

CALL TO Prayer

JANUARY 2017

Discovering Forgiveness After Abortion

BY AN ENVISION SITE LEADER IN AFRICA

One of our main ministries here is teaching English to the predominantly unreached members of the majority religion. During a recent session with a group of young women, I came prepared to talk about finances.

Before proceeding, I asked what they wanted to discuss. One student wanted to talk about infertility, so we conversed about that for a while. After I asked about other topics they wished to discuss, one woman mentioned abortion.

This caught me completely by surprise, and I had no idea where to begin. I prayed silently for God to direct this conversation, and He did just that.

I asked why girls get abortions. Some of their answers included:

- The boyfriend won't take responsibility for the pregnancy
- Poverty
- A mother might force her daughter to have an abortion—or her father would kick her out of the house
- The shame of being an unwed mother

To estimate how many girls in this culture terminate their pregnancies, I asked, "If there were 20 girls in a room, how many would have abortions [if they had an unplanned pregnancy]?" They said 15. Of course it is done in secret, and they don't talk about it—not even with each other.



I asked the students if God forgives abortion. They were all pretty unanimous that He *cannot* forgive such a sin. So I asked if He forgives murder. They also thought that God would not pardon that.

Then I told them the story of David and Bathsheba—including David's murder of Uriah—and that God not only forgave David but also called him a man after His own heart. They listened intently.

We talked about some of the repercussions of abortion—depression and emotional struggles being two of them. I told them that in the United States support groups exist for girls who have had abortions. I also asked if they might be interested in having a post-abortion counselor come to talk with them and any friends they might want to invite. They were very open to the idea.

Pray that those in this class who have had abortions will come to know forgiveness, healing, and freedom from shame.

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Hospital Patient Meets Her Savior

BY STEVEN AND HEATHER HOLSENBACK,
SERVING IN MALI

Aminata was admitted to the Women and Children's hospital with breathing problems two days after delivering her baby. We were unable to diagnose her illness, and she endured long periods on a respirator.

Once Aminata recovered enough to use an oxygen mask, she heard the good news and became the first Jesus follower in her family!

The morning after her decision, midway through showing Aminata the *JESUS* film, a rainstorm rolled in. Lightning struck our generator and fried a primary hospital fuse, taking out our oxygen concentrators. Within seconds, Aminata began panicking as she suffocated. We tried to breathe for her, but without extra oxygen she deteriorated.

Knowing our power was unlikely to be restored soon, we sedated Aminata to make her more comfortable. As she slipped into unconsciousness, we whispered to her truths about her newfound Savior. And we wept, partly out of frustration from inadequate technology to diagnose her disease and that lack of electricity was taking her life—but also from great joy in knowing she will spend eternity with Jesus.

Our team shared Aminata's newfound faith with her extended family. Pray for

their salvation and comfort, as well as health for her baby, for whom they are caring.

A Call to Prayer for Aleppo

Last month, the C&MA issued an urgent call to prayer for the civil war-ravaged city of Aleppo, Syria. Syrian government forces battling to reclaim Aleppo from rebel fighters gained momentum, and the rebel-held eastern portion of the city experienced heavy bombing.

A cease-fire agreement was reached in December that included the evacuation of rebel fighters and civilians from the city. Despite ongoing violence, the evacuations proceeded sporadically. However, the situation remains volatile.

Pastor Abdallah of the C&MA church in Aleppo writes, "We are OK; church continues. Pray for us as we welcome many from east of the city. We see so many needs."

CAMA (Compassion and Mercy Associates, the Alliance relief and development arm) remains focused on providing aid to civilians living in Aleppo or recently displaced from the city.

Thanks to all Alliance people who have interceded for the city. Please continue to pray for the cease-fire to hold. Also, pray for the C&MA church of Aleppo, the safety of its people, the ongoing impact of its ministry, and that people will seek the Lord amid their suffering.

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