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*Inside this issue:*

The Work in Ghana	1
Bread to the Nations	3
Community Kids' Corner	4
Place of Hope Africa	4
Talking Bibles—Mexico	5
Current Events	6

## The Work in Ghana

Have you ever been watching a movie when the audience breaks out in applause? I don't remember which movie I saw many years ago but I remember how striking it was when the audience applauded at the end of the movie. It was a spontaneous response of approval.

Last month I was watching a movie with some people when the audience broke out in applause. It wasn't the end of the movie; it was in the middle of a scene. The people were so moved by what they saw, they simply had to clap. I wish I had thought to keep count but unfortunately I was so surprised, I didn't think to count the number of ovations the movie received that night. Besides several ovations, there were numerous exclamations throughout the movie as people were shocked and moved. At one time while watching this movie, I noticed the woman next to me weeping openly. Not just a few tears squeezed out from the corner of an eye, but a convulsing sob

requiring her to blow her nose several times.

What movie could possibly be that moving? What movie could possibly generate this response? Well, to be specific it really wasn't the movie, but the main character that affected the people so much. It was the unencumbered response of people who were watching the life of Jesus played out in their own language. They weren't watching a movie, they were seeing the life of Jesus and they were moved to their core. When Peter, James and John pulled in the catch of their life after fishing all night and catching nothing, audiences in Ghana erupted in demonstrative displays of wonder. In the scene when Jesus raised the young daughter of Jairus from the dead her mother was speechless but the Ghanaian crowd wasn't. They erupted in spontaneous approval and praise.

During my recent trip to Ghana, I was impressed with

three things that I would like to share with you:

- We have lost something precious.
- Jesus really knew what He was doing.
- The life of Jesus is more significant than His death.

### We have lost something precious

I wish you all could have been with me to experience the life of Jesus through the Ghanaians. Imagine watching the life of Jesus unfold some twenty times, each time for the first time. It was like being in a wonderful version of the Groundhog Day movie. I saw the same thing over and over, each time enjoying the genuine wonder being displayed for the person of Jesus. I realized these people have a gift that we have lost. What happened to us? Have we become so sophisticated that we can no longer experience wonder when we see Jesus heal or cast out a legion of demons or calm a raging storm?

*(Continued on page 2)*

# The Work In Ghana

*(Continued from page 1)*

Of course, a 1979 film with a budget of 6 million dollars seems to us very unsophisticated indeed. And our cultural sophistication would certainly forbid us from sobbing openly in response to a work of art. But that is my point. This movie is more than a work of art. It is the depiction of a carefully researched and recorded set of true, historical events. It was not the movie that inspired such responses; it was the person of Jesus.

*“It was because of the life of Christ that hundreds of Ghanaians prayed to accepted Him into their hearts as Lord and Savior.”*

When I watched the Ghanaian audiences I thought of Jesus’ message to the Church of Laodicea, “you say, ‘I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing,’ and you do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked.” The Ghanaians knew they were watching a movie that had been translated into their language, but they also knew they were watching a true story and they responded to the truth in a way that showed how my sophistication had robbed me and made me wretched and poor. It was almost as if my familiarity with the story of Jesus had bred a small amount of contempt for His amazing life.

In the end, after sharing the movie in several languages, none of which I even understood, I think the American was more blessed than the Ghanaians.

## **Jesus really knew what He was doing**

As I watched Jesus in the movie, it became very obvious to me that modern Americans were not His audience. If Jesus walked the

earth in modern-day America, the subject of his parables and the objects of his miracles would certainly be different. Though the truths are timeless, I never realized how well suited the illustrations really were.

In the Jesus film, one of the first miracles performed by Jesus was the catch of fish experienced by Peter and his fishing partners, James and John. When the audience at a fishing village saw Peter pulling up his net, shaking his head in disappointment, they weren’t surprised. After all, he just said they had fished all night and had not caught a thing. But then the audience gasped and shouts of amazement went up before we even saw the great number of fish in the net. How did the audience know they were observing a miracle before they even saw the fish? Well, apparently the sound-effects crew got it right back in 1979 because the people heard a great load of fish break the surface and their years of experience told them immediately that something very special was happening. They heard the miracle before they saw it.

Time and time again, as Jesus taught and worked I saw Him connect with the Ghanaians whose lives closely resembled the original audience in the land of ancient Israel. They understood the sower. They also hand plant all their crops. They realized the significance of the healing of a woman who “was bent over and could not straighten up at all.” They had no concept of a surgical procedure that may straighten a crooked back. They also understood Jesus’ argument against

those who objected to Him healing the woman on the Sabbath. Many of them had to provide water for their animals each day. (See Luke 13:10 - 17). In fact, in some villages they laughed or even applauded when Jesus put the Pharisees in their place.

Through the eyes of these Ghanaian audiences, I developed an appreciation for the words and actions of Jesus in a way I could not have otherwise known.

## **The life of Jesus is more significant than His death**

We often focus on the death of Christ but watching the people experience the life of Christ for the first time, I have come to realize that it is through the life of Christ that we see God. I gained a new appreciation for what the writer of Hebrews must have meant when he said “in these last days [God] has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world. And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power.” (Heb 1:2-3)

The people in the villages in Ghana became acquainted with God through the life of Jesus as recorded by Luke. It was this life they saw that gave them confidence to come to God for mercy and grace. In fact, this is what the writer of Hebrews tells us, “we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. Therefore let

*(Continued on Page 5)*

# Bread to the Nations

## Medika Mamba Program

On October 27 we celebrated the one-year anniversary of our Medika Mamba clinic! We have had more than 400 children with moderate and severe malnutrition go through the program in that time. We have sent 20 plus children to Real Hope for Haiti because they needed care we could not provide, such as IV fluids and medications and/or 24 hour monitoring. Of those 20 plus, five have died. It has broken our hearts beyond words to lose these children, but God has graciously saved so many more from the deadly complications of diarrhea and pneumonia that often kill malnourished children.

We are quite concerned about the food security in Haiti. This is the harvest season when food is most plentiful, but we have double the number of children at our original clinic in Demichel in the past month. This has occurred since we opened the Bwadjout clinic where we admit 5 – 10 kids every week.

This increase of children has created havoc with our budget. With over 100 children in the program, our cost for mamba alone (not including staff, medications and supplies) is \$3500! We know if God sends the kids, He will also provide. We simply need to share with you what He is doing and the need. We know God will move your hearts to support the care of these children.

## School Program

Our 18 school children have successfully completed 2 months of school and will be taking exams in December for the end of the first term. There are two young ladies age 11 and 13 in 1st and 2nd grade, respectively. They 'skipped' the kindergarten classes that teach numbers, letters and early writing because of their

ages. One of the moms, who has some education, is providing tutoring assistance for them.

Please pray for the success of all the children in their school studies. We want them to feel they are accomplishing much and not feel frustrated with the challenges!

## Mobile Medical Clinic

We had an amazing mobile medical clinic with the team from Alexandria: Dr. Jean Fahey, Judi Smith and Nick Terhaar. Dr. Fahey is a recently retired pediatrician from Alexandria and was, plain and simple, an awesome asset to the clinic. We had many kids with pneumonia and sent one to the hospital on a motorcycle that was in acute respiratory distress. We were praying that she would make it to the hospital! I am happy to report that she is doing well and back home.

In addition, we saw several cases of RSV in infants, including one that we sent to our friends at Real Hope for Haiti. We also sent them a severely malnourished boy that we had been unable to find, but after his sister came to the clinic, we found him and got him some help! Praise God for the sister coming to us!

We identified a new case of TB in the teenage sister of a friend of ours, discovered two heart murmurs in young children that need checking and have several others that need specialist consultations. We will try to do as much as possible through our new friends at Lopital Bernard Mevs, where there are many US and Canadian specialist teams that see and treat kids for nominal cost.

As always, Dr. Lejette, our Haitian physician was present and saw many late teens and adults. She is always smiling and always happy to work with us and see

our Medika Mamba kids for consultations. We are so grateful for her participation with us year round!

Judi Smith did an amazing job of praying with people as they left the church and more than 15 people professed faith in Christ! She also ran a children's program at the church on Sunday afternoon with over 300 kids in attendance! They blew the roof off the building!

We could not have done it without Nick either! He was and is the most cheerful, willing, give-me-a-job person we have ever had. He added some good efficiency ideas for future clinics and was like glue in the stressful times.

**ALEXANDRIA TEAM: YOU WERE AN UNSPEAKABLE BLESSING TO HAITI AND BTTN! THANK YOU!**

The rest of the team included our usual staff: Pastor Pierre Duclair, Pierre Richard, nurse Yasmine, two additional nurses, and two additional translators and of course, Liz and Mickey. We were all tired but pleased that we saw over 450 people and likely saved several lives!

*-The Bread to the Nations Team-*

*“We know if  
God sends the  
kids, He will  
also provide.”*

## Community Kids' Corner

Isaiah 41:10 says *"So do not fear, for I am with you ; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand."*

During the second half of last school year, we had no young children attending Community Kids. A few had moved out of the park and others out of town. Meeting with the older kids twice a week was fun and good for a time, but we really missed the younger kids. Over the summer, five new young kids arrived and attended our summer C.K. activities, including a VBS type program presented by Catalyst Covenant Church. One of the helpers there mentioned that she may be interested in helping with our regular Community Kids program in the fall. Little did we

know how the Lord was providing in advance. September brought an influx of new families into the immediate area. Our first two Thursdays we had 12 youngsters 4<sup>th</sup> grade and younger! Adele and I were excited but overwhelmed! Not God, he had it all planned.

He brought to mind the woman who had offered her help. One phone call and a week later, Julie Smith joined Adele and I in our big adventure. She brings a refreshing new energy and enthusiasm to our afternoons, along with creativity and teaching experience. The kids absolutely love her! God's provision is both perfect and perfectly timed. Proverbs 11:25 says, *"A generous man will prosper; he who refreshes others will himself be refreshed."* Thank you,

Julie, for being generous with your heart and time. You have refreshed us and we trust the Lord's word that you will also be refreshed - even surrounded by 12 energetic kids!

Please remember the residents of Olsen Trailer Park, the 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue Community Center staff, and all our activities in your prayers. The area has recently become an even darker place with an increase in drug activity, the practice of witchcraft, violence, and domestic troubles of all kinds. The light of Christ is much needed and we truly appreciate your prayer support. Thank you.

*-Adele, Julie, and Rita-*

*"God's provision is both perfect and perfectly timed."*

## Place of Hope Africa

We now have 12 children all under 4 years old. Many of them are temporary, as we are helping mothers who are in rehab and counseling and trying to get their lives back together. By temporary, we mean whenever they can find employment, a place to live and direction for their lives. We have been able to connect one with a mentor and hope to help others indirectly as well.

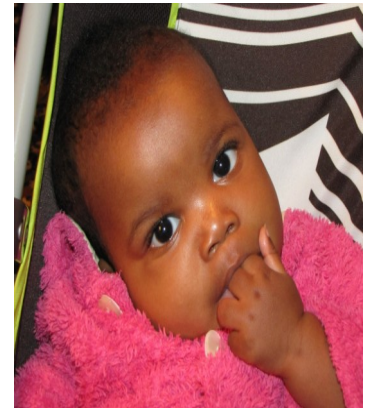
We are pursuing adoptability status for those children that may come under that category. The legal requirements are quite stringent, but we have professional contact in that area.

When our ministry expands by more than 100 percent in one week, so does our expenses. Our

contributions are actually down. We use Jeremiah 29:11 in our logo; *"For I know the plans I have for you - to give you hope and a future."* Please keep us in your prayers.

*-Marr & Marie Bjorklund-*

All contributions should be mailed to Place of Hope Africa, PO Box 1196, Alexandria, MN 56308.



# Talking Bibles—Mexico

Dear Friends and Family,

As you know, we are about to finish this year and we are really happy because we know that this year was really good for us. God has been good to us for allowing us to serve Him and to be able to meet the brothers from the mountain. We believe that good things are coming next year and a lot of work too.

Last weekend we had our last church reunion. This year we were a Reforma Zaragoza, that it is by Santa Ines we were thanking God for all the good things that He did for us and for all the doors that He opened for us. We did our reunions and every town that we visited we learned a lot of things together, but one of the best things is that we were able to fellowship and pray for each other. Now we know that we have to get out of our circle and try to reach others.

One thing that we did in our last reunion was that we walked around the town worshipping God as a symbol of victory, because we believe that God gave us the victory in every town and every soul He put in our way.

We are also finishing our year with a new member in our family. We found Gerardo on the streets. He was about to die, but thanks to God, he is still with us and he is getting better. I thank God for showing us His power and His mercy! All the brothers from La mixteca want you to know that we love you and pray for you in our reunions. We thank you because everything that we do is made possible with all the help that you give us. Thank you for sharing with us and for all your prayers. We know that God will reward you and He will bless everything that you do or touch.

Please keep praying for us as we walk through the mountains. Pray that God will keep opening doors for us as we reach the Mixtecos. We have a lot of plans for next year. We are praying for God's favor and all that we want to do for His kingdom.



Our prayer for you is that God's presence be upon you and that you will be in all ways making God the first love in your life. May the love of our God be with you always!

*-Esther, Nataly, Manasseh, and  
Hector Avila-*

*“We believe  
that God gave  
us the victory in  
every town and  
every soul He  
put in our  
way.”*

# The Work in Ghana

*(Continued from page 2)*

us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.” (Heb 4:15-16) It was because of the life of Christ that hundreds of Ghanaians prayed to accept Him into their heart as their Lord and Savior. Though they may not have understood the theological implications of the atonement, in Jesus they saw a person they could trust as their Lord. When they learned that He was still alive and could live his life through them, they gladly received His life into theirs to be lead by Him.

Just in case you need more evidence for the statement that the life of Jesus is more significant than His death, take a look at what the apostle Paul said on the subject, “If Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins.” (1 Cor 15:17) The death of Christ provided an atonement; the life of Christ provided a savior.

*- Tory Bjorklund-*



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## Current Events

The Regeneration Center has ongoing Life Skills Classes for both men and women. Some of the classes offered are: Freedom From Addiction, Alpha, Invisible War, Boundaries, Victory Over the Darkness, The Bondage Breaker, Financial Management., Now That You're a Christian, and Overcoming Emotions that Destroy. Please call our office or David Ask at 320-766-6182 for men's classes or Ardyce Harris at 320-766-2019 for women's classes. You can also access our website for current class descriptions and schedule of classes offered.



There is a need for used cars. If you live in Minnesota and would like to donate a vehicle to The Regeneration Center, we will give you a tax deductible receipt so you can claim the gift on your taxes. Please call **David Schonberg at 320-815-3590** for more details.

The Regeneration Center is coordinating an effort to get shop tools for both wood-working and metal working in southern Mexico. If you live in Minnesota and have hand tools, power hand tools, table saws, radial arm saws, drill presses, jointers, routers, grinders, band saws, sewing machines, baking equipment, etc., that you would consider donating, please call **David Schonberg at 320-815-3590**.

If you would like to receive regular email updates from Ghana and Mexico, please email your address to [markuson@regenerationcenter.org](mailto:markuson@regenerationcenter.org) or go to our website under "Current News" for updates.



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