

Set Free Update

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...LIBERTY TO THE CAPTIVES

A few thousand years ago, a 30 year old man named Yeshua (meaning "salvation") was asked to read from a Torah scroll in a Jewish Synagogue located in Nazareth. He read from the prophet Isaiah (Chapter 61).

*The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because the Lord has anointed Me
To preach good news to the poor; He has sent me to heal the brokenhearted;
To proclaim liberty to the captives and opening of the prison
To those who are bound; to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.*

After He finished this reading from Isaiah, this man we all know as Jesus Christ of Nazareth, made a profound statement.

"Today This Scripture Is Fulfilled In Your Hearing."

The mission was clear and Jesus would fulfill it. This mission was at the very heart of His heavenly Father who wanted to seek and save the lost and least of mankind. Scroll ahead a few thousand years, and the mission is still the very same because God does not change.

For over a year now, SFM/India volunteers have been praying for and visiting many men and women held captive in India's prison system. On the week of May 9-16, 2007 Paul Tameling and myself traveled to India to visit these faithful volunteers and minister with them.

On May 14, 2007 Paul Tameling and I had the wonderful privilege of preaching this same "Good News" to some 70 prisoners held captive in an India prison. After we shared the gospel, some 15 men committed their lives to Jesus as Lord. What a glorious sight it was to watch dead men come alive in Christ!



On May 15, 2007 we traveled to a bigger prison that held long term prisoners. Some 200+ men packed the small prison chapel with standing room only. We preached the same message Jesus did and asked if any wanted to receive this new life in Christ and be forgiven of all their sin.

To our amazement, half the room stood up to come forward and pray the sinner's prayer. Tears of joy ran down the faces of many men and they experienced for the first time the love and forgiveness of their heavenly father. **Jesus is opening prison doors and still setting captives free!**

Written by Dean Vander Mey

THE ORPHAN CRISIS IN UGANDA

Recent statistics published by the Ugandan Department of Social Welfare indicate that there are 4 million "VULNERABLE CHILDREN" which is more than half of the total child population in Uganda. Over 1.5 million of these children are "ORPHANED". I was taken back when I looked at the twelve different "Child Categories" the Ugandan government uses to classify children: Orphans, Abandoned Children, The Girl Child (girls are more vulnerable to be abused and defiled), Children with Disabilities, Child Prisoners, Child Laborers, Child Slaves, Children Displaced, Children Not in School, Children with HIV/AIDS, Child Headed Households, and Child Soldiers.

After returning from our recent trip to Uganda, what haunts me is the role passivity or inactivity has in this Orphan Crisis. So many vulnerable children...so much injustice. In Zechariah 7:9-10 the LORD says: "Administer true justice, show mercy and compassion to one another; do not oppress the widow or the fatherless, the alien, the poor." In Psalm 82:3-4 God says: "Defend the cause of the weak and the fatherless, maintain the rights of the poor and oppressed. Rescue the weak and needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked." Injustice towards orphans takes place when the government fails to protect, laws fail to protect, people fail to protect, and the church fails to protect. By being passive the injustice to these orphans continues and the darkness prevails. I would argue that being passive is not an option. To remain silent and passive in the face of injustice, violence, and poverty is actually collusion with the darkness. People have defined "evil" as the absence of good. Pretty simplistic, but if that is so, then the refusal or even the indecision to do good is partnering with the darkness and is therefore evil.



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What we saw in Uganda is two extreme humanitarian crises, one in the South and one in the North. In the South, the AIDS pandemic in the Rakia District has left thousands of children orphaned. AIDS has almost wiped out a whole generation of adults in this region and has left innocent children infected. Can you imagine children taking care of children--"Child Headed Households"? The needs are overwhelming--extreme poverty, 90% unemployment, not enough schools and teachers, no health care, and lack of clean water, just to name a few. This crisis is far from being over.

In the North, the Gulu District is where the 20+ year war between the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and the Ugandan Army has caused thousand upon thousands of innocent children to be orphaned. People are forced to flee from their villages to find safety from the rebel soldiers in the IDP (Internally Displaced People) or refugee camps. People are living in captivity in their own country. One camp we visited there were 10,000 people living in less than 1 square kilometer. Food is rationed, children malnourished, only four schools, not enough teachers, children being exploited - and the list goes on. The IDP camps are not the answer. People are living in fear 24 hours 7 days a week. Child soldiers, little boys ages 8-14 abducted by the LRA, brainwashed, armed and trained to kill. Little girls abducted as sex slaves, and luggage carriers for the LRA. We interviewed some of the rescued LRA child soldiers whose stories are true but unbelievable from my American mind-set. One of the young men we met, a former LRA soldier is now carrying a guitar where once he carried a machine gun and leading other orphans in praise & worship; lives that have been redeemed and totally transformed by the power of God.

I left Africa completely overwhelmed and heartbroken over the number of innocent children whose lives have been shattered and forever changed due to these extreme crises. I can no longer be a bystander. I am ready to "put into the deep" (Luke 5:4) and join God in defending, rescuing and delivering these innocent children. If you would like to learn more about how you can get involved please contact me via e-mail at wjt@orphanjustice.org.

Let us take up the weapons of our warfare and tear down the strongholds of evil and build up strongholds of protection and blessing for the Glory of Christ!

Written by Bill Terpstra