

LIZZY'S MIRACLE

Back around Christmas, 10-year-old Lizzy Gross told her mother, Lestra: "Mommy, I'm seeing double."

That night Lestra mentioned it to her husband, Johnny, who is minister of music at Cornerstone Church in San Antonio, Texas. They prayed.

The parents continued to check Lizzy's eyes. The ophthalmologist, who originally diagnosed the condition as a "lazy eye," recommended a pediatric ophthalmologist.

The specialist took one look. His voice reflected his alarm: "You need to see a neurologist."

The neurologist was kind, but blunt. The possibility of a brain tumor was strong. He ordered a magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) scan of her brain.

That afternoon, Johnny talked to his pastor, John Hagee. Hagee immediately called his 10,000-member Cornerstone Church into prayer.

Two days later, Johnny received an emergency phone call at the church office. His face blanched white as he heard the MRI report.

"It couldn't be worse," he said with quivering voice. "The doctor says she shows an inoperable tumor in the center of her brain."

More tests followed. More doctor's visits. The Jewish neurologist sat the parents down. "I've seen this too many times. She'll be dead inside a year."

Lestra Gross, however, refused the verdict. In a letter to me, she said: "You would never give your grandchildren a book you wrote filled with promises, tell them that

without faith in those promises it is impossible to please you, then watch them do what you asked and not honor their faith. Neither would God."

About this time, John Hagee called me. Last summer, John and his wife, Diana—along with the Cornerstone Church—had helped carry me in prayer when the doctors gave me similar news. He was calling the Cornerstone Church to fast and pray every Monday. Would our church pray also?

Lestra sent us a picture of Lizzy, which went up in our kitchen. Later she called, weeping. Diana had told her of the new cancer attack on my body. "Every time I pray for Lizzy, I pray for you."

A second MRI confirmed the tumor deep in Lizzy's brain. Treatment would destroy brain tissue, and a biopsy would be extremely risky. By this time, the iris and pupil in her eye had almost disappeared into her head. Only the white was showing. Her eyelids were drooping. Her face seemed to be losing its definition on one side.

A third MRI showed no significant change. A radiologist thought the tumor had even enlarged.

One day, as winter drew to a close, the school called. Lizzy was vomiting with a massive

headache. Johnny ran into Hagee's office and fell into his arms.

"It's happening, just as the doctors said it would." It was the only time in the ordeal that fear took over.

Hagee began to prophesy: "You shall not let Satan replace faith with fear. This is not as it seems." He held his friend and prayed.



Lizzy Gross

The next morning, the church leaders gathered in the huge auditorium. They lay on the floor, praying for Lizzy. She returned to school the next day, her headache gone. The prayers intensified. Within 10 days, her eye was returning to normal.

"Does this condition sometimes get better before it gets worse?" Johnny asked the neurosurgeon.

"No," he answered, "she should be getting worse. Let's have another MRI."

Soon after the visit to her pediatric doctor, Hagee received a call from the Jewish neurologist involved in Lizzy's case. "We believed there was a brain tumor in the child's head. Now all the symptoms are gone. How could this be?"

After telling the doctor about the prayer and fasting, Hagee said: "Doctor, we pray to the same God you pray to, the God who heals all our diseases. Would you call this a miracle?"

"Well, if it's not a miracle, it's pretty close."

Hagee laughed. "Hang on to your yarmulke, Doctor, you ain't seen nothing yet. *Baruch hashem!*" (Hebrew: "Blessed be God.")

The doctor paused. "*Baruch hashem, Pastor.*"

A month later, on April 26, Lizzy had a fourth MRI. All the symptoms of a brain tumor had disappeared, much to the doctors' amazement.

In June, Lizzy's neurologist admitted, "In all my 20 years of practice, this case comes the closest to where prayer actually seemed to work."

Yes, prayer does work. ■

Jamie Buckingham pastors the Tabernacle Church in Melbourne, Florida. He reports that Lizzy Gross was honored with a praise party on June 7.



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