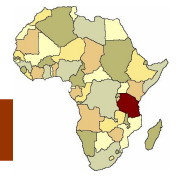


Tanzanian Testimony



VOLUME 2; ISSUE 3

LORIEN KNAPP

MARCH 2008

Dear Friends,

It has been an amazing first month in Mwanza, and I am surprised how quickly the time has passed. I continue in a process of orientation here as I am learning the language, so I have not yet started my official work...needless to say, work has found me. I have finally adjusted to the tremendous amount of walking that must be done every day, and I am enjoying this part of my new life because it gives me opportunity to make many new friendships, and to learn the streets of my city. Mwanza is a very big area, and it is growing in leaps and bounds. I don't even recognize this place I visited 3 years ago because it has changed so much. Walking is the perfect opportunity for learning.

I am becoming quite fond of the markets. It is interesting to observe the people and the items that are being sold... Only in Africa can you buy a copy of General Obstetrics on the street corner... I have taken several field trips to the markets with different African friends so that I can learn how much items should cost, since it is a variable pricing system depending on your knowledge of the customs. I am blessed to have made so many friends who are concerned for my acclimation.

I have been to many different churches, nearly a different one each week. So many invitations are offered, and I am enjoying learning about the different worships styles. I have enjoyed one particular church very much because of the warmth of the people. After the service one of the ladies offers me cooking lessons, teaching me to cook traditional African food. I have so much fun with these women, sitting in the kitchen over a hot charcoal stove. The fellowship is a great blessing.

PRAYER CONCERNS:

- ✓ **Praise God for reminding me each day of his overwhelming presence. My relationship with him is growing in many new ways.**
- ✓ **Please pray for language learning and the formation of new relationships here in Mwanza.**
- ✓ **Please pray for my wisdom and discernment to understand how God is leading me to minister. Pray that I may have courage to follow his leading.**

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.

Why are Children living in the Streets?

I have spent several occasions walking through the streets of Mwanza, learning about the ways of street life. Several former street children have offered to accompany me on such walks so that I may have a better understanding of the situation. As we walk, they explain the struggles of the street; where to sleep, how to find food, how to survive.

We walk for the entire day, and as we come across the street children we talk to them about their lives. I have not yet seen any girls, only boys...but the reason their presence is absent in the street is possibly more tragic than the idea of them living homeless. Street girls are often taken in by adults who sell them into prostitution. There are areas of the market where you can find these girls at night...sometimes they are as young as 10 years old, mere babies. I am trying to learn more about their situation, and perhaps at the time of my next newsletter I will understand better, and have some personal perspective.

I want to share the story of two boys I have befriended in the street so that you can understand more, and have some specific children to pray for. Jeremiah is now 11 years old, his brother Emma is 8. These boys lived with their mom in relative peace, but a few years ago Jeremiah was hit by a car and as a result of the accident he lost both of his legs and his left arm. While he was in the hospital, his mother ran away, leaving him alone and helpless. Out of a sense of duty and love for his brother, little Emma decided to remain in the streets with his brother to care for him. There are many children in the street with circumstances like Jeremiah's. Life here is very difficult for those people who have physical disabilities. Often parents will abandon the child because they don't know how they will care for the special needs. Many centers are also hesitant to help these people because they are worried the child will require too much personal care.

Please pray for these boys, and for others here who have disabilities. Pray that they will be embraced and loved dearly. Pray for attitudes to change and love to overcome.



EASTER SUNDAY

I must admit that Easter caused some homesickness... none of those beautiful Easter lilies or the sound of the glorious words "He has risen...he has risen indeed." Pasaka (Easter) was however a very special day for me.

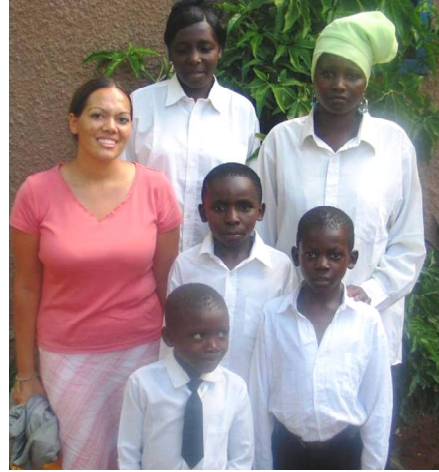
I went to church with a dear friend, who made special arrangements so that I could have some personal time with the Church elders. The morning of Easter Sunday, we went to the home of the Bishop and enjoyed breakfast and conversation before the service. The worship service was filled with sound biblical teachings of the resurrection. The music was moving as always...I find African music touches my heart in a new way; I can worship so fully without even understanding the words because the sound of the voices is so powerful. I think God weeps with joy as he listens, and I imagine heaven must sound like African music.

After the service I returned to the Bishop's home for lunch. All of the church leaders came as well. They wanted to know me better, and understand why I had come to live so far from my home. I began with the usual brief testimony, explained God's calling in my life, shared some stories from home, and finished with an explanation of the current problems here in Mwanza.

When walking through the streets here, it is obvious that there is a big problem with street children...there numbers are so vast. Yet I continue to be saddened by the lack of awareness about these children. I think most people don't even see them, perhaps they just see through them. When seen, they are viewed as a menace, rather than helpless struggling children.



Evangelist, Me, Bishop, and Pastor



**Me with
some
members
of
Bishop's
family**

As I discussed my work with the elders they became quite concerned. They had a sort of deliberation to decide if this was work I should be doing because of the associated dangers.

Evangelist warned me, "These children are not really children anymore, their minds have been changed and they are more like lions." Pastor opened his bible and began reading me passages about demon possession, reiterating Evangelists concerns about changed minds...he however also offered the story in Mark where the demons of a man fled at the mere sight of Jesus. He told me "Because you have Jesus inside you, when these boys see you approaching them, full of God's power, the demons will flee before you as well."

Like so many other Tanzanians from solid family backgrounds, these men could not understand why these children would be in the street, wondering if perhaps they preferred this lifestyle. This thinking comes not from hard heartedness, but from a lack of understanding of the problems. As we continued to discuss the situation, they promised to become partners in prayer, and they made me promise to keep them informed of my work so that they could be a part.

Pastor told me the story where Moses held his hands in the air, ensuring victory for the Israelites. Aaron and Hur sat with him helping him to keep his hands aloft. Pastor told me, "We will stand with you and help you to keep your arms raised, to ensure the victory. But your hands must be open to receive the blessing of the Lord. They can not be filled with money or things, because these items will not offer salvation to the street children."

Jeremiah 1:8

"Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you and will rescue you", declares the Lord.