




**KIDS HELPING KIDS
PEACEMAKING!**

ETHIOPIA



Paul's Story

PEACEMAKING IN KENYA—TRIBES

My name is Paul I am ten years old. My father is Ibrahim. He is a Covenant pastor in South Sudan. We are from the Nuer tribe and because there is much fighting, especially between tribes, we left South Sudan and are now living in a refugee camp in Kenya. My father and other leaders of the church are working to bring peace among the tribes. They know this is what Jesus wants.

James Tang, the Covenant's missionary to South Sudan and a member of the Nuer tribe, is here to work for peace. "We are called to be ambassadors for Christ," he said. "If we don't do what the Bible says, then we are not representing Christ."

The South Sudan Refugee Peace, Reconciliation, and Healing Project is bringing together 250 people of different tribes to be trained as peace ambassadors in three camps located in Ethiopia and Kenya. My father is one of them and he brought me along to listen.

Pastor Tang facilitated the first conference meeting, which was held at the Kakuma Camp in Kenya, where I live. He said that Christ is the only one he represents. "I don't represent the rebels, I don't represent the government."

Pastor Tang invited pastors from the Dinka tribe to the first meeting. Seven walked through the Nuer section of the camp to attend. Pastor Tang said this was a very brave act. Once everyone was together, they discussed paths toward peace and worshiped together. They sang songs in each other's languages and washed one another's feet.

After the session, one of the Dinka pastors confessed to Pastor Tang that he had previously seen him only as Nuer but now considered him a brother in Christ. Soon my father will go and preach in a Dinka church. I told my father he was very brave for volunteering. He said, "It is what Jesus wants, it is Jesus's way. We are called to be peacemakers."



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Nana's Story

PEACEMAKING IN THAILAND—FRIENDS

Each day, Nana dressed her very best and wore little pink plastic earrings to school. Nana's school sits on the Thai side of the border with Myanmar. There are children from three ethnic groups in Nana's class, Karen, Thai, and Burmese. Nana's family is Karen.

A very pretty girl with straight black hair and gold earrings invited Nana to sit with her at school. Her nickname was Smile and she was Thai. At recess Smile grabbed Nana's hand and together they ran to the playground. "Let's get all the kids to play hide and seek!" Nana suggested.

But Smile's face turned sour. "Not those skinny kids, they are Burmese." Smile pointed to some of the kids and turned her nose up. Nana was confused, but she followed Smile because she wanted to be friends.

Day after day, Nana learned that Smile would play only with Thai children. The few "skinny Burmese kids" played by themselves.

Nana felt sad and a little ashamed. She knew that God didn't like it when people were not kind. That night, when her mom was saying bedtime prayers, Nana started to cry. She told her mom, "Smile asked me to take a toy from the skinny girl's backpack today. I didn't want to, but she made me. Then Smile put it in her own backpack!" Nana felt so sorry and sad, but she was also afraid of getting in trouble.

Her mother kissed her head. "I'm glad you told me, Nana," her mom said. "But why did you do something that you didn't want to do?"

"Because if I didn't she wouldn't play with me anymore! Smile always wants to boss me." Nana's big eyes searched her mother's.

"Nana," her mother said. "Smile is not the boss of you. Do you know who is the boss of you? God." Her mother smiled and hugged her. "God is the boss of you, and God will always help you to do the right thing, you just have to listen."

Nana was still nervous the next day when she pulled her hand from Smile's and went to play with the other kids. Smile was angry with her. But Nana prayed that God would help show Smile the right way. Nana remembered that God also loved Smile and wanted her to learn how to be kind.

For about a week Nana continued to play with the other kids, and she tried her best not to get upset when Smile made faces at her. Some of the other Thai kids joined the Burmese kids' game, and soon it was Smile who had the smaller circle of friends. Then one day, Smile joined the game. The Burmese kids looked doubtful at first, but they welcomed Smile anyway. Now Nana, Smile and all the children play together.



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Serophine's Story

PEACEMAKING IN CAMEROON—FAMILY

My name is Serophine and I am nine years old. I live in Cameroon and I'm the firstborn child from a family of five children. My mother is a housewife and my father is a taxi driver. When I was seven I was sick and had a wound on my three left fingers. My parents did not help me. They did not love me. I was as good as dead to them. They wanted to get rid of me because I could no longer help with the house chores. I groaned in pain, and each day my fingers were getting worse. I thought God would help me, but no one was listening.

But our neighbor was listening to God. One morning, this Christian woman just came and packed my few dresses and said we are going to the hospital. Our family was not Christian. I couldn't understand why she would help me, but at the same time I was so happy that someone would care for me even though we were different.

When I got to the hospital, they discovered I had Hansen's disease, also known as leprosy. In the hospital, there is a leprosy camp for patients who are on medication and have no place to go because their families have rejected them. During that time God gave me another father who was the head of the department of Hansen's disease. He took me to the leprosy camp. There, I was to live with a woman and her two daughters. I worried that she and her daughters would reject me. But when I arrived she and her two little daughters, Faith and Hanna, happily welcomed me with a broad smile. I was told my new mother was treated for Hansen's disease fifteen years ago.

Now I have a loving mother and two sisters in my new home and a father who checks on me almost every day. All of them love Jesus and I know Jesus loves me and saved me. I feel so grateful that I am not alone and I found another home.





Mary's Story

PEACEMAKING IN KENYA—RELIGIONS

My name is Mary. I live in the Waata Muslim community in Kenya. We are separated and despised by other communities. My community is poor and very small in number. We have always been hunters and gatherers but now we cannot hunt because the government has banned hunting. If we are lucky we can eat once a day. I am fortunate because I have one dress. But my younger sister has no clothes and none of us has shoes. Sometimes when my parents are out in the forest looking for water or wild fruits they are attacked by wild animals. If they are hurt there are no doctors or clinics. There are also no schools. The government will not provide these things for us. If we want to go to school we have to walk more than three miles to the Pokomo community but have to be on the lookout for water buffaloes and hippopotamuses that will attack us if they see us.

One day a Christian man came to our community. His name is John. He is a Covenant pastor and said God told him to come. Christians despise us but Pastor John came to bring hope and

peace. Our community has never known a Christian like Pastor John. He spends time with us. He values us and is working to make life better for us. Pastor John shows us what Jesus is like. I, and my family are Muslim but we have experienced Jesus's love.

There is still a lot of fear and the Muslims from Waata and the Christians from Pokomo do not trust each other. A woman in our community was disowned by her family when she married a Christian man from Pokomo. His family said marrying a woman from Waata would bring bad luck to their family.

It is not easy for people to change their ways. Those of us from Waata who go to school in Pokoma are looked down on by the other children. So we seek God's guidance to overcome the challenges. I'm thankful we have Pastor John and the Covenant Church to help us. Perhaps one day there will be peace and love shared between the people of Waata and Pokomo, between Muslims and Christians.





Nyayual's Story

PEACEMAKING IN SOUTH SUDAN—WAR

My name is Nyayual and I am eleven years old. I lived in the refugee camp in Malakal, South Sudan. I am a member of Nuer Tribe and a member of the Evangelical Covenant Church of South Sudan. When war broke out two years ago we were forced to leave our home and we came to this camp along with 48,000 other South Sudanese. The camp was set up by the United Nations and Covenant World Relief helps provide money for food, clothing, and medical supplies.

At the beginning of this year, soldiers came into the camp and started shooting people. The entire Nuer section of the camp was burnt down to ashes. Many people died including five people from our church. Two of the women were my friends, Nyaweeka and Nyayual. Nyayual has the same name as me.

When the fighting started we fled to escape the bullets and the fire. There were thousands of us who had to run from the camp. I was separated from my family. This was true for many of us. I

walked along with some other children, younger than I, who did not know where their parents were either.

We were all afraid. We did not know if the soldiers would come after us, or what we would eat or drink or where we would go, or if we would ever see our parents again. We just walked along with a crowd of other people.

Because we had to flee so quickly, we had nothing except the clothes we were wearing. This war makes life very hard. While we walked I prayed to God that my parents were okay. I cried for those who died. I was told by some of the others we were headed to another refugee camp in Ethiopia where the people from the Covenant Church of South Sudan and Ethiopia were there to help us. But I was also told it was many days away. I prayed I would find my parents and that we would survive and that God would bring peace.





Kisemvo's Story

PEACEMAKING IN DR CONGO—DIFFERENTLY-ABLED

My name is Kisemvo and I live in DR Congo. I can't walk. My mom cares for me but my father thinks I'm worthless because I can't walk. He never talks to me except to say something mean. He will not let me go to school. There is no peace in our house because my father is always angry at me and thinks I can do nothing.

One day my father had to take a moto-taxi to the other end of town. He hailed the moto and got on, without agreeing to a price beforehand. When they got to the destination he stopped the driver, and gave him 200 francs (about 20 cents). The driver said, "No, it's 500 francs!" and they began to fight.

A child in a wheelchair came by and heard them fighting, and tried to get them to stop. He asked them in French why they were fighting. The moto driver told the child that my father only wanted

to pay 200 francs but the price was 500. The child reached into his pocket and pulled out a 500 franc note and gave it to the driver. Then he told my father to go on his way.

This profoundly affected my father—here was a child with the same disability as me who spoke French and had a 500 franc bill in his pocket! My father came home and told us that he had changed his mind about me. He decided a person with a disability could do some things better than a person without a disability. He said he had been wrong to say bad things to me and not send me to school. The next day my father enrolled me in school. It is a good school where I am accepted. Peace has come to our home because the school accepts me and because of the kindness of the boy in the wheelchair who helped my father.



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Emmnauel's Story

PEACEMAKING IN SOUTH AFRICA—POVERTY

I am Emmanuel and I am eight years old. I live in Willowfountain, South Africa. Many years ago people with white skin forced those who had black skin to live in this place. This is a poor place. For many years there were no schools here and the fathers all had to leave to work in the fields or factories. The fathers, including my father, still have to leave today to work in the same places their fathers worked. They do not make a lot of money and they are not home with their families. I see my father only for a few days each year.

My mom was very sick and died when I was two. There was no one to care for me except my grandmother. She was also sick and she had trouble walking. When I was little sometimes I would hear noises outside. I would run out to see what it was. My grandmother would try to stop me but I went anyway.

There were young men yelling at each other and fighting because they could not get a job. They were angry. One man got pushed

and fell on top of me. It hurt and I started to cry. He just laughed at me. I was cut and bruised. I ran back in the house to grandmother but she was laying down. She was too weak to help me. So I laid down next to her and cried.

Then some women started a preschool for children 0-5 years old. It is called a crèche. I was one of the first children to go to the crèche. The women are very kind and gave me food to eat and cared for me during the day. I learned songs and words and how to be nice to others.

At night I was with my grandmother but during the day I was always at the crèche. It was much safer then to be out on the streets. It is a peaceful place.

Now that I am eight I go to school. The things I learned at the crèche have helped me in school. I am thankful for the women at the crèche who took care of me when I was young to provide a peaceful place in a very poor and hurting place.





Quri's Story

PEACEMAKING IN ECUADOR—PERSECUTION

My name is Quri. I am seven years old and I am Kichwa and live in Lote Tres, Ecuador. My people are indigenous to Ecuador. Long ago my tribe was enslaved and later given very poor land to live on at about 12,000 feet of elevation in the mountains near Cayambe, Ecuador. They called it Lote Tres (Lot 3).

Not much grows in Lote Tres. So we do not have much food. We grow onions but do not get much money for them. We are poor because of the land we were forced to live on and we are looked down on by others. Many families are separated because fathers and some teens have to leave to find work. They send money back but cannot be with their families.

It is even harder for those of us who are Christian. I am part of the Evangelical Covenant Church of Ecuador. Because we are Christian and Kichwa we are often seen as the lowest of the lowly. We are made fun of and we have even had our water and power turned off because we are Christian.

Pastor Segundo Farinango is the pastor of the Peace of God Covenant Church in Lote Tres, Ecuador. The Covenant Church of Ecuador and Covenant World Relief are working to bring peace

to our part of the world. They are developing a dairy association in which milk is collected and stored in a cooling tank where it can be sold at a higher price. Eventually, the association will produce cheese and yogurt in addition to milk. This will give us more money so we can survive.

Both members of the church and those outside of the church form the association. My father is now part of the association and he doesn't have to leave to make money. I used to be sad because my father would leave for long periods of time. I love having my father near us every day. When others make fun of me, my father wraps his arms around me and tells me he loves me and Jesus loves me.

Because the milk association is helping many members of the community that aren't from the church we are hoping the project will improve our relationships with neighbors and help bring people to Christ. Maybe people will stop making fun of us and will see that we are kind and loving like Jesus. Even though others may be unkind, we are reaching out with peace. We are working together to make life better for all Kichwa. I am grateful for Covenant World Relief, I am grateful for Pastor Segundo and I am grateful for Jesus who shows us the way to peace.



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Levis's Story

PEACEMAKING IN KENYA—MOTHERS

My name is Levis Barasa, I am ten years old. I have a younger brother and four younger sisters. I never knew my father and I was separated from my mother Sarah when I was 4 years old. My mother was very poor and could not afford to take care of us. This is true for many mothers in my community. It is hard to work and care for children. The jobs available for mothers pay less than for men, making it even more difficult. So my mother left my younger brother Andrew, my sister Yasmin, and I to stay with our grandmother in another town.

Life was hard. Grandmother was getting old. Sometimes she took care of us and sometimes we took care of her. When our mother came to visit us at Christmas time, my brother and I found it very difficult to call her mama so we called her by her name, Sarah. This made my mother sad. It was hard for her not to be around us and take care of us. We were sad too.

A year later, our grandmother sent me to live with my mother's older sister in Kapenguria, while my brother Andrew and sister Yasmin stayed with her. She could not feed all of us anymore. She was getting very old and could not do as much work as she used to.

I was happy to live with my auntie because I got to be close to my cousins. My two cousins attended school in Kapenguria and I wished I could too but my auntie could not afford to put me into school because she did not have enough money to cover the fees. Whenever my cousins would go to school, I was left alone at home to wash dishes, clean the house, and go to the river to fetch water while my auntie went to work tilling people's farms, harvesting their crops, and washing their clothes so that she could get money to buy food for us.

Through the help of Covenant World Relief, I am now in school and my mother was able to come to work in the village where her sister lived. I now live with my mother.

Since September of 2013 we have never been separated, now I call my mother, mama because I feel very close to her, I pray that one day my mother will have enough income to bring my brother Andrew and my sister Yasmin to live with us, then maybe they too can have a chance to build their relationship with our mother and call her mama too.





Sami's Story

PEACEMAKING IN SYRIA—REFUGEES

I am Sami and I am eleven years old and have a four-year-old sister and six-year-old brother. There is war in my country of Syria. Bombs took the lives of some of my friends and family. My parents Omar and Amina knew if we stayed we might be next. So we left our home, our neighborhood, in the hope of finding safety in Europe. We are among almost 5 million people who have had to flee the war.

We travelled by car to Lebanon, sold it for a small sum of money and then took a flight to Istanbul, Turkey. That's when our journey became really difficult. In order to get to the coast, we had to trek through the mountains of Turkey. It was very hard scrambling and hiking through the mountains. My sister, brother, and I complained—the mountains seemed to go on forever. Day after day we stumbled through the mountains. Our legs hurt, our hands were cut and scrapped, and our feet were sore. We were a long way from home and far from the end of our travels.

Finally we made it to the Turkish coast. My father talked with some smugglers about taking our family by boat to the shores of Greece. He paid them money and we got into a boat with many

other families. It is a dangerous crossing. Sometimes the boats sink because there are too many people in them.

My brother, sister, and I were afraid, water sometimes splashed into the boat. But my parents held on tight to us and we were fortunate to reach the shores of Greece. Our legs were shaky when we stepped out of the boat onto shore. But we were thankful to be alive and away from the war.

We had been outside for a long time trekking through the mountains and across the water to Greece. We were cut, bruised, tired, hungry, and dehydrated. We were in need of food, medical care and shelter. Thanks to Covenant World Relief we were able to receive these things. Our cuts and bruises are healing, and we have even been able to play some in the refugee camp.

We are not yet at the end of our journey. We must move on to another country to find a new home. We are unsure where the journey will end. Pray that we will one day have a new home and live in peace.





Mahant's Story

PEACEMAKING IN NEPAL—DISASTERS

I am Mahant. I am eight years old. My mom and I were on the way to the market to purchase some grain to make bread when the ground started to shake. Suddenly, the buildings and houses around us began to collapse. A cloud of dust and smoke filled the air. I could not see anything. I shouted for my mom but choked on the dust. I could feel my mom's arms around me, holding me as the ground continued to shake. People around us were screaming.

When the dust cleared, I could not believe my eyes. The entire village was destroyed. There were just piles of rubble where houses and buildings once stood. My mom took my hand and we ran back to where our house was. But it was destroyed. The roof lay on top of the ground with the collapsed walls underneath.

My mom started screaming and crying out for my father who was in the house. But there was no answer. We tried to move the roof but it was too heavy. Others nearby were doing the same thing. But it was hopeless. The bricks were too heavy to move.

The next day some men and soldiers came and began looking for people buried in the rubble. Eventually they came to our house. After removing the roof and some of the walls they found my father. He was dead. This made my mom and I very sad.

In the days that followed I discovered that many of my friends and relatives also died in the earthquake. They were dead and I was still here but I no longer had a home. My mother took me to a brick making site. My mother and I sat under a tarp and made bricks. The brick site is now my home.

I miss my father a lot. I miss my friends too. I am sad and worry that an earthquake will come again. I am thankful for the Hindustani Covenant Church who gave us blankets, mosquito nets, and mats. It is the beginning of finding peace after the disaster.




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Nyla's Story

PEACEMAKING IN ETHIOPIA—WAR

It was a long journey from our camp in South Sudan to Gambella, Ethiopia. When I arrived, people from the Covenant Church of South Sudan and Ethiopia gave me food and a place to stay. The next day we began the search for my parents. A woman named Dorcas helped me search for three days but we could not find them. Dorcas told me not to give up. More people kept coming into the camp each day and each day we would stand near the gate and watch for them. Finally, on the fifth day I saw them. I saw my parents and called out to them. They ran to me. We cried tears of joy when we found each other. My parents couldn't stop hugging me.

We were given food and a place to live with the help of Covenant World Relief and the Covenant Church of South Sudan and Ethiopia. I thanked Dorcas for her help. Dorcas smiled then went to help other children find their parents.

A week later our camp in Gambella was attacked by another South Sudanese tribe who came across the border into our camp. They

took the cattle which provided food for the camp and they began shooting at us. They killed many people. Forty-one people from the Covenant Church of South Sudan and Ethiopia died. The same people who were trying to help us. Some of those who died were children. I cried for the children and I cried when I heard that Dorcas had also died. Ethiopian soldiers finally chased the attackers away. But I have not found the two children that walked with me to the camp here in Gambella. I don't know if they are alive. These are sad days.

Why is there so much anger? Why do people take from each other instead of sharing? Why do people kill others because they are different? Jesus tells us to love each other. I pray for peace. I pray that God will not let my heart be filled with hate.

We are grateful for our sisters and brothers in the United States who give money so we can survive in this camp. It is not easy, but for now you have helped provide a place for us. For the moment there is peace.