



Every child matters to God



# TORCH

A PUBLICATION OF GOD'S GRACE FOUNDATION

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## God's Grace Foundation's vision

To reach the children of the nations for Jesus

## God's Grace Foundation's mission

To reach children by meeting their spiritual, physical and social needs so they can become all that God created them to be.

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## welcome

**H**appy New Year. We are most grateful to God for giving us the opportunity to see another year. We thank God for what we were able to achieve last year in GGF. We know that "unless the Lord builds the house, they labour in vain who build it" and we give Him all the glory forever and ever.

We appreciate all our partners and all those who donated to GGF last year, thank you for associating with us, may God reward you abundantly and enlarge your coast. We are all important in God's harvest field because we all have a part to play.

We are looking forward to this year when more children and young people's lives will be transformed by the power of God.

Every blessing,  
Olumide & Dupe Makinde

## Girlz Empowered Event "for teenage girls"

My Total Image ... inside out.

Saturday, 1 March 2008  
3 - 6:30pm

Emmanuel Baptist Church,  
Yarnton Way,  
South Thamesmead, DA18 4DR



## 2008 Key Dates

- January 19 GGF Team Meeting
- March 1 Girlz Empowered
- April 26 EXCEL (Teenage Boys)
- May 3 GGF Team Meeting
- June 7 Day of Prayer for Children at Risk
- July 12 Summer Fundraising Event
- August 2 GGF Team Meeting
- September 27 Girlz Empowered
- October Visit Sponsored Children In Nigeria
- November 8 EXCEL
- December 6 Annual General Meeting

## HELP RAISE MONEY FOR GGF WHILE YOU SHOP.

Log on to  
[www.simplefundraising.co.uk/2438](http://www.simplefundraising.co.uk/2438)  
or  
[www.buy.at/ggf](http://www.buy.at/ggf)



# GGF NEWS

by Kemi Onafuwa

**'When God gives a vision, He makes provision'** is certainly our testimony in GGF. We have seen God open doors in many areas for the Foundation. The application submitted to the charity commission was successful and GGF is now a **Registered Charity** in England and Wales, the registration in Nigeria should be completed in the coming months. Have you visited [www.Godsgracefoundation.org](http://www.Godsgracefoundation.org) lately? This colourful and user friendly **website** was paid for by one of our sponsors.

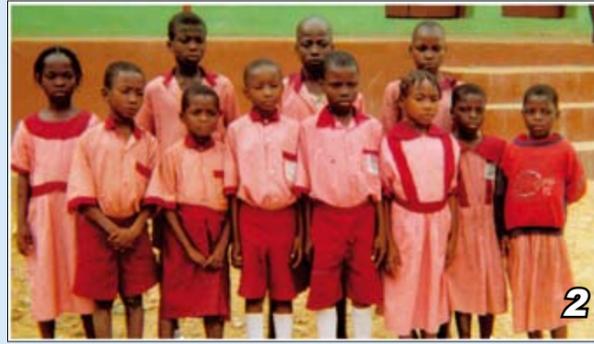
On the events side, we have been busy. We started 2007 with a prayer event for marriages in February. We saw the launch of **'Girلز Empowered'** - a forum where teenage girls are equipped and empowered to make a successful transition from childhood to adulthood. We kicked off with two amazing workshops - 'Self-Esteem' at the April meeting and 'Relationships' at the November meeting.



The **summer fundraising event** was a great success. We had another sponsored walk and almost everyone from the 2006 event joined us again for the 2007 walk. This time we walked from Woolwich to Greenwich. The day was gloriously sunny and the route was lovely - we walked on the river front in Woolwich, went through Charlton Park and what better way to end than with a picnic in the magnificent Greenwich Park! Thanks to all the walkers, sponsors, friends and family, we raised £1,400.

By the grace of God we can report that the **scholarship programme** is going well. We implemented a part scholarship

scheme for the current academic year and 6 children are benefitting from it. We also have twenty children continuing on full scholarship. All in all 2007 was busy but lots of fun.



Our **programme for 2008** is even more exciting. We have two Girls Empowered meetings scheduled for March and September, the day of prayer for children at risk is in June and the summer fundraising event is in July. In April we will be launching EXCEL (a programme for teenage boys) and in October we will be visiting



the sponsored children in Nigeria. Full details of events will be posted on the website.

We are confident that it is God's desire that we transform lives so if you are already supporting GGF, we thank you. If you are not, we ask you to join us and let us together make a difference in a child's life.

*Kemi is the PR/Communications co-ordinator for GGF and a member of the Management Board.*

## Life is for Living

By Lola Anuwe



**'Life is for living'** is a phrase I have heard several times especially from those in the throes of youth, and I well and truly agree with it, but I have also come to the conclusion that it depends on how you do the 'living'. God's intention is for us to enjoy life to the fullest but many of us really do not know how to 'live the living' the way He intended.

In society today there is a lack of real peace and joy and the cascading effects can be seen in many homes and lives. People fight, bicker, moan and complain, many live with anger, depression, low self-

esteem and the many ills that can affect a person's wellbeing. Living without this peace and joy is a miserable existence because it is not God's plan.

How many of us wake up with a smile? Do you feel any joy on a cold, grey rainy day? When was the last time you had a good laugh, a real hearty laugh that comes from within? When was the last time you felt the love of God that brings peace?

**God's intention is for us to enjoy life to the fullest but many of us really do not know how to 'live the living' the way He intended.**

How many have really experienced true joy and peace? The kind of peace David spoke about when he wrote "But Lord, you are a shield over me. You are my glory. You have lifted up my head. I shouted aloud to the Lord. He answered me from his holy mountain [1]". The peace that is ever present regardless of the chaos around, peace in the midst of a raging and relentless storm. This peace and joy is not the fleeting feelings that comes and goes. No! It's the peace and joy that is always there, it never goes away - like an

ever flowing river.

The time has come when we need to seek and experience God's true peace and joy. We need to learn to enjoy the moment. We need a child's heart and learn to just drop everything and savour the moment. It is true that we experience knocks here and there, things might not go the way we want, life has its many frustrations but there is a lot to be thankful for.

We seem to be losing the ability to enjoy the small things of life because we fail to realise how blessed we are. The fact that we are alive is enough to be thankful for! Can you eat? Be thankful! Can you drink, sleep, feel the rain, see the sunset, are there people you love or who love you? Be even more thankful.

People are looking in strange and diverse places for true joy and peace that can only be found in God. When we live the way God intends is when our lives can start to affect others, people can see God in us and yearn for what we have. There is a brand new day coming into your life and God will renew it every day with His peace and joy. "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you [2]".

[1] Psalm 3:3-4, [2] Matthew 7:7

*Lola is a member of GGF's Management Board.*

The teenage years can represent the greatest challenge in parenting. Jewish philosophers point to two major transitions that take place when growing up. The first one is from the womb to the world. This is a transition that is traditionally well supported and managed.

The second transition is from childhood to adulthood. According to Jewish philosophers this begins at the age of 13. This transition is one where parents can often be perplexed by their children's reactions, unsure how to parent or even if to parent at all.

### Increasing boundaries, increasing responsibilities

As children grow older their sense of freedom grows but with increased boundaries comes increased responsibilities. When they are still children, you make every decision for them, what they are allowed to do, when and with whom. All of this is part of their training and preparation for adulthood. A teenager, however, is no longer a small child, dependent on you for all their life choices, he or she is now a young adult capable of making independent decisions.

As such you should be seeking to negotiate boundary lines with them and even the penalties for crossing the boundaries. As mature adults they will not have your input on these matters forever but you hope that they will make wise decisions, based on all that you have taught them. It is important to gradually allow them to make some of these decisions. A large part of being an adult is about being willing to take responsibility for your own actions. All actions have consequences; a wise adult is aware of these consequences before setting out to do anything.

This does not mean that we allow our young adults to do whatever they please. For example they can't stay out partying every night but it does mean that you need to enter into a dialogue with your children.

### Building relationships with your adult-child

The real right to hold such a dialogue comes out of building a strong relationship with your child. Some of this relationship will have been formed in the earlier years as you took time to listen to all they had accomplished but now there needs to be a shift in the relationship towards friendship.

In this friendship you are the older and hopefully wiser friend and want to share some of your life experiences and mistakes to help guide, though not control, your younger friend. In this constructive relationship you are seeking to build the young adult in your care, not to knock the child into line. This is all part of transition from childhood to adulthood. It does not happen overnight, but it should be what you work towards.

### Work on building them towards their dreams

All parents have dreams and visions for their children but children too have their own dreams. One mum had a desire for her teenage son to be a lawyer, one day he turned to his mum and said, "I don't want to be a lawyer, I want to be a TV presenter". Shocked, the mum went away, with her dreams shattered. She returned to him a few days later to discuss what it would take to be a TV presenter and to see how they could start to work towards his dreams.

This affirmation and simply listening to her son enriched the relationship between them. They became more like friends and

were less in conflict.

### The art of listening to your teenager

So how do you listen to your teenager? In everything they say they are sharing their frustrations, their emotions, their dreams and their struggles, but only if you take the time to listen to them. Even an angry reaction to a boundary you have in place can be an opportunity to share at a deeper level once things have calmed down.

"I noticed you were really angry when I said you needed to be back by 9pm. Did you feel restricted? Can I explain to you what my concerns are and see if we can do something about them or come to some compromise."

If they make a comment such as, "You never have time for me", make sure that you make time for them - that they feel you've heard them. If they know you will listen and are non-judgmental, they will be more likely to share things with you, so that you will have an opportunity to influence them.

Know their friends. One of the greatest influences in the lives of teenagers is their friends. As a parent you have a duty to find out who those friends are and to get to know them. If their friends are at your house playing at least you know what they are up to than if they are out on the streets.

Understand their weaknesses (while perceiving them as adults) and pray for them. We all have character flaws and younger people often have more flaws, as character is grown over time. Take hold of specific weaknesses you see in your children and pray them through. If you have cultivated a relationship with your teenager you will be able to talk about it with them. But be prepared to allow them to point out your weaknesses too, as you seek to develop your friendship with them.



## TEENAGE TIMES

by Olly Goldenberg

### Encourage their walk with God

Encourage your teenager to be actively involved in church as much as they desire. Go out of your way to nurture their life with God. Buy them whatever Christian music they ask for. The more input they are willing to receive the stronger they will grow in God. Part of letting go of your child and allowing them to be an adult is to let them meet with God for themselves, through the influence of others.

### Parenting prevails

There will be times when you will have to restrict your teenagers. In all that we have said about discussing and giving freedom, boundaries will still be needed to keep your child safe. But if you enforce the boundaries in an environment where things can be talked through and reasons for the boundaries are clearly explained and where love and respect exist between a parent and child, then there will be a greater willingness to accept the boundaries. When you treat them as adults many teenagers will rise to that level of responsibility.

As you guide your children in this key stage of transition, remember, it requires as much wisdom, patience and prayer as the first transition from womb to the world. Enjoy your teenagers as you help them reach their potential in Christ

*Olly is the Children's Pastor at Kensington Temple London City Church, [www.kids.kf.org](http://www.kids.kf.org)*



## Support GGF While You Shop!

We have signed up to an online fundraising scheme which means that every time you shop online through [www.simplefundraising.co.uk/2438](http://www.simplefundraising.co.uk/2438) or [www.buy.at/ggf](http://www.buy.at/ggf) a donation is made to God's Grace Foundation.

Retailers such as Amazon, eBay, Argos, Tesco, HMV, PC World, Boots, Harrods, Carphone Warehouse, Disneyland Paris, Esure are some of the over 200 companies participating. These retailers will NOT charge you any extra but instead they offer you incredible savings and pay us from their profits.

This is an exciting opportunity for God's Grace Foundation and we will really appreciate your support. Every time you shop, remember you are giving as well.

# God's Passion for Children

by Dupe Makinde

"Beware that you don't despise a single one of these little ones, for I tell you that in heaven their angels are always in the presence of my heavenly Father. If a shepherd has one hundred sheep, and one wanders away and is lost, what will he do? Won't he leave the ninety-nine others and go out into the hills to search for the lost one? And if he finds it, he will surely rejoice over it more than over the ninety-nine that didn't wander away! In the same way, it is not my heavenly Father's will that even one of these little ones should perish". [1]

As I reflect on this verse, I can see that God is passionate about children. Passion means fervour, delight, excitement, enthusiasm, commitment, dedication and devotion. He wants children and young people to be saved and have abundant life, He wants them to experience and know Him personally. He wants them to come to Him so He can touch their lives and bless them.

A teacher friend of mine was telling me about her conversation with God concerning the children in her class. She was thinking of leaving the school because of the behaviour of some of her pupils but God was saying it was not yet time to leave. God told her how much He cared about those young people in her class. According to her, those words changed her perception, she now relates with her pupils with an understanding of God's love for them. She rebukes them when they misbehave but she doesn't hold it against them. Isn't that the same way with God? He rebukes us when we sin but he doesn't hold our sins against us.

## A role to play

We all have a role to play in making sure our children have a personal encounter with God, we need to make sure that they know God for themselves. This is important because they need to be touched by God. The spiritual child is the child who knows God personally, a child who has received Jesus as his or her personal saviour.

"One day some parents brought their children to Jesus so he could touch them and bless them, but the disciples told them not to bother him. But when Jesus saw what was happening, he

was very displeased with his disciples. He said to them, "Let the children come to me. Don't stop them! For the Kingdom of God belongs to such as these. I assure you, anyone who doesn't have their kind of faith will never get into the Kingdom of God. Then he took the children into his arms and placed his hands on their heads and blessed them". [2]

In order to ensure that children and young people's lives are touched by God, we need to introduce them to Jesus by presenting the gospel in the language they understand. "But how can they call on him to save them unless they believe in him? And how can they believe in him if they have never heard about him? And how can they hear about him unless someone tells them?". [3]

We need to get the attention of our young people; they are looking for security in things or people to fill a void that can only be filled by God. Many of our teenagers are confused, they are dealing with issues that are greater than them. Some of our girls are dealing with low self esteem which makes them vulnerable to all sorts of abuse and bad relationships. On 5 December 2007, the BBC reported that more and more girls were being targeted and groomed for prostitution. In some cases girls as young as 10 are believed to have been groomed by youths pretending to be boyfriends. They are then passed on to older men and end up in prostitution. Boys are joining gangs everyday because of insecurity and the need to feel important. They need to know that God is the true source of self esteem, security and significance.

**We need the Holy Spirit to transform their lives because we cannot do anything of lasting value by ourselves but our sufficiency is of God.**

## We need the Holy Spirit

As we prepare to reach out to them, we need to seek God's face consistently in prayer in order to release His power into the lives of our children and young people. Let us adequately prepare in prayer before our activities, classes or events. We need the Holy Spirit to transform their lives because we cannot do anything of lasting value by ourselves but our sufficiency is of God. We also need to pray for more workers in the children and youth ministry. He said to His

disciples, "the harvest is so great but the workers are so few. So pray to the Lord who is in charge of the harvest; ask him to send out more workers for his fields". [4]

Children are not to be despised or looked down on. To us they might seem insignificant, like the lost sheep, but to God they are precious. He cares about every single child and wants to reach them with His love because only the power of God that can truly transform lives.

[1] Matthew 18:10 -14 NLT, [2] Mark 10:13 -16 NLT, [3] Romans 10:14, [4] Matthew 9:37-38 NLT

Dupe is the Director of GGF.



# Why We Need To Pray For Our Children

by Toyin Osinibi

It is always in the mind of God to walk with our children. In Genesis, He spoke to Abraham about his seed possessing the cities of their enemies [1], but rather than the seed (our children) possessing the gate of the enemy, the enemy is possessing the gate of our children through diverse means. Children do not want to be a tool in the hands of the enemy neither do they want to have a frustrated future, but unfortunately we can see that many children are becoming victims of the enemy's attack.

The reason is in Genesis 3 verse 15 which says "And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel." Right from the beginning a battle had been announced not by Satan but by God that the seed of the woman will bruise the head of the seed of the serpent and the serpent's seed will

bruise the heel of the woman's seed. The enemy does not wait to see the seed of the woman bruising his head first for him to retaliate. No, he knows that if that happens that will be the end of him, so he tries to get his punch in first.

He launches his attacks on our children both old and young. Many homes and families that ought to be instrumental in destroying the enemy's ploys are themselves falling victim of the enemy's attack. How long shall we keep looking? It is time to arise and put a hedge over our children. Whether you are a married parent, single parent or grand parent there is an offence to be avenged and that can only be accomplished when we take our stand as parents and lift our voices to God on behalf of our children. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective. [2]

[1] Genesis 22:17b [2] James 5:16b

(Toyin is the co-ordinator of Praying Parent Army (PPA), a ministry which brings people together to pray for their children and to learn about successful parenting. PPA's next meeting is at 2.30 p.m. on Saturday 29 March 2008 at Manor Close Community Hall, Thamesmead SE28 8EY. For further information please email debby4jesus@hotmail.com or phone 07946 287366).



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