

Different Cultures...Same Issues



I have just returned from a two week training trip to South Africa to establish summer camps for orphans of South Africa and beyond. Needless to say, the short time there proved to be both inspiring and depressing for me. It was certainly filled with the demise of any idealism I may have had about Africa. All the reading I had done about this country and the purposeful conversations I had with others connected with Africa, still didn't prepare me to absorb the culture that I found myself in.

I would say that in South Africa I came to be aware that family relationships generally are very fractured due to the issues of abandonment, addictions, abuse and sexual promiscuity. Glenda, a 40 year old African mother of two boys, described her bringing up as chaotic, overwhelming and lonely. By her own admission she believes her circumstance is very common throughout the country. She was abused by the age of 6 years old by many step-fathers. She also told me that as a teenager, when the last step-father came home from work, all the kids hid in their rooms until he left in the morning. Then one day he came home from work early, packed everything in the house into a trailer, and left all the kids and bills for his wife to deal with. Not a word was spoken, either from him or her mother since she found out. For over forty years she has kept those secrets and emotions inside her and has tried to be the "good girl" who never upsets anyone. Today she is beginning to take small steps to heal and find the courage to tell her story and to be a different kind of mother to her boys while they are still home.

Her story reminded me of the Courageous Parenting groups that I am involved with here at Genesis. Parents are given a chance to tell their stories (perhaps for the first time like Glenda) and get support as they seek restoration and healing in their own lives. They can then begin to move on into becoming the most influential person their children will ever have – and to love them deeply. All of these things require only one ingredient- a willing heart no matter where one lives or what circumstances they have had.

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Genesis and Summit Church will be hosting a half day seminar that will be based on the Courageous Parenting book and class on January 14th beginning at 8:30am and ending by 12:30pm. This is an open, no cost seminar. It will be held at the Summit Church facility. We also begin another 12 week class at Summit starting Tuesday, January 24th at 6:30 pm. If there are enough interested parents, a second class will begin at the Genesis office starting Thursday, January 26th at 6:30pm..

For more information about the seminar or class at Summit Church, contact Heather @ 509-443-8079. For the same class at Genesis call 509-467-7913 or go to our website at www.genesisinstitute.org.

