



Alan & Melody Pieratt

Children's Relief International

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THERE IS MUCH WE CANNOT DO ...

After our prayer time each morning, Jason shares news from our project sites. Often it is good news. The photo at the bottom is from a village in Kenya. They are celebrating the packets of food received from a CRI Christmas distribution. The photo of the kids is from one of our Mudpaths Preschools in Kolkata. I could share a number of others from other places we send Christmas funds. The thanks we receive back always make me smile.

Other times, the stories are tragic. Last week, Jason reported on a 13-year old girl who attends our Grace and Knowledge High School in Nigeria. Fulani gunmen had burst into her house, shot her father, and kidnapped her brother for ransom. At our project in western Uganda, two children lost their mother to a disease brought on by chronic hunger. These stories are humbling and discouraging. In spite of all that we do, there is much that we cannot do, even within the sphere of our influence.

I've started hearing a new term here at the office: secondary trauma. This refers to the emotional distress we feel when helping people who have experienced a severe loss or tragedy. We care about their pain and we feel it personally.

Last week, one of our senior staff members led a heartfelt devotional over his experience of secondary trauma. Here is an excerpt:

For anyone who's been at this for a while, you realize that pain and suffering is part of the deal. As people called to ministering to and with the poor, we actually have a leg up on everyone else, because in this work we're made to wrestle with it before God in a way that most are forced to only when the crisis comes. The suffering is unjust, ugly, and painful. But through it we are united not just with each other, not just with our international missionaries, and not just with those we serve. Far more importantly, through suffering for the call we are united with Christ. And because of that, like light piercing through the black clouds, we see joy shining through—and in—the suffering.

It would be difficult to better describe how we feel about and work with the deeply poor. We do best when we keep our eye on Christ.

Melody and I are grateful for our niche of service, and appreciate deeply your partnering with us.

