



Broken Dreams.....Restored Dreams

Many things have happened since my last newsletter. One of my good Nigerian friends, Emma came to tell me his four month old son was sick and in the hospital. We had just had a naming ceremony at their house the week before. A few days later he came to tell me the baby had passed away from what the doctors reported as a heart defect. It is hard to know how to comfort someone when all the dreams they had for their first child have now been broken. I joined a group of their close friends and we all departed from the hospital together to have a small burial on the corner on their property, where they are building a house.



Emma with his wife and baby

Not long after comforting my friends at their baby's burial, I was having dinner at my friend's house when one of our graduated boys stopped by. He looked very sad and troubled. He had been working different jobs trying to earn money for himself and a friend to start a business. They had been dreaming of their future and planning how to make it happen, but now those dreams had been broken. He had gotten his girlfriend pregnant and her parents had sent her to his house and she was now his responsibility. I could tell that it was hard for him to tell us this devastating news and that he was looking for someone who would not condemn him, but would help him work through this issue and help him seek forgiveness. My heart was broken as I listened to his story and felt the pain of his broken dream.

Only two weeks later, I was treating one of my patients at the hospital when she turned to me and said she had just been diagnosed with HIV. The sight of her sad, hopeless eyes was enough to break your heart. She is not sure how she contracted it but most likely her husband had it and passed it on to her. I prayed with her and encouraged her that though her future dreams here on earth were broken, she still had hope knowing she would spend eternity with her Savior in Heaven.

BUT...

Not all dreams have to remain broken. Now I have started a ministry that I hope will help restore some people's broken dreams. Burns occur in devastating numbers here in Nigeria especially during the dry season from October to April. Many people are left with thick, ugly scars and spend the rest of their lives trying to hide their skin from staring eyes. The burn garment clinic I named "Healing Touch" has just opened. This clinic is for patients who have healed from burns within six months or less. We measure the patient and sew a garment out of neoprene or elastic type material that acts as an outer layer of skin. This garment puts pressure on the healing skin helping it to flatten out and therefore preventing it from developing into thick scars. The patients will wear the garment up to one year or more depending on when the skin is fully healed. I am hoping that with treatment and these pressure garments, people's skin will heal well and they will be free to go out and continue to follow their dreams.



Ogechi-burn patient

I am comforted in knowing that God knows everything before it even happens because he is in control of all things. He rejoices with us in our hopes and dreams and comforts us when dreams are broken and lives shattered. As I put this ministry in



Seamstresses Iyabo and Austin

God's hands, I know that he will guide me and he will accomplish all that he wants to happen in his good time.

The Sound of Division



The table was set and full of wonderful food we had cooked for our Christmas Eve meal. As we all set around the table eating and talking, we suddenly heard two or three blast echo in the night. We questioned who would be blasting rocks with dynamite at this hour. After finishing our meal, we began to get text messages that bombs had gone off in two different sections of the city. We all gathered on the balcony as we heard reports on the radio and from frequent text messages from friends in different areas of the city. Instead of piling on the couch and watching a good Christmas movie, we spent the rest of the evening sitting on the balcony listening to gunfire and updates on the status of the situation. One family had to spend the night on our compound because they were unable to get back to their house.

Christmas day was a morning filled with more gunfire as army had come in to help settle the situation. We were told not to leave our compound, which was not a problem as we had planned our Christmas meal on our compound together with

Nigerians who lived around us. Though the day was tense, we had a great time of fellowship with food and games.

I arrived at the hospital Tuesday morning to find a whole twenty bed ward full of injured victims from the bomb blast. Doctors reported that the weekend was crazy, as they were overloaded with injured people all coming in for treatment. That was the beginning of the next few busy weeks for all of us as we spent every day trying to treat all the patients with fractures, various wounds, and some needing amputations. Bulus, pictured above, is one of my patients who just happened to be in the market when one of the bombs went off. He sustained a fracture of his right leg, which required surgery and he had multiple wounds on his left leg which left him unable to move his foot. He is slowly improving, but is still unable to walk due to the injuries to both of his legs. Even though he is in pain during treatment, I have still been able to conjure up a smile and even a laugh now and then. I continue to pray for his healing.

I wish I could say that was the end of the fighting, but up until now the tensions are still high and sparks of various types of attacks still occur. This has now created a dividing line with the M*slims confined to their area and the Christians confined to their area. The peaceful time of the two living together does not exist right now. This has really put a damper on our ability to evangelize. We continue to pray and we know that God has no restricted area and he can touch their hearts wherever they live. As we go about our day periodically hearing gunfire and sirens, they just become sounds that remind us of the continued division.

Praise:

- Strength to continue ministry during all the unrest.
- Chance to minister and encourage the injured victims of the crisis.
- The opening of the Burn Garment Clinic.
- A new Physical Therapist coming to work at the hospital.

Prayer Request:

- Pray for peace in Jos and for the Christians to not retaliate with violence in the midst of the brutality.
- Pray for healing for all the patients in the hospital who are victims of the recent attacks.
- Pray for the new Physical Therapist who arrives from England this week, as she begins work in the midst of the unrest.
- Pray for Iyabo, Austin and I, as we begin work at the Burn Garment Clinic.
- Pray for me as I design the logo, brochures, and information packets for the Burn Garment Clinic.

Gay Lynn McCrady

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