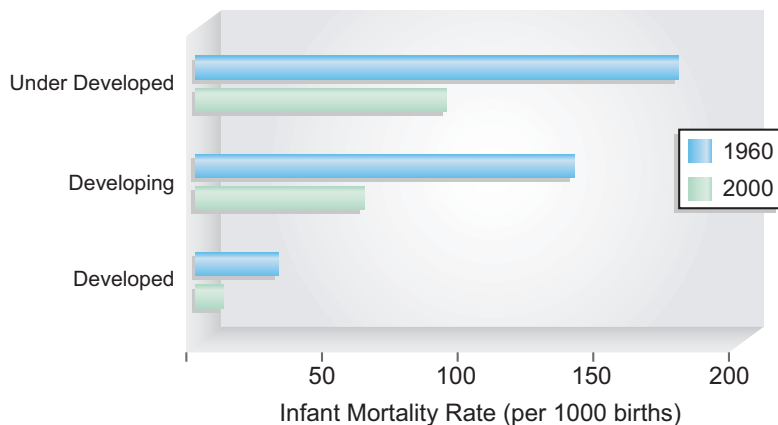


According to the Department for International Development 80% of the children who died never saw a doctor or received healthcare of any kind. Many people would say that the need for health care workers is so great that it can never be met. We have to escape from our cultural mindset in order to understand this emergency and take action.

First, we need to change the way we see the illness. In America, the three leading causes of death are heart disease, cancer, and stroke. In

almost 8 million children would have been saved through preventative measures of education. The act of prevention depends on

## Children Under 5 Mortality Rate



Africa, very few people live long enough, or eat enough junk food to develop any of these three causes for death. Seventy percent of the children that die before the age of five die from easily preventable diseases. Diarrhea usually brought on by malnutrition or contaminated food and water, kills millions of children. Bacteria that would not be a threat to you and me kill many of these children. In fact, the germ that causes the majority of lethal pneumonia cases is one that about 70% of well-nourished people (like us) carry in their throats at all times without experiencing any illness. Why are they so vulnerable? It doesn't seem to be the bacteria, but the combination of lack of care, education, and resources has caused an entire continent to ask where have all the children gone?

Now, how will this incredible injustice be corrected? Many try to answer through surgical teams or week-long clinics. However, statistics show that these have made no improvement what-so-ever in combating this large-scale problem. Surgery without follow-up checkups or antibiotics can do even more harm than good.

What can be done to bring help where there is no doctor? If 70% of childhood deaths are readily preventable, then last year alone

educating the people-educating mothers to boil water properly and fathers in creative ways to farm enough food to keep the family well-nourished.

The healthcare emergency in Africa is unlike anything that we have experienced here, both in scale and in cause. This dramatic difference demands a dramatically different response, a response of Jesus' love-one of compassion and a willingness to give of ourselves. Mark 1:40-41 A leper came to him begging him, and kneeling he said to him, "If you choose, you can make me clean." Moved with compassion, Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him, and said to him, "I do choose, be made clean!"

**Please help us to facilitate these much needed seminars on health-care.**

## A SNAPSHOT OF TODAY'S CHILDREN

**Of 100 children born during the World Summit for Children...**

- **9 Died** before the age of five
- **32 Suffered malnutrition** before the age of five
- **27 Were not immunized** against Disease
- **18 Did not attend school**
- **18 Did not have access to safe drinking water**

Source: The State of the World's Children  
2002 UNICEF

# An Average Woman

## An American Woman...

- complains about her monthly menstrual cramps
- complains about the two hour wait at the doctor's office to get her 12 month old baby vaccinated
- as a widow has the option to marry again or not
- breezes through the latest copy of Cosmo at the checkout line reading an article titled, "Seven ways to have your man please you"

## A Sub-Saharan African Woman...

- suffers silently as she is forced by the men in her community to have her genitals (clitoris and surrounding tissue) stretched, cut, scraped, or burnt as part of a religious or cultural practice.
- helplessly witnesses her 2 year old child suffer from a disease that 1 vaccination out of the 20 vaccinations that American children receive by the age of two, could have prevented
- who contracted AIDS from her late husband, is forced to marry her brother-in-law, a traditional practice called wife-inheritance (like they are property) which is greatly responsible for the vast spreading of AIDS in Sub-Saharan Africa.
- has been mutilated in her genitals and experiences levels of pain equivalent to being tortured every time she has sexual intercourse.

know these people. Not just answering their need by throwing food or money at them, but to help them carry the burden of their condition by joining them in it until it is relieved.

If you have had this authentic kind of experience, then you must understand why the ladies wrote the articles in the health portion of this newsletter the way they did. If you have, then you know why we continue to do the things we do. If you have visited, touched, fed and reached out to people in need, you know that is where you are guaranteed an encounter with God. If you have not had an experience like that, then listen to people like this; they have something to say. Join them in carrying the burden they have because of what they've seen; join them in this kind of suffering. We need you!

If anyone wants to make me, or anyone else feel guilty for continuing to bring up our family in need around the world... then enjoy "Star Wars"

## FGM STATISTICS

Every Year 2 Million women are at risk!

**Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is Practiced Worldwide:** predominantly in Africa-in 28 countries. Now cases have been reported among girls and women in the United States and Europe, where there are large number of African immigrants. This practice has been performed on as many as 130 million girls and women worldwide.

- FGM is even practiced among the refugees in the USA
- It is dated back to mummies in ancient Egypt and Inca Indians in Mexico having the procedure done.

**Reasons for the Practice:** religious & cultural, although it is mostly a ceremonial tradition

- It is viewed as a right of passage-going from a girl to a woman.
- It is seen as a must before marriage.
- It is supposed to stop promiscuity.

**The Dangers of FGM:**

- Mostly done to girls between the ages of 4-12 years old
- Procedure is not done sterile
- Birth complications for mothers are potentially deadly
- Intercourse pain is the equivalent to torture

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Jesus said "what you've done to the least of these my brethren, you've done unto me." He spoke of feeding, clothing, visiting and showing hospitality to those who would be considered the least in society. Therefore, our action towards "the least of these" is in direct connection with our actions toward our God. To have an encounter with one who is considered "the least" is to have an encounter with God.

Of all the people in the world, whom the almighty creator of the universe could relate an experience with them as an experience with Him, why did he pick the poor and underprivileged? Why didn't He pick kings, princes, generals, presidents and rulers? What is so profound about the experience with someone in this condition that it could be an encounter with God?

You'll never know until you experience it! But beware; such an experience will ruin you. Such an experience could be an encounter with God! I'm talking about a real experience where you suffer with the people. Not a fabricated one where one takes one of their 2 weeks of vacation a year to go and make themselves feel better by passing out food, playing with children and clothing needy people, only to return to their sanitary hotel and eat some of the countries best food. I'm talking about really getting to