

Documentation of HIV-1 (Aids) Healing

Olga Sosa Taboada

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Christ Community Missions Church - Santa Cruz, Bolivia

Post-Healing Interview completed by Michael & Daisy Lund with Senora Olga Sosa: February 22, 2007
(The Lund's are the missionary founders of Vertical life Ministries, Bolivia; working together with CCMC in Santa Cruz)

Michael – I apologize Olga if some of the questions I must ask will bring hurtful things to your remembrance. I thank you for agreeing to this form of interview so that others can see the entire picture of what God's grace has done in your life. So, with your permission, please tell me a bit about your experience with aids? What was life like for you and your family?

Olga – I have one sister who lives here in Santa Cruz who was supportive. She could not help financially but was always kind and never rejected us. Once we were officially put into the HIV Program, we had to identify ourselves to schools, hospitals, etc. whenever we wanted to use their services. Even though my four children all tested negative for HIV, they were not allowed into school. We were often not allowed to use the micros (small buses) if some of the people already on the micro recognized us and complained to the driver. It was pretty much like that with everyone. I don't think they were bad people. They were just scared.

Michael – And your husband's family? Do they live in Santa Cruz?

Olga – Yes. My mother-in-law was a Christian. She was always telling me, (long before we contracted the disease) that I needed to 'fall in love with Jesus.' But I did not want 'her Jesus' because she was not a loving or a brave lady. They owned stores and had money to help us at times when my husband Juan did not have work, but they always refused us saying that Juan was just lazy. Sometimes we went two or three days without even so much as a little bread.

Michael – How did you contract aids?

Olga – Juan contracted the disease over five years ago and passed it to me. He was depressed with no work and ashamed to be around his children because they were hungry. He did not often drink, but one night did and went with another woman. When he came home that night, he was so terribly depressed that he spoke of taking his life. I was intimate with him that morning to console him. Neither of us knew about the aids until a week later when he had symptoms. Juan secretly went to the doctor thinking he had caught a common sexual disease. His blood test however revealed he had contracted active HIV-1.

Daisy – How were you told and what did you feel when you found you had also contracted the disease?

Olga – Juan came to me and confessed everything saying that I must immediately go to be tested. I did; and the test came out positive. And from that day, I saw a fear come into my husband's face that I cannot describe... We were very ignorant of this disease and feared for our children. And so we immediately began to get information. (Olga paused, emotional)

I know that you asked me how I felt when I was told and later when I found out that I also had the disease... There is so much difference between you and I...that I do not know if I can make you understand... (Another pause) We were already poor. My husband was not lazy. He sometimes worked 10 or 12 hours just for a couple loaves of bread. We were poor Sister Daisy. We did not wake-up in the mornings with any hope. We did not know if there would be work, or money, or bread that day... We lived with only one hope; that our children would not be poor; that they would study and somehow have enough luck in life not to be poor and without hope.

After finding out that we had HIV; we woke-up in the mornings wondering who would take care of our children when we died. That was the worst part...worrying what would happen to our children and knowing that they were going to go through the ordeal of losing both their parents; not only to death but to shame. For this, we felt like bad parents. And we felt that we must have done something terribly wrong that had cursed our lives.

Daisy – Was there no one in your husband’s family here willing to take or help the children?

Olga – My sister promised to help but did not have enough even for herself. My husband’s family rejected us. They were ashamed of Juan. And they were afraid. My mother-in-law would throw away anything the children touched in the house right in front of their eyes. My daughter is 13 and my oldest son is 11. They got their own information about the disease and asked us if there was any hope for us. There was none. Our children woke-up every day wondering how much longer it would be until we died.

Michael – Did not any of this make you think to turn to God for help? What was your relationship with God?

Olga - I believed in God but I was not a Christian. I did not want to be a hypocrite like my mother-in-law. I was poor but I was proud. In some ways it was good; in other ways, bad. I understand now what you mean when you say ‘*relationship*’ with God; but I did not understand that before. I did believe God was a just God however. You know... Once, my daughter died...and God brought her back to life.

Michael – Could you tell us that story?

My oldest daughter Alejandra was born with epilepsy. The first year of her life, she often had strong convulsions. Every time it happened, we were scared she would die. I can remember thinking about why God would let this happen to her, but never praying...

When Alejandra was a little more than a year old, she had a tremendous seizure. She quit breathing totally and turned completely blue. I ran with her in my arms to my mother-in-law who said she was dead and that it was God’s will. I walked out of the house and there was a neighbor standing in the street. She ran to me and looked at Alejandra. She did not know me. Alejandra was totally stiff and her lips were almost black. The lady said, “I think she is dead.” And she tried to comfort me by saying, “She belongs to God. If He wants to take her, you have to let her go.”

I remember I went back into my mother-in-law’s house and put Alejandra in a bed. She had not been breathing for a very long time and as I sat on the side of the bed staring at her, I was sure she was dead. But then, without really thinking about it, I prayed aloud: “God, she is yours. And You can take her if that is Your will. But if she lives, she must live healthy; without this terrible epilepsy.” I started to cry. And then my mother-in-law came and took me out of the room.

I sat on the porch crying one moment and feeling numb the next; wondering how I was going to tell Juan. My mother-in-law went to look for a lady to clean the body. I sat on the porch for maybe 20 minutes and watched numbly as she returned with a younger woman. They went inside the house. And then I heard a scream. “*Olga! Olga! Come quickly!*”

I ran inside the house. My daughter was coughing and trying to catch her breath. She was still very blue, but her eyes were open and she saw me. I ran and held her in my arms thinking she was having another seizure. But as I held her; I knew she was not. And somehow, I knew she would be okay and that she would never have another seizure for the rest of her life.

Daisy – And she's 13 now and has never had another seizure?

Olga – Never. She has never even been sick. But for some reason, I never thought very much about that prayer I said on the side of the bed until now. Now I realize that God did exactly what I asked Him to do.

Michael – I know this might be hard Olga, but tell me about how your husband died.

Olga – For the first three years everything was pretty much as it has always been. Juan had to go farther across town to find work; far enough away that no one knew him. (He worked construction) I never really blamed Juan. I think my husband was a good man and a good Father. I never felt bitter, just sort of numb and without hope. Juan however lived in terrible guilt. We had no friends except for one friend I made named JoAnna, who was also in the HIV Program. Juan was happy that I at least had one friend.

JoAnna had three children. She said her husband worked someplace else, (but this is a typical thing that women who are abandoned say here.) She had had HIV less time than Juan and I but her disease was more advanced. She wasn't really a naturally strong person. We watched her get sicker and sicker. Eventually, she lost her mind. She did not recognize me or her own children. She became only a skeleton of a human being. Then she caught some kind of skin disease and her whole body was covered with ulcers. Within days, she died. We never knew what happened to her three children.

Her death changed Juan. He was a brave man but he lived in great guilt. He was never the same after JoAnna's death. Six months ago, he died leaving me 2 months pregnant. He contracted a case of pneumonia that his body was unable to fight. He lost all his strength but I also think he lost his will. He could not get out of his chair in our rented room. And the worst thing was that the children saw it all.

Michael - What did Juan tell the children before he died?

Olga – He asked them to forgive him for leaving them alone. He asked them not to blame me and not to blame God; just live good lives and be kind.

Michael – You must have been terribly afraid. First JoAnna and then your own husband Juan...

Olga – I think the worst part was that I didn't know how to help either of them when they needed it. They were dying and I could not help them. I could not give them hope because I did not understand God and I did not know anything about the bible. And it seems to me that that is all a person has for hope if they're dying; don't you think?

Daisy – Yes. Really...if their dying or living. Life isn't worth very much when we don't have the conscious, living presence of Jesus with us... So tell me Olga. How did you hear about Christ Community Missions Church?

Olga – Someone told me about this Mission's School. They said that it cost nearly nothing. I was desperate. The children needed to be in school but no one would have them. So I went to talk to the lady (Karina Luna) who ran the school. I knew the children did not have aids and so I made the decision not to tell the lady. Maybe I was wrong, but I was desperate. And I did not know what else to do.

Sister Karina and her family were very kind. They took the names and ages of my children and listed their names and arranged everything. The only thing that she asked of me was that I show an example to the children and come to the church service on Sunday night, February 4th, before the first day of school the next morning. I agreed. But I lived a long way away and was now eight months pregnant.

Daisy – But you ended up coming...

Olga – Oh... *I didn't want to.* It was raining and raining and raining all day and I told myself I was not going out on such a night as this to a church service. But then about two hours before the service, it stopped raining. My 5 year old son, Manuel, came up to me lifting his arm to me. "Look Mommy. I have hair. (On his arm) I can go to work. I can help you." And when I heard him say that, though I didn't know why; I felt a hopelessness and an urgent need to go to church and take him with me.

I left my other children at home with my oldest daughter. It was easier to travel with only Manuel and we arrived to the service just a little late. Sister Karina and her daughter greeted me and took me to a chair. I felt uncomfortable. The place didn't really look or feel like a church. But when the people started singing, I started to listen to the words.

They weren't singing words about God. They were singing 'to' God. It felt strange. And I felt surprised. But then I was more surprised when I saw a gringo was the one who would preach... (A little embarrassed, smiling at Brother Michael) I was very tired. I had a hard time understanding him at first. I wasn't really interested. But then...it was like things happened really fast.

I remember he was talking about a man in the bible who had an incurable disease. (Naaman) And then he started to compare the man's disease to 'aids.' He talked about how God wanted to heal Naaman but he expected something else and he almost didn't get healed because of his pride. But then he humbled himself and did what the prophet in the bible said to do. And he was healed.

I was listening to the story and having no trouble understanding now. "And what about me?" I was thinking. "What am I supposed to do?" Those were the thoughts going through my head when all of a sudden, Brother Michael stopped preaching and came directly over to me.

"I don't know you Senora" he said. "But do you know my Jesus? Have you asked Jesus to come into your heart and be your Lord and Savior?"

I shook my head 'no.' Strangely; he turned around and walked back up to the front.

Something in me almost panicked. He was walking away. "What am I supposed to do!?" (Is all I could think to myself.) "Please...I don't know what to do!"

When he got back to the front again, he looked at all the people real slow and then looked back at me again. And in front of everybody, he said: "Senora. God has sent you this word tonight to save you. If you will come up here in front of these people and pray with me to accept Jesus as not only your Savior but also your Lord... I'm telling you: Jesus will show you what kind of King He is. "He will deliver you from destruction; just like the Word of God says." (Reference to Psalm 107:20 used as a base for the story of Naaman)

I needed help getting out of my chair. I know the people thought it was because I was so pregnant, but it was more than that. I was trembling. I felt a weight. I felt afraid. But with Sister Karina and her daughter's help, I went to the front. I have never felt anything like that.

I was like Naaman. I thought Brother Michael was going to wave his hands over me and do some powerful thing; but instead he just spoke quietly to me after asking my name, saying; "Olga. *God does not want to help you.* He wants you to give Him everything. God DOES NOT want to help you. He wants to fill you with His Spirit and leave no room for anything else." And then instead of praying like I thought he would, he called his wife up to where we were.

Michael – Did you understand me? What did those words mean to you?

Olga - I started to cry and don't remember everything else clear after that. But yes, I understood. I understood that everything that was against me was bigger than me. God had to do something. I couldn't do it. And you couldn't do it. But I was sure that God would do it if I followed your instructions and did whatever you told me to do, just like the man (Naaman) in the bible.

You called Sister Karina up and asked Sister Daisy to pray with me. They put their hands on me and my fear went away. Just like that, it went away. And in that same moment; just like I knew my daughter would never have another convulsion...*I knew God was about to do something I could not understand.*

I was trying to concentrate. It felt like time stopped. I was trying to concentrate and repeat the words Sister Daisy was asking me to pray. I think God was helping me speak. And after I prayed and asked Jesus to come into my heart, Sister Daisy and Karina continued to pray. They prayed for my baby. They prayed for my family and my life. They prayed for my children to honor me and to grow up to honor and never forget God. They seemed so sure that everything was going to be good for us in the way that they prayed, that I felt hope. I felt like it was okay to 'hope.'

Michael – And what did you 'hope?' What was the picture you had on the inside of you right then?

Olga – I can't explain it. But I felt like God knew what I needed and I was happy and I was free. I was going to be with my children and they were going to be free from living in fear that I would leave them alone. I didn't feel alone. And my fear of dying and leaving them alone left me. I didn't feel afraid. All the fear left; and I didn't feel alone.

Daisy – When did you tell Karina that you had had aids?

Olga - The next day, I think. She seemed a little surprised, but she assured me that the church would not abandon me. The following Wednesday night, you and Brother Michael with Pastor Augustine took me home after the service. The fear had come back. I was quiet and having a lot of conflicting thoughts. I didn't want you to leave me alone. Then Brother Michael turned around from the front seat there in the dark and spoke to me.

"I want you to use your imagination Olga. Do you have a medical document in your room that says you are HIV-Positive?"

"Yes" I said.

"Okay. I want you to picture yourself standing in front of the hospital maternity ward where they turned you away. In your left hand you are holding up the document that says you are HIV Positive. And in your right hand, you are holding up your new 'Negative' blood test. Can you see that picture in you mind? Can you imagine that?"

"Yes" I said. (Thinking it would be a wonderful picture, but not feeling like I had a lot of faith)

"Well" Brother Michael said. "I don't want you to think about *anything else* except that picture; you and I and Daisy and Karina standing there like that together testifying that God is good to those people. I don't know so much Olga, but my advice to you is that you keep your eyes on that mental picture and keep thinking about the word God gave you that says, He 'sent His word to heal you, and deliver you from ALL destruction.'

Pastor Luis later took me for my new blood test. I had to wait nearly a week for the results, but he called me and said, "What do you think it is?" I thought about my picture. But no words came. I had thought

about that picture soooo much. And then I heard Pastor Luis said in the phone, “It’s negative Olga. It’s negative. *You have won.*”

Michael – What else would you like to tell us Olga?

What can a person say... I want to thank everybody, but I know it was God who did this. I thank God. I hope my husband is in heaven. I hope he knows that even though he is not here, that we have Jesus as our husband and Father. *I hope he knows that.*

The church loved me enough to welcome me and not abandon me and not reject me even after they found out about the aids. My children are now in the Mission’s School. And the church has been helping us with money and food.

Michael – What is ‘faith’ to you Sister Olga?

Olga - I still have to learn. I don’t think it is something that feels strong. It is something else. I think it is wanting to know what to do and then doing it the best you can. That’s what happened with my healing. It didn’t feel powerful. But God kept putting a ‘what to do’ in front of me and I just did it the best I could. I was so scared but I just kept doing and saying what you told me and looking at that picture in my mind. I know God helped me.

Michael – So I guess what you’re saying is it was a fight... A fight with doubt and fear?

Olga – It was hard waiting for the results of the blood test. I didn’t feel like I had any faith at all. My skin broke-out and I got painful blood clots in my legs. I didn’t feel better. I felt worst. And yes I was afraid. But when I finally received the call from Pastor Luis, I felt weak and silly and even a little afraid in another way. I dropped the phone and sat down and cried. “Why” I thought to myself, “would I doubt God?”

My oldest son saw me crying and ran to me afraid. “What’s the matter Mommy!?” He cried.

I cannot tell you what it felt like to look into his frightened eyes and say: “Nothing is the matter Jose.” Pulling him into my arms, his face cheek-to-cheek with mine.

“God is not going to take your Mommy like we talked about. *I am going to stay.*”

~Testimony Summary~

Olga’s Father and a sister live in Argentina. He had invited her and the children to come to live with him, (before the healing), stating that they would be welcome and that Argentina treats people ‘*in her condition*’ better than Bolivia.

Olga plans to go to Argentina once her new baby is 3+ months old and she has raised funds for transportation. But now she will go healed and saved instead of dying. Neither her Father nor Sister are Christians. She wants to use her testimony to change their lives and the lives of others, as the Lord has graciously changed hers.

Olga’s baptism was yesterday. She wanted to be baptized while still pregnant and dedicate her unborn son to the Lord at her baptism. Her words were simple. “Lord I dedicate this life to You. Take him as yours.”

Olga has already begun to give her testimony in local churches and wants to use her healing testimony to demonstrate to the sick and dying in the Local Aids Hospice that there is hope. She says she will go anywhere she is asked to speak. And is asking God to open doors for her to tell her story.

The cross was sufficient for Olga's miracle and it is sufficient for yours. Please pray that God continue to glorify His Name in Olga; in Bolivia; and throughout the world. Never forget that Jesus bought these testimonies of life, and liberty, and hope with His own blood. They are already purchased. *They are already waiting to be received through our simple faith. They are His testimony of glory in the Church.*

At the cross, Jesus demonstrated by His choice of love just what kind of King and Friend He is truly willing to be unto anyone, anywhere, in any circumstance who believes that the power of the cross is His love freely given; held out at present to anyone who will receive it.

Jesus is Lord. And He is worthy of this testimony of glory.