

When I was 9 years old, I surrendered my life to become a missionary - I read autobiographies about ordinary people giving their normal lives to become people on the mission field. I wanted to do the same, and I was drawn to Africa.

The Lord called me to Bob Jones University and I went willingly. I met a guy in missions class and we decided to go to Kenya, East Africa - we got married and were in our marriage a year and 3 months : we had 25% of our support. The rest of this story comes from my dad's perspective:

1994

Sara came home in August nearly eight months pregnant and with the “mother of all cases” of chicken pox. She was so brave throughout the ordeal. On October first she delivered our first grandson, Isaac David Guarisco. He weighed seven pounds fourteen ounces and was twenty-one inches long. He is such a good baby. He rarely cries, and has been in excellent health. On October, sometime before five in the morning, a blood vessel in Sara’s brain burst and bled for a few moments. At the hospital emergency room, the doctor gave us only a little hope for Sara’s survival, and even less for her recovery. He said that the bleeding was extensive, and there was a strong likelihood of serious damage. We had to give her to the Lord. He said the first 24 hours were the most critical in her survival. People began to pray.

That morning the students at our Christian school had a prayer meeting for Sara. Sara was mentioned for prayer in chapel at Bob Jones University, at Pensacola Christian College, and at Northland Baptist Bible College. By noon, we had word from our friends Paul and Karen Janke in Calgary, Alberta, that they had heard and were praying. Over the next several days people from all over the U.S. called or sent cards,

pledging their prayer. We heard from Hawaii, Korea, and Ireland. Many people prayed who didn't write to tell us. We could see Sara fill with strength and begin to improve. She proved wrong every prediction the doctors and nurses could make. They said she would be in intensive care "about two weeks." She was released after four and a half days. She was supposed to spend "at least two weeks in a private room." She spent four days. Then we heard she would need "from three to six months" in the rehabilitation hospital. She was sent home after twenty seven days. She is now walking with the help of an ankle brace and a cane, and can do a good job of helping with the baby. She still doesn't have use of her right arm but she is getting closer. We have spent much more time praising the Lord for His goodness than we have wasted worrying. He has answered more than we could ask or think.

When Sara was first in intensive care, a tape player was brought in and several good sacred music tapes. Curt purchased a CD player and took it to Sara, so she had Christ-honoring music playing whenever she was awake. The nurses said she needed stimulation to begin communicating. It wasn't long until she could hold up one finger for "yes" and two fingers for "no," even though she seemed somewhat confused at times. While she was in her private room she started trying to speak, but could only groan. In response her being asked to write down what she wanted us to do for her, she wrote, "ASAC ALONE" in large left-handed letters, but we didn't understand what she meant. She had been reversing the order of letters and repeating letters, as well as writing new ones we had never seen in other things she had written, and Curt thought she was saying "Sara alone." She was a little frustrated that we couldn't understand her, and then she wrote, "SARA AWAY" in the same large letters. We finally figured out that she

was saying, "Isaac alone - Sara away." That made perfect sense because she hadn't seen Isaac since her injury. It was the intense desire of her heart that she see her baby.

The day after she was transferred to the rehab hospital she was able to say "Isaac" for the speech pathologist, who was very pleased. Sara was also able to identify an object the therapist was holding and say "fork." both words were understandable, but neither was enunciated clearly. The therapist told us of the results of the testing she had administered to Sara, and of the course, of therapy she was going to use. She hoped Sara would be saying up to two words within the next two weeks. She explained that Sara couldn't speak because of the damage done to the left side of her brain where the speech center is located. She suggested that we could work with her in trying to "sing-song" words, as the music center is on the right side of her brain and was unaffected. When the therapist left, Curt asked Sara if she would like to try to sing along with a CD, and she held up one finger. He got out one of Sara's favorite CD's - May the Lord Find Us Faithful by Mac and Beth Lynch from The Wilds Christian Camp where Sara had worked before she had gotten married. Then Curt gave her the liner notes with the words, and put on "He Lifted Me," which is an old time hymn and our favorite. She tried to sing, but could only groan in a monotone. As we look back now, the words she was reading and trying to sing were especially meaningful.

In loving kindness Jesus came, My soul in mercy to reclaim to reclaim,

And from the depths of sin and shame,

Thro' grace He lifted me, thro' grace He lifted me.

From sinking sand He lifted me,

With tender hand He lifted me,
From shades of night to plains of light,
O, praise His name, He lifted me!

He called me long before I heard,
Before my sinful heart was stirred,
But when I took Him at His word, Forgiven,
He lifted me, forgiven, He lifted me.

From sinking sand He lifted me, with tender hand He lifted me, From shades of night to
plains of light, O, praise His name, He lifted me!

His brow was pierced with many a thorn,
His hands by cruel nails were torn,
When from my guilt and grief, forlorn,
In love He lifted me.

Now on a higher plane I dwell,
And with my soul I know 'tis well;
Yet how or why I cannot tell,
He should have lifted me.

From sinking sand He lifted me, With tender hand He lifted me, From shades of night to
plains of light,
O, praise His name, He lifted me!

--words by Charles Gabriel

The next song was "With a Voice of Singing."

With a voice of singing, with a song of praise,
With a heart of worship this joyous anthem raise!
With a glorious melody my tribute I'm bringing
To my dear Savior, with a voice of singing.

I will always sing the wondrous story,
The song of Jesus Christ who gave His life for me.
Sing of how he left His throne in glory

To take my place to bear the cross of Calvary.
I was lost but Jesus found me, found the sheep that went astray'
Threw His loving arms around me and drew me back into His way.

With a voice of singing, with a song of praise,
With a heart of worship this joyous anthem raise!
With a glorious melody my tribute I'm bringing
To my dear Savior, with a voice of singing.

Days of darkness still may seek to find me,

Again the path of sorrow weary feet may tread;

But my Savior's love is always with me

And by His hand I know my way is safely led.

He will keep me till the river rolls its waters at my feet;

Then He'll bear me safely over where my dear loved ones I shall meet.

With a voice of singing, with a song of praise,
With a heart of worship this joyous anthem raise!
With a glorious melody my tribute I'm bringing
To my dear Savior, with a voice of singing.

--words by Rowley

It was about this time when Isaac was brought into Sara's room for the first time. she unceremoniously wiped CD case and liner notes and her whole dinner onto the floor, and accepted her baby boy into her arms. We were asked to leave the room to allow the three of them some time to be alone as a family, when we were asked us back into the room, Sara was still peering into Isaac's face with as intense a love as anyone could imagine. We sat there rejoicing in seeing them together again, and trying to imagine how Sara felt. It was very hard not to cry for the joy we saw in her face!

I said, 'Sara, show how you can say 'Isaac.'"

Without taking her eyes off her baby she said clearly, "Isaac."

It was really hard now to keep from having a running and shouting fit," Then we asked her to say 'David.'" We knew that "David" required more than the simple exhaled words she had been saying, but very clearly she said, "David." We were surprised to hear her speak so quickly and clearly, and everyone was crying by now, and thanking the Lord.

Then we said with a laugh, "We'll wait until tomorrow to get you to say 'Guarisco'!" We all knew she couldn't say anything that complicated.

Sara said, "Guarisco" as clearly as she had ever said it, and then started

repeating, "Isaac David Guarisco" over and over, looking at the son she hadn't seen for nine days. Those words were so wonderful to hear coming from her lips, especially when we had been told that speech was often one of the last things to return.

Later, Isaac was being prepared to go home. We said to Sara, "Tell Isaac you love him."

Sara said, "I love you."

"Tell him you'll come home soon," he said.

"I'll come home soon." The words seemed to flow effortlessly.

After Isaac was gone, Sara motioned us to come over to her wheelchair, took our hands, looked at us, and said, "I just want you to know how much I miss you." It was like the Lord had flipped a switch and she started speaking. "Tomorrow, I want to go to the playground," she said. When we looked at her trying to figure out what she meant, she smiled and said, "I just made that up." She was practicing! We all laughed and hugged and cried and thanked the Lord for His goodness.

I am more than ever convinced of the value of Christian music which doesn't prey on the flesh through rock styles, but reaches the spirit by honoring the Lord.

We are so thankful for the effectual, fervent prayer of the many faithful Christians who even to this day keep Sara in their prayers. We are again reminded of the verses from II Corinthians 1:8-11.8 "...we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life:

9 But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead...

11 Ye also helping together by prayer for us, that for the gift bestowed upon us by the means of many persons thanks may be given by many on our behalf."

Sara's continued attitude since then has been exactly what she told one of her college friends who visited her in the hospital and said, "Sara, how can you stand to be like this?"

Sara's response was, "This is what the Lord has for me right now."

We have been so encouraged by her attitude and bravery. She is very eager to give the glory to her Savior Jesus Christ. Sara has three wonderful children, Isaac (19), Anna Joy (14), and Antone (12) She has never regained the use of her hand and arm, she walks with a limp, but she has overcome so many things. She has learned to do everything left handed, her non-dominant hand. Think of what it's like to only have one hand to do things. Even in the rehab hospital she taught herself to tie her tennis shoes with one hand. Try it sometime- cutting bread or holding down an onion or changing a diaper. Yet she cooks, knits and crochets, sews for her family, makes craft projects, does stamping, is a stay-at-home mom who can do anything with the kids, and most importantly trains her children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Her spirit is still so sweet, because she knows she can do nothing except through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Our prayer is that you have a personal relationship with the Living God so that you can experience that same help in time of trouble.

This is from my point of view-

People ask me if I've ever been discouraged or depressed- and I say NO- it would be easy to be, but the Lord is my strength and I can lean on Him for guidance! One time I read the documents that Victor wrote to the courts- I broke down and cried! It was awful! But I picked myself up (after 2 minutes) told myself that the Lord is my ALL- no

one can harm me without the Lord's knowledge- and I was encouraged! Look outside yourself and help other people. Grow in their walk with the Lord! But first, we need to read the Bible everyday-God will guide you every step of the way!

The Lord has been doing so much- not what I had planned in college, but the Lord is in control. After 17 years being married, my husband called me up and wanted a separation and a divorce. I was devastated, but I knew that he was unstable in ALL his ways from the very beginning! He divorced me a year later, and 6 days later asked if the kids could come to his wedding in 2 months. I told the Lord that He was my Saviour and I would trust in Him for guidance! The kids were very confused, and when he didn't pay very much to me- I couldn't get a house to live in. The pastor told me and the kids to come to Greenville and work in the horse ministry and the Lord impressed upon me that this was the right thing to do!

The kid's dad went ballistic, and told the courts that I child abused my children! That accusation was very hurtful, but it was the only way to get at me! When the kid's were told to say all this stuff about me on video, I gave them over to The Lord, and came down to Greenville to live on my own. I prayed all the time that The Lord would impress upon their hearts the need for love in their Saviour and ultimately their love for me!!

It took a year and a half and a lot of sadness, but my kids love and concern for me has returned! I am so grateful!!!! I know that the Lord worked mightily and I continue to praise Him every day!

The horse ministry is part of my life 3 days a week- it is incredible to see people come to the ranch- learn to ride horses, and get the gospel out through our lives

and work, but also by the testimony of the different riders! We have a 15 minute devotional every time we ride and many people are saved and/or get a fire put underneath them to read the Bible and pray!

I am active in sewing things for the ranch and selling them at the gymkhanas, and 2 days a week we have horsemanship apprenticeship with my parents as teachers! It's amazing how little I knew about the horses - I was around horses since I was 2 years old and it was instilled in me, but I am learning so much!

I am very thankful for the opportunity to see people saved and know that the Lord is in control- not me! I hurt for my kids, but I know that when I do see them, I need to be a sweet testimony to them and show them how I'm not bitter, just trusting the Lord to guide and direct me in all of life- especially in the choices I make !

Thank you - you are a blessing to me and the smiles and encouraging words mean the world to me!!