

Saving a Child's Life in Gabon

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August 1976



Old and new treatments co-exist in Africa. Very often patients are brought for modern medical care only after native remedies have failed; sometimes it's too late.

Last Sunday I experienced a little of the joys and sorrows a doctor goes through every day. My brother had come, late the night before, to say someone in his village had died and I could come the next morning to see the funeral preparations. So I came early, not eating. But instead of finding what I expected, I encountered his mother and other women from his family moaning and groaning, carrying a child who was close to death.

I didn't know quite what to do but I followed them back to their village, where they tried their native medicine to revive it, while my brother tried his best to convince them to take it to the hospital. Finally, as he was almost dead, they agreed and I ran to the road to hail a taxi. I've had a little experience with the general hospital here, as well as heard numerous gory stories, so I knew it wasn't the place to take a dying child. I took him to the doctor's clinic. Just the day before he had saved a child near death.

When we arrived it was 7:30 a.m.; I rushed upstairs where he lives and woke him. He came down immediately and did all emergency measures he could. The child was convulsing and practically not breathing and was almost cold. He said he was worse than the child of the day before. At one point, he even stopped breathing completely, and they had to rush in the oxygen and for the next hour and a half we anxiously watched as they gave him artificial respiration and oxygen. His eyes were open the whole time - he was fighting as well, but at last the danger was over, he was breathing naturally and he popped off to sleep.

What a miracle! It was such a beautiful thing to watch him go from death to life -- to know that Heavenly Father had spared him his life that someday he can live for His will. During that time I had to run all over Libreville to search for more oxygen, as another emergency case was brought in and we were almost out; the child next to him died. The doctor says usually they bring the children in too late after their own

native medicine has failed -- and often, after the life has been saved they don't continue the necessary medicine but return to the native, and so the child often dies after all.

He goes through that every week; each time his heart is torn and he must grieve because of the people's ignorance and his inability to change it at this time.

Something very interesting and exciting happened last week. There is a local theater that shows many old movies -- in French. Before each movie they show a short, 15-minute movie on something contemporary from life in France. One of our "brothers" went last week to see "The Godfather," because he had heard it was about American society (Yech!). Anyway, he was sort of witnessing to another "brother" when the short feature film went on the screen, and there was Reverend Moon!

His mouth dropped open, he got so excited he almost choked, and his friend apparently thought he had started going crazy as he cried, "It's them! It's them! That's the group." It was a 15-minute movie all about the family in France -- very beautiful, although it did show the negative press, the kidnapping by the parents of one of our sisters, etc., but he was so happy -- he had seen Reverend Moon and had seen, for himself, how joyous and beautiful our family is elsewhere.

He's naive enough that he didn't notice how, in small ways, they tried to throw a negative air to our activities -- after all, colorful scenes of our family in action speak louder than any false words. We went to see it a few days later and really it was quite well done. The people watching couldn't help but be impressed and ask how such a man could inspire so many beautiful young people. They gave excerpts from Rev. Moon's Madison Square Garden speech -- key points about Jesus' mission (that he didn't come to die, etc.). Really, they couldn't have done a better job unless they had been 100 percent for us.

I'm hoping other brothers and sisters in French-speaking countries had a chance to see it. It really raised our spirits, especially since everything is censored here; yet people were given a chance to see for themselves.