

The Christ for Humanity Newsletter

THECFHCHRONICLES

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Triumph Through Discouragement

By Ronda Tyson

What an awesome God we serve! Let me tell you how awesome. The same God who set the stars in space and placed the earth on its axis is the same One who created the universe and its splendor. He is indeed able to do what He has promised. His kingdom comes through the obedience of His children to carry out His will.

In February New Life Fellowship in The Gambia planned an open air outreach at a Youna Village at which they would distribute rice and clothing. This outreach was to reach people of three villages. The people in these villages were Muslims – nearly 3,600 individuals.

The day before the outreach, the New Life Fellowship evangelism team went to Youna to post fliers about the event. Team members saw men from the village taking down the fliers, tearing them into pieces, and stepping on them. They thought they heard very clearly from the village, “We don’t want you here,” and found it difficult not to be discouraged. In fact Pastor Martins began to reconsider having the outreach at all due to personal safety concerns.

After bathing the situation in prayer, Pastor Martins told his team they would go to Youna despite the evident resistance in order to fulfill all righteousness. He began to form strategies for evacuating the village in the event of a physical encounter. How would he gather his team together? How would they escape? What would be their means of defense?

With all this in mind, the team proceeded to the village the following day. As the van approached the meeting place, a crowd awaited them. Reluctant yet obedient, the team began to file one by one from the vehicle. Dressed in clean white t-shirts with the words “Evangelism Team” written on the back, these men and women stood out sharply among the villagers. The women wore scarves on their heads. Team members went with the strength of a warm smile and with love in their hearts.

The team was welcomed by the Akaloos (chiefs) and the elders of the village. Villagers watched as the team unloaded kilos of rice and clothing. The evening air became crisp with winter’s chill as the team began singing songs about Jesus in Fulani, Manjako, Wollof and Mandinka – the local languages of the community. To a familiar drum beat, New Life Fellowship’s evangelism team identified with the villagers – African to African.

Then team members told of a God who loved them and wanted to live with them – of a God who would call them His children and who loved them so much that He made His own Son a sacrifice for their sins. His Son’s name was Jesus, and Jesus still lives as the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of those who believe in Him as Savior, Deliverer, and Lord. The team offered prayers on behalf of those who wanted to know Jesus. Some with health issues were prayed for as well. To some that day, God gave testimony to His healing power. Others received clothing to protect their bodies and rice to fill their stomachs.

That first day 67 Muslims gave their lives to Christ. In the course of the three day outreach, 100 people became believers. There was much praise and rejoicing. The people didn’t want to leave the worship area. Each day they would stand in anticipation of worshipping the almighty, living, caring God to whom they’d just been introduced. What an incredible testimony to the villagers! The almighty God who created them really did love them and came to dwell in their midst.

The other wonderful testimony was God’s faithfulness to the New Life Fellowship evangelism team. These men and women stood strong despite discouragement and fear, and through their obedience, they achieved a work that only God could have accomplished through them. Discouragement became joy; triumph replaced fear!

Medical Update:

Local Ministry

Good Samaritan Health Service: Two-thousand four was an eventful and fruitful year at Good Samaritan Health Services. This Christian healthcare service provides mobile medical clinics to area poor at seven locations around Tulsa. Last year GSHS treated 5,573 patients (an 18% increase from 2003) from 6 ethnic backgrounds. Many of these patients received spiritual counseling and prayer, as well as medical treatment. In 2004 Christ for Humanity donated \$256,079.00 in medication and medical supplies to Good Samaritan Health Services to help treat Tulsa's poor. "Your partnership over the past year has been invaluable! Thank you for making this ministry your ministry and letting us be your hands and feet to reach a city in need!" John R. Crouch

International Ministry

Tsunami Relief Effort: (Christ for Humanity provided financial support for Ona and Jeremy La Motte, medical missionaries to Banda Aceh, Indonesia. Below is part of their report on the devastation they witnessed and the seeds of Christ's love that were planted by their ministry.)

The devastation Ona and I witnessed was indescribable. Our team of 20 medical personnel and 20 translators split up each day into small groups to work in the most needed areas. We helped staff the pediatric ward and the ER of the general hospital in Banda Aceh, which was waist high in mud after the tsunami. Only 30 of the 240 hospital nurses survived the disaster. Make-shift clinics were held at several Internally Displaced People (IDP) camps. We also vaccinated several villages. Most of the acute needs from the earthquake and tsunami had been addressed before our arrival; however, we treated some of the after effects – multiple cases of tetanus from all the cuts and scrapes in people who have never received immunizations, aspiration pneumonia from those who swallowed the tsunami water, and many cases of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

Prior to the earthquake and tsunami, Banda Aceh was a very hostile and oppressive place. It was the only province in Indonesia under Muslim or Sharia Law. No outsiders, especially Christians, were allowed into the area – not even fellow Indonesians. The Christians living in this area were persecuted. Many churches had been closed by the government just before the tsunami. In fact a small group of about 400 Christians in Banda Aceh asked the government for permission to celebrate Christmas. They were told to go to the mountains if they wanted to commemorate the Lord's birth. They spent the Christmas night in the mountains. The next day the tsunami hit. These Christians were saved by the grace of God.

The disaster provided a window of opportunity for Christians from all over the world to enter this stronghold of Satan. Seeds were planted, and lives were touched. Though the government ordered all relief workers from the area by March 26th, World Harvest, the Indonesian organization with which we partnered, was given permission to stay to build a community center and help in the re-building process. Please pray that the seeds that were planted would produce a harvest and not be choked by thorns.

May the peoples praise you, O God; may all the peoples praise you! May the nations be glad and sing for joy. Psalm 67:3-4

Tearing Down the House

Everyday desperate people walk through the doors at Christ for Humanity. Many of these men and women face problems directly related to poverty. While most people have a fall back position should they find themselves in financial trouble, the poor usually know only other poor people who are unable to help in times of crisis. Timmy, a member of CFH's 1st Steps program, was one such person who

found himself in a seemingly hopeless situation.

Years ago the City of Tulsa condemned a house on Timmy's property and began applying pressure for its removal. Sadly, neither Timmy nor his family had the financial means to accomplish this task. A construction dumpster alone costs at least \$275 delivered, not to mention the \$120 refuse disposal fee. Obviously, one dumpster alone would not be sufficient to remove an entire house. For ten years this problem weighed heavily on Timmy, his family, and friends.

But no problem is too great for God! Jeremiah 29:11 states: "*For I know the plans I have for you,*" declares the Lord, "*plans to prosper you and not harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.*" On Saturday, April 16th, 30+ members of Metro Christian Academy's Key Club got down and dirty to help a man they'd never met. These young men and women were the hands God used to resolve Timmy's problem with the city. When Christ for Humanity contacted American Waste Control about construction dumpsters for the project, Guy Blagg offered to provide 2 *free of charge*. American Waste Control became the means for removing thousands of pounds of wood, rubble and trash from the work-site.

You hear a lot these days about the selfishness of young people, so the joyful, hardworking attitude of Metro's Key Club was a breath fresh air to every participating adult. When the work crew arrived at the site, the task before them seemed overwhelming. Yet, everyone pulled together to get the job done. Within an hour, mounds of rubble became manageable, and after only three hours, Timmy's property was clean, and two 30' dumpsters were completely full. Praise God for His goodness – project completed without incident or injury!

The joint venture undertaken by Christ for Humanity, Metro Christian Academy, and American Waste Control is the first serious work project CFH has undertaken in Tulsa. Its overwhelming success opens the door to more hands-on ministry of this type. The *Book of James* speaks to putting faith into action. Everyone participating in April's event was a testimonial of God's love to Timmy and his extended family.

"You see that faith was working with his works, and as a result of works, faith was perfected." James 2:22

Meeting the Challenge – Feinsein Challenge Totals

Christ for Humanity recently participated in the *Feinsein Challenge to Fight Hunger*, a fundraising event sponsored by Alan Feinsein of Cranston, Rhode Island. *The Challenge* was quite simple: During the months of March and April, CFH sponsored a food drive to collect as many canned goods as possible for its emergency food pantry. Cash donations designated for this event were also welcome. The first week of May, all non-profits participating in the Feinsein Challenge submitted their numbers to the Feinsein Foundation to receive a portion of \$1,000,000 designated to help fight hunger in the US.

The response to CFH's food drive was phenomenal. Nine Oklahoma churches, 4 Christian schools, and numerous individual donors participated with the ministry to raise "Cash for Cans." The ministry collected 5,393 cans or boxes of food and raised \$2,730 – totaling 8,123 *Feinsein Challenge Points*.

Christ for Humanity would like to thank everyone involved in this event. There are very few foundations in the secular world open to Christian groups needing money to help the poor. Thankfully, Alan Feinsein allowed any non-profit with a feeding program to participate in his fight against hunger.

CFH will receive a check from the Feinstein Foundation at the end of June. The amount of that check will be posted in the August CFH Chronicles. Yet, even if the ministry weren't to receive a cent from the Feinstein Foundation, our staff considers the food drive a huge success.

Carrot, Egg or Coffee Bean?

You'll never look at a cup of coffee in the same way again.

A young woman went to her mother, describing her life – how hard things were for her and how tired she was of the struggle. She didn't know if she was going to make it and wanted to give up. It seemed that just as she solved one problem, a new one arose.

The mother took her daughter to the kitchen. She filled three pots with water and placed each on a high fire. Soon the pots came to boil. In the first she placed carrots, in the second an egg, and in the last ground coffee beans. She let them sit and boil without saying a word.

After twenty minutes, the mother turned off the burners. She fished out the carrots, placing them in a bowl. She put the egg in a second bowl. Then she ladled the coffee into a cup.

Turning to her daughter, she asked, "Tell me, what do you see?"

"Carrots, an egg, and coffee," her daughter replied.

Her mother brought her closer and asked her to feel the carrots. She did and noted that they were soft. The mother then asked her daughter to take the egg and break it. After pulling off the shell, the young woman observed the hard boiled egg. Finally, the mother asked her daughter sip the coffee. The daughter smiled as she tasted its rich flavor.

The daughter asked her mother what this demonstration meant. Her mother explained that each of the objects had faced the same adversity . . . boiling water. Each reacted differently.

The carrot went in strong, hard and unrelenting. However, after being subjected to the boiling water, it softened and became weak. The egg had been fragile. Its thin outer shell had protected its liquid interior, but after being boiled, its insides hardened. But the ground coffee beans were unique. After boiling for twenty minutes, the coffee had actually changed the water.

"Which of these three are you?" asked the mother. "When adversity knocks on your door, how do you respond? Are you a carrot, an egg or a coffee bean?"

Ask yourself that question. Which am I? Am I the carrot that seems strong, but with pain and adversity, do I wilt and become soft and lose my strength.

Am I the egg that starts with a malleable heart but changes with the heat? Did I have a fluid spirit, but after a death, a breakup, a financial hardship or some other trial, have I become hardened and stiff? Does my shell look the same, but on the inside, am I bitter and tough with a stiff spirit and hardened heart?

Or am I like the coffee bean? The bean actually changes the hot water – the very circumstance that brings the pain. When the water gets hot, the coffee released its fragrance and flavor. If you are like the bean, when things are at their worst, you get better and change the situation around you. When the hour is the darkest and the trials are their greatest, do you elevate yourself to another level?

The happiest people don't necessarily have the best of everything; they just make the most of everything that comes their way. When you were born, you were crying and everyone around you was smiling. Live your life so that at its end, you're the one smiling while those around you cry.

"Not only so, but we also rejoice in our suffering, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us." Romans 5:3-4

On the Light Side

If a Dog Were the Teacher

If a dog were the teacher, you would learn:

- When loved ones come home, always run to greet them.
- Never pass up the opportunity to go for a joy ride.
- Let others know when they've invaded your territory.
- Take naps and stretch before rising.
- Run, romp, and play daily.
- Thrive on attention, and let people touch you.
- Avoid biting when a simple growl will do.
- On warm days, stop to lie on your back in the grass.
- On hot days, drink lots of water and lie under a shady tree.
- When you're happy, dance around and wag your entire body.
- Delight in the simple joy of a long walk.
- No matter how often you're scolded, don't pout . . . run right back and make friends.
- Eat with gusto and enthusiasm. Stop when you've had enough.
- Be loyal. Never pretend to be something you're not.
- If what you want lies buried, dig until you find it.
- When someone is having a bad day, be silent, sit close by, and nuzzle them gently.

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