

# A Heart for Iraq's Children

**During the height** of the Sunni/Shiite clash, Jeremy and Jessica Courtney moved their family to war-torn **Iraq**—to sell shoes. Now they're using the 3,000-year-old Kurdish footwear business as a way to provide lifesaving medical care to Iraqi children.

*Klash* shoes inspired Jeremy Courtney of the Preemptive Love Coalition (PLC) to launch "Buy Shoes, Save Lives." As a result, some cobblers sell the woven shoes on international markets to help fund the children's care.

The effect of chemical warfare, poor prenatal care, malnutrition or intrafamily marriage has caused tens of thousands of Iraqi children to have a common birth defect: literal holes in their hearts.

"These kids broke our hearts," says Courtney, executive director of PLC and a musician, songwriter and businessman. "We determined to start an organization that would address their need for surgery and provide them with hope and a future."

Though outsiders questioned the move, Courtney couldn't sit idle after he learned that 30,000 Iraqi children were in need of life-saving surgeries. He and his wife started the organization with their friend Cody Fisher.

Since then, PLC has contracted the world's leading humanitarian heart surgeon, Dr. William Novick. He is now developing pediatric cardiac surgery centers around the country. The effort, dubbed Remedy Mission, enables Iraqi doctors and medical staff to be trained in performing heart surgeries.

✘ In just 11 months Remedy Missions has enabled 118 children

to receive lifesaving heart surgeries and provided Iraqi doctors and nurses with 30,000 hours of training.

The results are astounding, Courtney says. Today heart surgeries cost an average of \$670 per child—a minuscule amount in comparison to what they once cost.

“We believe Iraq needs a win right now,” he says. “Iraqis desperately need to see progress. They need to believe again that the American people—even the people of Jesus—are on their side.”