

Classical School of the Medes...

“The Magic of Forgiveness.” The father’s heart had been touched by the example of his five year old daughter. He came the next day to the school. Instead of shouting at us, he said, “Thank you, you are helping my daughter.”

I have been asked what challenges we are facing and how believers and Christian schools in America can help us. Well, our greatest challenge is pressure from the government and security offices wanting us to accept more students. In Erbil for example, our target was to accept sixty K1 students. But this year, because of the pressure on us, we accepted 120 in K1—double the numbers. The same thing happened in Dohuk and Sulaymania.

But what about in grades one through twelve? In the future, doubling K1 will create a huge number in the upper grades. In the future, I will need double the classrooms for each grade. The “snowball” is getting bigger. We will need to add more classrooms, more teachers, and more international training. That growth cannot be paid for through tuition.

Although the government doesn’t want to control the schools directly, they impose Ministry of Education exams on all students. These exams are very different than international exams like the SAT. We must prepare for both. It’s not just a big problem for the administration at the schools, but also for the students. We’re trying to find a solution—maybe by focusing on the government exam in the twelfth year.

To help the schools spiritually, keep us in prayer in your churches. Pray for our schools and what’s going on in all of Iraq during the critical times we are going through.

Next, help us meet the needs resulting from the growth of the schools. Send us more teachers—more Colleens, Jeremiahs, Bobs—to help us fill the gap. We really need teachers who have the vision, background in classical education, and qualifications to help us. Then they can immediately begin teaching in the schools.

Another way is to help financially. We need money for scholarships, construction, and help with the costs of sending more Jeremiahs and Colleens.

If God will let me live to be 95 years old, I think I will see CSM graduates in government offices, hospitals, courts, schools—there to help their nation with their new lives. It will be a totally different nation. The

government, like CSM, will not have Islamic fundamentalist ideas—but will be reforming and reshaping their lives and beliefs.

I’m thinking of a ninth grade student who passed his exams with the highest marks. I had never met the boy, but I called to say “good job” and ask him what he wants to do in life. “You are Mr. Yousif?” he asked. “Yes,” I said. “I want to be like you and help my nation! You taught me that.”

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The Adullam Strategy

By George Grant

In 1824 the Glasgow Missionary Society founded the Lovedale mission station along the banks of the Tyumie tributary of the Keiskama River, deep in the Cape Province of South Africa. The hardy Scots Presbyterians who staffed the station devoted themselves almost entirely to evangelistic work for nearly four decades. Alas, their sacrificial efforts bore little fruit all that time and the Society was considering cutting their losses and closing Lovedale. In 1867 however, a young and ambitious Scottish educator, James Stewart (1831-1905) and his wife Mina Stewart (1841-1912), proposed turning the mission station into a mission school. The directors of the Society believed that such an enterprise was more than a little quixotic but gave him permission to try.

The Stewarts had arrived at Cape Town in South Africa some six years earlier in the company of Mary Livingstone, who was on her way back to the African Transvaal to join her pioneer missionary husband, David Livingstone. James and Mina intended to spend the rest of their lives working with the Livingstones in an effort to establish new industrial enterprises along the Mabotsa frontier on the headwaters of the Limpopo River.

Like Livingstone, James believed he was called to help “open up” Africa’s interior to the broader influences of Western civilization. Once that occurred, he was certain that commerce and Christianity would work hand-in-hand to end the evils of slave trading, tribal warfare, and primitive barbarism. After several wrenching false starts however, he began to doubt that industry could succeed and he was plunged

Adullam...

into despair. Mina convinced him that all was not lost. Perhaps, she suggested, before their dreams of indigenous development could be realized, the impoverished tribal peoples would have to be much more substantively trained, disciplined, and educated. In order to run businesses, staff factories, and man industries, African men and women would have to be equipped and prepared. Mina urged James to consider mercy as a possible gateway to productivity.

Thus together, James and Mina conceived of the idea of transforming the old failed mission station into a fully integrated institution of learning. The Stewarts were both products of a venerable Scottish Reformed tradition—an unswerving belief in the merits of education, hard work, and devotion to God that had been drilled into the hearts and minds of Scottish schoolchildren, around the hearth and the blackboard, since the time of John Knox. They became convinced that such a tradition, carried to the African peoples with grace, mercy, and compassion, might well prove to be the key to liberating Africa from the pagan bonds of oppression, ignorance, and brutality.

Irrepressibly passionate but always gentle, stunningly brilliant but always accessible, racked by malaria but “compelled by the love of Christ,” James Stewart was one of the most productive,

effective, and tireless men in the history of missions. He served as principal of Lovedale for most of the next thirty-eight years and succeeded in making the school into the premiere educational establishment for the indigenous

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peoples in southern Africa. But he was always quick to point out that it was Mina who kept his vision clear. It was Mina who reminded him of the things that mattered most. It was Mina who enabled him to translate his soaring ideas into gentle and practical action.

Thus, in addition to a general education, Lovedale offered practical training in sundry industrial arts to those who had, heretofore, only been exploited for unskilled labor: printing, blacksmithing, carpentry, masonry, and wagon-making. They built roads, watercourses and dams. They not only built all the buildings on the Lovedale campus, they actually fabricated all the building materials themselves—they made the bricks, hewed the timbers, forged the hardware, and poured the glassworks.

From the beginning, Lovedale graduates were tapped for a host of responsible positions throughout the vast continent. Stewart's emphasis on combining

a substantive classical Christian curriculum with practical vocational training made his students indispensable to the burgeoning development of Africa. They were involved in church planting, school teaching, entrepreneurial start-ups, and commercial organization. They served in colonial administrations, helped to staff nascent businesses, and formed the basis of the first indigenous African middle class.

During their long and productive years of ministry, the Stewarts helped to establish two other mission stations, a satellite school, and a fully equipped hospital—and they left a blueprint for a college, which was built after their deaths. James was lauded as the “educator to a race” and the “father of native African enterprise.” More than a century afterward, Nelson Mandela hailed him as the “model Christian” and South Africa's “founder of freedom.” Likewise, South African president, Thabo Mbeki, recently asserted that the impact on South Africa of Lovedale graduates was “incalculable in terms of helping us to get to where we are today.”

Tellingly, Stewart called his philosophy of education “The Adullam Strategy.” He took the name from two odd descriptions from the life of David that Mina had pointed out to him in the dark days of his early despair—one when the ruddy shepherd boy had just begun his career, the other when the old king was ready to lay down his mantle.

The first description is found

George Grant is the pastor of Parish Presbyterian Church (PCA) in Franklin, Tennessee, a lecturer in humanities at Franklin Classical School, and an ex-officio ACCS board member.

Adullam...

in 1 Samuel 22:1-2 where young David is hiding in the cave of Adullam. There he becomes “the captain” to all the distressed, indebted, and embittered men of the land. It was hardly a promising start. Such a motley crew did not exactly bode well for the foundation of an enduring kingdom. There seemed to be little nobility in the vagabonds, brigands, and renegades that had attached themselves to David’s cause.

The second description is found in 2 Samuel 23:8-39. It had been quite some time since they joined his seemingly hopeless cause, but many of those men were still with David. Somehow

though, in the intervening years, they had been transformed from the distressed, indebted, and embittered into the king’s “mighty men.” Their exploits through the years were now the stuff of legend. Few would have believed that the men who emerged from the cave so long ago could have ever accomplished so much with so little.

Their story was a kind of “David and Goliath experience” repeated again and again and again. Following their giant-killing mentor, they had all learned to transcend their physical limitations. By the grace of God, they had all become giant killers. Against all odds.

Like David, James and Mina Stewart willingly served as captains to a distressed, indebted, and embittered people only to see them transformed into “mighty men.” They did not despise the day of small beginnings. Rather, they invested themselves in the lives of a motley crew of the least and the last. And by God’s grace they too eventually became giant-killers.

The Adullam Strategy is hardly the way we would choose to undertake the great task of cultural transformation. But more often than not, it is the way God, in His mercy, grace, and good providence, chooses for us.

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