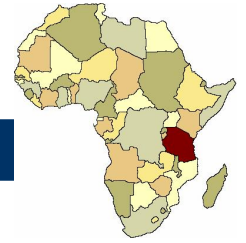


Tanzanian Testimony



VOLUME 3; ISSUE 7

LORIEN KNAPP

JULY 2009

Dear Friends,

July has been a month of transition. I realized how tired I was, that I needed some alone time to process all of the things that have been happening here in Mwanza. I spent the first two weeks taking care of street children who had been hospitalized. Caring for the sick ones always takes so much of my energy, but I also realize that it is a chance to really connect with them. When they are in a vulnerable state they respond to love much more deeply. Relationships are often solidified in the times where there is great need. The last two weeks were spent in Nairobi, Kenya just resting. It was good to get away from my daily work and just spend some time alone. I had a chance to catch up with several missionary friends, and it was encouraging to share time in fellowship. I came back to Mwanza with a bit more energy, and greater peace in my heart about God's calling for my life.

It seems that each day I am gaining a clearer picture of what God wants for me to do in this ministry. The burden on my heart is growing as I learn more about the struggles of the streets. I know that I came to Africa to assist in community development. As much as I would like to help to put infrastructure in place, I realize that the first development that must take place is spiritual. As people unite with a common belief and purpose, the community can take shape in a lasting change. Development can only be sustained by people who are willing to work together in unity. My prayer is that God will continue to unify those who minister to these children, so that seeds can take root.

PRAYER CONCERNS:

- ✓ **Praise God for HIS amazing plan of reconciliation, especially for reuniting Mabura with Anatoli.**
- ✓ **Praise God for developing our bible study to reach more of the kids, in a way that is meaningful.**
- ✓ **Pray for the staff of TCRC to be driven by love, even in frustrating circumstances. Pray that we can be imitators of Christ.**
- ✓ **Pray for me to have a clear picture of how God wants me to minister to these vulnerable children. Pray that I can walk forward with courage, and in faith that He will lead the way.**

If you wish to offer financial support, mail check to:

AIM: Finance PO Box 178 Pearl River NY 10965

Checks should be made payable to AIM in order to be tax-deductible. Include a note stating my name, and the money will be credited to my account.

Your support and encouragement are appreciated!

The Dry Season



The landscape has become golden, and the dust stirs easily from the lack of moisture. The colors of this season have their own beauty, though it is less vibrant than when all is green and lush. It seems as if all things are dying in the dry season, but I am reminded that seeds must fall to the ground if they are to take root and grow into new trees. It is easy to judge a tree to be good if it is bearing much fruit, and it is hard to remember that a fruit had been sacrificed in order for the tree to exist. I have tried to focus my attention to the fallen seeds, because I know that if they are nurtured they will become trees. Trees bear fruit and have the potential to create new life giving trees. This work of tending to seeds requires much patience and effort. It is not by any means easy to care for seeds which have fallen such long distances.

I went to Kenya to try and refocus, spending time in quiet reflection, and visiting with more seasoned missionaries. I have come to know and love the children of the streets and at TCRC, and our relationships run deep. My burden for their souls weighs heavily on me because of my love for them. I see so much potential in them, and I admire their many gifts. I realize that the work I am doing is not easy – though it is ministry I have been called to do. So many of these children are like the fallen fruit, needing to be nurtured so that they can bear fruit one day.

I believe with all my heart that our children have the greatest potential to reach to others in the streets and in vulnerable situations because they have experienced that pain themselves. I believe that they can become trees which extend themselves as life giving sources, as their love for God radiates from them. Please pray that this potential can be recognized by more people so that our children can be raised up with greater love and support.

UNEXPECTED SURPRISES...

Nine months ago, TCRC became the home for little Anatoli. I remember sharing the story of this 4-year-old boy; how we found him begging in the streets, how we ventured up a mountainside to visit his family in search of answers, how we spent months looking for a way to help his 8 year old sister Lemmy. Many of you followed the story with great interest, and your prayers opened doors of hope for these special children.

Imagine my surprise when an unexpected part of the story unfolded this month. Several new boys from the street appeared at TCRC, hoping that they could join our family and escape the struggles of street life. One of these young boys recognized Anatoli immediately and brought a piece of news to the small boy. "I was living with your brother Mabura in the streets, I know where he is!" From the time this news reached the ears of Anatoli, his heart was set on going to search for his long lost brother. One evening we went to the streets in search of Mabura. Less than 10 minutes into the quest we were together with Anatoli's big brother. Little Anatoli was shocked, "I thought he was a lot bigger than that, I remembered him being big like you!" He expressed to me with amazement. I reminded him that the last time he saw his brother he had been much smaller, so his brother had seemed much bigger.

Mabura was more acclimated to the street life than Lemmy or Anatoli had been. When we found him I recognized that he was much more hardened than those kids who are new to the streets, his eyes bore a deeper pain, more experience, greater suffering. He is 11 years old, and has been in the streets for many years now. He was filled with such happiness to see his little brother, and to know that his sister is being cared for as well. He gratefully accepted my invitation to come to TCRC. I watched as he and Anatoli walked hand in hand down the street. Anatoli had been saving a piece of candy in his pocket, and he lovingly offered it to his brother. That in itself is a miracle as Anatoli LOVES candy. Later in the evening he whispered to me... "I love my big brother so much." I replied... "I think he loves you too!"



On the Street: Mathias, Anatoli, Mabura, and myself

BIBLE STUDY



Tuesday nights have become a rich time of fellowship for many of the boys at TCRC. Initially I had hoped for the bible study to be directed to the older ones who were struggling with especially large spiritual burdens, but it seemed the young boys couldn't stay away for long. Our bible study started with 9 people, and now we have about 30 who join us on Tuesdays.

In many tribes of Tanzania, it is common for elders to sit around bonfires at night to share stories and pass along lessons to the next generation of men. Though I am not a man, and I don't consider myself to be an elder, the boys and I have a special relationship and they are eager to listen to the lessons I have to share with them. I remember many camping experiences from my past sitting around bonfires, and those moments were memorable for many reasons. There must be some special emotion that is ignited by the recipe of bonfires in the darkness and good company.

We study the bible, share our ideas about the words which have been given to us, and we talk about the real struggles of today's life. The boys ask questions, and speak honestly about the challenges they face. I have been most impressed about how some of our older boys help in leading the studies. I am mostly facilitating the conversations, but the older boys are teaching their young brothers. Their understanding of scripture continues to amaze me. It is as if they have already had theological training, but I know that their scriptural understanding is EVIDENCE of the Holy Spirit working within their hearts.

2 Timothy 3:16-17

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the children of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.