

The God's Story Project

Prayer and Praise Report June & July, #3 of 2014

"No Junior Holy Spirit"

Dear Friend of *God's Story*,

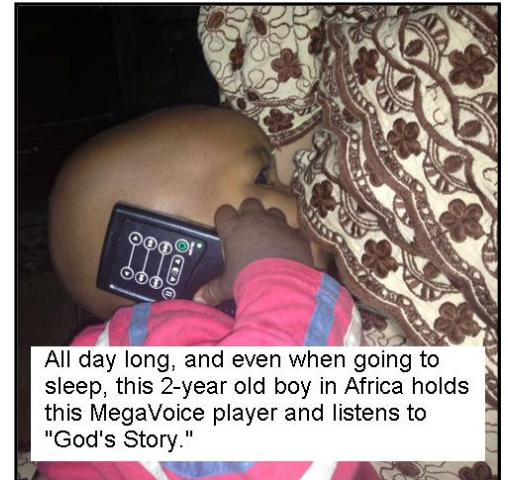
Ach! Where to begin? The joys and the accompanying challenges keep rising!

Notice this letter's theme. The Executive Director of Church and Community Development of Awana and I discussed the value of using Bible stories to teach children. We agreed on how deeply they could go in the Word. He added, "I have never read in the Bible about a Junior Holy Spirit."

That really struck me. Of course! Again and again we have seen even very young children drawn to Bible stories and discovering important spiritual applications.

For awhile, God has been nudging us to provide STS material for children's programming. Could you pray for us as we tackle this vital area, and also could you select any areas for prayer from this newsletter that God may lead you to remember?

To see how young children can hear from God, see bonus at end of this newsletter, [How Old Must One Be to Hear From God?](#). SimplyTheStory.org web site (right side, home page) also has a great 11-min video, "[Age 8 Gives Insights?](#)"



God's Story & Simply The Story Impact

Closed Places—Hard Places

West Africa: African instructors just led STS trainings in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea, the 3 countries being ravaged by Ebola. As our instructors continue to train in these regions, please pray for their safety and the eradication of this epidemic.

Tel Aviv: While rockets assailed Israel (and most attendees had family in the military), God spoke to hearts in an STS workshop. "One group discussed the story of Saul & David in the Cave (when David could have killed Saul but instead cut a piece off his robe).

One Israeli guy began to weep because of the way he had treated his authority figure/mentor. The group prayed for and ministered to him. That is what this is all about—the Word of God transforming hearts toward healing and shalom."



Unnamed Communist Country: Anyone caught with even a piece of paper with a Bible verse or Christian teaching on it is thrown into prison. A team of 11 pastors and a few of their wives secretly went to another country to learn STS. They loved learning how to remember Scripture and how to dig deeply into it in a way they and

the downtrodden people in their country could understand it.

At the end of the 5-day training, in tears, one pastor's wife told those gathered, "My husband has always been timid to speak. I have seen him here gain a confidence and boldness to speak the Word of God. He is prepared now to go back."

SE Asia: An instructor wrote us: "I just get a short story from one pastor in place where they is not allowed to hold /carry the Bible and say anything about Christ / Christianity. But they use the sts and tell the good news and there one monk and others excepted [Jesus]."

Ukraine: Our brothers and sisters in Ukraine face the threat of a 2nd occupation by Russia. Should this happen, know that by God's grace, before a possible outlawing of the Word takes place, we were able to plant the STS way to remember the Scripture and orally share it. We led two STS workshops in 2012 and advanced training in Nov 2013.

Those trained said, "My ministry was incomplete and I was praying about what to do and feel STS is the answer to that prayer." . . . "This is a tool to reach out to Gypsies." . . . "Previously Bible study was superficial, and I was not getting deeper into understanding and discovery." . . . "STS is a powerful tool for spreading the Word." . . . "Before I could learn 9 verses in a week and now I can learn 9 verses in 10 minutes!". . . "STS has given me a way to get into the Word, where I had struggled to even read the Bible before."

Ethiopia: "At the moment we are in south Ethiopia doing a workshop in one of the prisons. Yesterday, 4 prisoners committed their lives to Christ."

Morocco: "One of my dear lady friends that I was visiting almost every Friday passed away a week before I got back to Morocco. I was very sad that I did not see her again. But one good thing happened.

"Her daughter told me, 'My mother was listening almost every day to the MegaVoice you gave to her.' This lady loved to work in her yard and always carried her solar player with her, so she was listening to *God's Story* and the Bible in her own language."



Niger: "After an STS workshop, a young man followed me for five days to get a solar player. [Player has *God's Story* and Scripture on it.] Finally I gave him one. The man later took me around to SEVEN villages where this guy had formed lots of listening groups and people have received the Lord."

Country Closed to Christianity: "For 2 years I read all of the reports of STS touching lives and multiplying around the world, but I saw very little happening where I serve. I was very discouraged. But now, 34 workshops later, I can say it is catching hold. People are understanding and responding to the Word . . . and multiplying what they learn. In God's time!"

Togo: "Chad," we will call him, is a church planter whose father was an animist priest. Chad was praying for his Dad for 15 years. His Dad was his first enemy when Chad gave his life to Jesus, and denied him as a son.

One day, after all these years of prayer, the father called and asked for Bible. Chad gave him a solar MegaVoice player and his Dad began to listen the moment he received it. Isaiah 43 came to him one night, and he came to Chad to have his questions answered about the Bible, including for help with Isaiah 43. His father then said to Chad, "I gave you life but you are older than me." The son understood that his Dad was giving him supreme honor by saying the son knew more than the father. His father then responded to the Gospel and was crying and crying at the time of prayer/repentance.

Central Asia: In this Muslim country "A few youth now believe in Jesus, others are seeking. Christians had tried doing a Bible study, but it didn't really work" I was invited to try a story. "I told a 10-verse story of a paralysed man who was lowered through the roof. I asked for a volunteer to retell it. One of the seekers said he would. He told it far better than I had, and didn't forget hardly any of the details! Everyone said, 'You must have heard it before,' but he insisted it was new to him."

“Later, as we talked about the scribes in the story who were sitting there, the volunteer concluded, ‘Well, if only God can forgive sins and Jesus forgave his sins, then Jesus must be God.’ It was a good moment. I believe that discovery of truth was a result of the Holy Spirit’s work in his life.”

Bahrain (Arab Peninsula): Attendees use STS in prison outreach, ministry and witnessing. The Bible Society in Bahrain devoted their whole newsletter to STS. They wrote, “Thank-you emails congested our email accounts & “STS is an unprecedented, cutting-edge and phenomenal Bible Engagement tool.”

Mystery #3. In many regions of the world there is a crippling entitlement mentality among those we hope to disciple. How can we change this?

North Africa: One believer’s Dad is a respected Muslim leader, and he heard *God’s Story* on the solar player several times. He decided to share it with friends. More than 60 people came to listen. Lots of questions were being asked so his Dad said, “I will ask my son.” Next they had 200 people listening.

Over 15 years, the father has moved from wanting to kill his son, to making him a slave, to years later apologizing to his son for the rejection, to now saying, “Jesus is God’s Son.” But, even though he travels all over the region and plays, “this true story” for older men as they sit and drink tea, and he started attending church, he has not yet said, “Jesus is my Saviour.”

North Africa: A church planter got to answer a lot of questions when his "cousin-brother" came to his house one day and discovered the planter’s family having devotions. He asked the planter afterwards, "How sure are you that Jesus is Son of God?" The man asked for a book to read. Instead of a book, the planter gave his cousin-brother a solar player. He listened to it for three days and then came back.

At first he was asking the planter questions, but then he started crying. Then, before the planter had finished talking to him, the guy kneeled down to pray and receive Jesus. As a result, the man had to leave his family and family home, fleeing for his life and for a time moved in with the church planter.

Guinea: “We finished the workshop by the grace of God. We had 65 participants on the last day. God did mighty things in the lives of participants. The last day they wanted me to continue till night. I saw joy in the lives of the participants. The pastor openly said that ‘It has never happened in the history of the church that after a seminar or conference that the members were so happy like this. Most workers in the church were before hostile to each other, but STS has helped us be together.’

“There were so many testimonies at the end that I wept heavily in front of them all whilst giving my final speech. I saw love, happiness and appreciation in their faces.”

Easier Regions, But Still Needy

Taiwan: “This is the most people I have seen that have gone out during the workshop and shared a story with strangers. I saw God really move. One lady told me, ‘I have been studying the Bible for 40 years and just saw things in the Bible I have never seen before.’”

Guatemala: Email from a user of STS on short term mission trip. “The pastor has been having me do stories at every service (about 3 times a week). He loves the story telling process. He noticed that his people stay awake when I tell a story, but they fall asleep when he preaches! He has also noticed how much they interact with me-even the kids answer questions. He says, ‘They never talk with me about the Bible.’ He told me last night at supper, ‘This story-telling process is much more effective for my people than what I learned [in seminary].’ He’s 72 yrs old and would love to learn to tell stories!”

West Africa: The Lord is widening and deepening the impact of *Simply The Story* (STS) and *God’s Story*. [Many Large Ministries](#) are asking STS instructors for training. One of these, Mercy Ships, just received STS training in Benin, the 3rd country in which we have trained their local ground crews!

USA: In Sept we are hosting a Summit for Lead Instructors including directors from 15 countries. Afterwards some will stay on to lead a first-timers training and Alumni Advanced training from Sept 28-Oct 3. There are still a few slots left! We need 3 more visas granted.

Answered Prayer: For a long time we have asked for prayer regarding the need for hands-on help at our Hemet headquarters. Part time help has come! More full time help is to arrive when their house in TX is sold. We still need one or two on-site staff who love web site, audio and film ministry.

Answer to Mysteries 1 - 3: A pastor from a remote region of Kenya had heard about an STS Oral Bible School, so he contacted our Kenya Director to find out how to set up a school. "First you host a workshop so people can be trained in oral inductive Bible study." It was explained to the pastor how a team of instructors would come to lead a 5-day training and that there was no charge for the training. As well, the pastor was told that he needed to provide the venue. The local attendees should bring their own lunch, and also provide the food and lodging for the instructors. It was agreed that each person would pay 50 shillings to cover those expenses.

A western STS instructor had made travel arrangements to Africa so he could fit in a few days to go to this workshop to observe STS being taught in a remote village.

A week before the scheduled workshop the village pastor called, and asked, "Where is the money we need to host this training?"

"There is no money," the STS Director responded. "We have already told you what we do and what you need to do."

"I know what you said, but where is the money for the venue and the food?"

After some discussion, the pastor stood firm and demanded the funds or he would not host. This African Director wanted to bring this training to that region. He did NOT want to disappoint the western leader who was excited about being able to see a village workshop. Those were strong reasons for the director to back down and just say "Okay," so all could go forward as planned. The director said, "No I am sorry. If you and the villagers do not see the value of what we bring, and are not willing to be a part of supporting it, then we cannot come."

The pastor angrily responded. "Then it is cancelled!" And it was! In a relational culture, the decision by the STS Director to not give in and pay the pastor was rare and vital to stopping entitlement.

Two weeks later, the village pastor phoned back. "I was very angry that you would not pay. You are from the city and I know you have contact with the West. After a week, I decided to go visit the Oral Bible School I had heard about to see for myself what is so great that we should pay to be trained! Well I saw. I am calling to ask you to come train us. We are willing to support it and cover the cost as you asked. "

The ladies came to the workshop and paid their 50 shillings, but still, most of the men in the area held out. They stood outside and listened to the first story, and that is when the photo was taken. After the men heard one story, they paid their shillings and joined the ladies.

On this extra hot day, the only shade was inside the church. So everyone was quick to return from the tea breaks! This gave attendees a full, 5-day training and more! They now have their own Oral Bible School that they fully support.

Blessings,
Dorothy A. Miller

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Bonus Story Next

How Old Must One Be to Hear From God, or to Speak to Him? (From a mommy whose family uses STS in their home.)

As a family, we have been studying through the Bible. We just finished the plagues of Egypt. Our children, ages 3 and 5, intensely followed the story each evening. After each time we hear a story, we use questions that prompt lively discussion. The boys were especially amazed how during the plagues, Pharaoh continued to have a hard heart before God. We talked about how today we sometimes have hard hearts like that too.

Today over breakfast, I asked our 3 year old to pray and thank God for our food. He said "Okay," but his expression surprised me. He had become very serious and somber. I could even say he looked sorrowful. He closed his eyes, took a deep breath, letting it out slowly and thoughtfully and began to pray as I've never heard before. "Lord," he pleaded, "Oh Lord . . . we need your help. We really, really need it!" He then closed his fist and literally beat his chest a few times, over his heart and said, "Please Lord, please help me to not have a hard heart like Pharaoh! Please help me to obey my Mommy and Daddy and not have a hard heart! Thank you for this good breakfast. In Jesus' name, Amen."

I was quite touched by his prayer and didn't realize that I was staring at him, smiling and nodding in agreement. When he looked up at me, he gave me the response we'd just taught the boys. It was the response to use when you are talking to one person but someone else mistakenly thinks you are talking to them. He said, "Oh, I'm sorry, Mommy! I wasn't talking to you, I was talking to God." He then began eating up his breakfast while I sat thinking.

Once again I was surprised by the honest to goodness working of the Holy Spirit in such a tiny person's soul. As well, the spiritual insight coming from the mouth of a babe not only amazed me, his humble and sincere application convicted me. Lastly, I was blessed by the fact that he wasn't praying to impress Mommy. He wasn't saying what he thought I'd want to hear. This admission of need and plea for God's help was between my son and God alone. I was just privileged to listen in and hear what the Spirit had already done.

This mom called our office a week after sending the first report as she wanted to tell something more. She excitedly explained that of their two boys, Isaiah, the 3-year old, was the challenge, the strong-willed one. She told how separately, in the last few days, she and her husband had felt called to explain salvation to Isaiah. The 3-yr old listened. Then, over the weekend, she said, "I heard Isaiah very clearly explain to his 5-year old brother what you had to do to go to heaven.

"Only then," the mom said, "did I put all the events together. I realized that for the three days (after hearing about salvation), Isaiah had been unusually bubbly and full of happiness. But for some days before that, as we were talking in Bible study about the plagues and pharaoh's hard heart, he had been sad and withdrawn. In fact, we had seen that sadness, even before the breakfast prayer. Isaiah had been disciplined for something and had been crying. His dad had told to him to go into the bathroom and get a drink and wash his face. Then both of us overheard Isaiah in the bathroom sniffing and saying, 'I don't want to have a hard heart. I don't want to disobey mommy and daddy. I don't want to be like this.'"

The mom said she realized that at age 3, Isaiah had been under conviction for days. His change in disposition and his excitement as he explained salvation to his big brother showed he had asked Jesus to save him from his hard heart, and now Isaiah knew he was forgiven and going to heaven!

I guess 3-year olds have ears. "He that has an ear, let him hear." Is salvation just knowing information or is it a response of the spirit admitting our inadequacy and God's sufficiency? For all of us, at any age, I think what is needed is Listening and Responding! www.SimpleTheStory.org