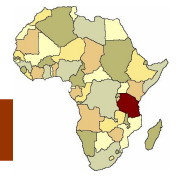


# Tanzanian Testimony



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JUNE 2008

Dear Friends,

June was such a blessed month, filled with inspiration, new knowledge, encouragement, and VISITORS. I spent the first part of the month in Kenya for a conference on HIV/AIDS and children's ministry. I recognize that in Sub-Saharan Africa, there is no ministry that can avoid HIV work. Another valuable part of the conference dealt with resiliency building in children. When working with such broken young people it is helpful to think of how to build them up so that they can be people of hope and love rather than fatalism and defeat.

While in Kenya I had the joy of collecting some guests from the airport...my parents!! We spent several days together in Nairobi before traveling together to Mwanza, where we met my sister who was also able to come for a visit!! It was a tremendous joy to share my new home with my family, and to be together here in Africa. We have been blessed in my adult life to make several international trips together and now we have touched a new continent as a family unit. I think that Africa handled us pretty well.

After a week my sister left for Zambia where she manages several public health programs. My parents are still here for a few more weeks. It has been moving to see how my family embraces Tanzania. It is helpful to have my eyes reopened by those who are looking through fresh eyes. Guests surely are a great blessing... The boys at TCRC have been thrilled to meet my family, and spend time in fellowship.

## PRAYER CONCERNS:

- ✓ Praise God for relationships that are forming with the boys at TCRC and in the community.
- ✓ Praise God for my family's safe arrival, and a joyful time of fellowship together.
- ✓ Please pray for language learning to accelerate so that I can minister in the heart language of these children.
- ✓ Please pray for my wisdom and discernment.
- ✓ Please pray that TCRC can begin to think about HIV ministry and counseling for the boys at the center.

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. Include a note stating my name, and the money will be credited to my account. Your support and encouragement is appreciated.

## HIV and Children

I came to Africa knowing that HIV is a serious problem, but I didn't think of it in concrete terms. The truth is that before coming here I had never known anyone who suffered from this disease. Now that I have spent several months of interviewing boys and counseling them **I am faced with the reality that every boy at the center knows someone who has died as a result of AIDS...** Some of these people have contracted the disease through immoral practices, but many were unknowing victims, blindsided by the disease.

In having HIV personalized the certain death sentence is almost too much to bear. The term unfair comes to mind, but I know that fairness is hardly an appropriate term to use in ministry. Life will always deal a hand of unfair situations. As Christians it is our journey to seek God's grace and love in even the most trying moments. Our Lord himself was not treated fairly in his earthly walk.

One day I sat under the mango tree alone, contemplating the statistics and I realized that it is very possible some of the boys at TCRC could be infected... That realization broke my heart into a thousand pieces. I realized that I was completely unprepared to deal with this disease. My last bit of education concerning HIV was in High School so many years ago. My ability to offer counseling was minimal at best. Then God opened a door...



I went to a workshop in Kenya to learn about HIV/AIDS and children. I learned more than I could have dreamed, and left the conference feeling prepared to battle from a spiritual standpoint. There is a definite stigma

here in East Africa concerning HIV. The mere mention of the disease can silence a room. Education and understanding are needed so that these next generations can break the trend of devastation that HIV has inflicted. **I have talked with many of the boys at TCRC, and they are thirsty for knowledge about HIV/AIDS. They want to understand it better, and they want to heal from the wounds that AIDS has brought into their lives.** Many boys have lost parents and siblings from AIDS, but society does not permit an open discussion about the disease. People don't talk about how the person died. The family is then unable to come to terms with the death because they are not able to confront the full story. They can not mourn appropriately.

**Please join me in prayer that TCRC can begin a ministry with these boys concerning HIV/AIDS. Pray that we can face the disease together, with love rather than fear. Pray that we can begin to counsel and educate so that the victims do not need to hide any longer.**

## ISLAND ADVENTURE

*I traveled with my family to visit some missionary friends who minister to villages on the islands of Lake Victoria. It is difficult to describe the land where we traveled because the Lake is unlike any place I have known. In the West Tanzanian part of the lake there are 54 inhabited islands!!!*

*Fishing is one of the BIGGEST industries in Tanzania, and the islands have naturally developed into villages for men in this line of work. The sad news is that as these fishermen began setting up camp far from their families on the mainland, another industry also found a viable market on the islands. Prostitution began growing exponentially, and many of the fishermen decided to take additional wives on the islands. Now there are so many families, and MANY children living on the islands...*

*The tragic reality of polygamy and unfaithful relationships is that HIV/AIDS becomes a very strong likelihood here. On the Islands and mainland coastal villages, the numbers of AIDS victims is unbelievably frightening...men, women, and children. Perhaps even more devastating is the lack of medical care, counseling, and support available to these people who are suffering.*

*These missionaries are living in the islands, training healthcare workers, planting churches and clinics, and loving the people in a remarkable way. They are on the front lines, and have been involved in this ministry for many years. My family was extremely encouraged and blessed to spend time with them and come to understand their ministry in a more personal way. Please lift these people in prayer for encouragement and greater support in this mission.*

*Here in Tanzania I have been reminded MANY times, of how small the world is... for example, I befriended a lovely missionary couple here in TZ and learned that the brother of the husband plays for the Greenbay Packers...a team which my cousin has been working with for several years... in fact the brother and my cousin are well acquainted. That is a delightful reminder of our small world. Unfortunately I am more often confronted with sad reminders... many of the boys at the center have family members who have lived and worked in the islands... some of the boys themselves worked in the fishing industry for a time period when they were searching for a livelihood.... The world is small, and HIV is big. Anytime I hear the islands mentioned a wave of sadness comes over me and I visualize all of the potential faces of this horrible disease.*

*This month HIV has presented itself to me as a very REAL disease. The initial shock is wearing off, and I am ready to see God battle this disease in a way only HE can do. Let us join in prayer for these Brothers and Sisters who are being the hands and feet of Jesus and for the sick and weary who need to rest in our Saviors welcoming arms.*



Travel by boat or plane to reach the islands



So many children on the islands



The island of Ikuza... one of MANY



A visit to the new clinic on Ikuza

*James 5: 14-15*

*Are any of you sick? You should call for the elders of the church to come and pray over you, anointing you with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he has committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.*