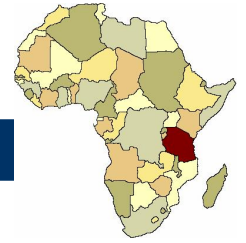


Tanzanian Testimony



VOLUME 3; ISSUE 3

LORIEN KNAPP

MARCH 2009

Dear Friends,

It has been a challenging month in so many ways. There have been great spiritual battles, and difficult moments of contemplation. The month began with many night visits to the streets to minister to the children. Each time I go to the streets I remember what a great opportunity it is to share the love of Christ, and to offer mercy to his struggling children. Though each visit is an encouragement, it is also a great challenge of trying to understand the love of God in such desperate situations.

Mid-March I had a great opportunity to visit the coast for a Women's Retreat. It was a spiritual blessing in many ways, but it was also a great challenge for my heart. I realized many areas where I have been failing to grow. It is painful when we see our shortcomings, but it is a necessary part of life. It was good to get away from Mwanza and frolic on the beach a bit. The Indian Ocean is certainly a beautiful place, and the perfect setting for some moments of reflection and prayer.

After returning from the retreat I was met with some very sad news. I learned that my young cousin passed away unexpectedly, and I was faced with the grieving process, alone in a distant land. I continue to mourn his loss and try to find understanding in the confusion. It is so hard to be away from my family at this time, but God is teaching me some new lessons about grace. My cousin was an amazing young man, full of potential, overflowing with tremendous gifts and a warm loving heart. It is hard to fathom loss when it comes so suddenly. Though I know he is dancing with the Lord in Heaven it is still painful for those of us left here on the Earth. Having personal loss has given me a refreshed understanding of the suffering experienced by the children here in Mwanza. I have been grateful for the love the boys have showered on me, and their sincere willingness to grieve by my side. Please keep my family in your prayers as we begin the slow process of healing. I would be especially grateful for prayers for the parents of my cousin, and his three young brothers. Surely God will sustain us!

Street Growth

No longer do I ask boys to accompany me on street ministry outings. They come in herds, explaining how much they want to minister to their young brothers and sisters who are without hope. We go in small groups, armed with food and love, seeking children who are sleeping in street burrows. We have earned quite a reputation in the streets, and are recognized by many of the night crowd. The kids look forward to us coming so that we can enjoy some fellowship together. I have tried to encourage TCRC boys to think outside of their immediate environment at TCRC. It can be easy to focus on themselves because there are also many needs at the Center. I have found that by giving to others and reaching out to our neighbors the boys are learning to love in profound ways. They are being transformed from within, and their hope is increasing. These past few visits to the street have opened my eyes to the tremendous growth of our boys. They are surprising me in amazing ways as I see the great love blossoming in their hearts.

We have been bringing a guitar on our outings so that we can sing and worship with the kids in the streets. Many of the TCRC boys write their own songs; lyrics which describe the life of the street and the hope that is found in Christ. Such songs are sung and the children gather around to hear. One night a man was passing by and told our lead guitar boy Paul that he was playing very nicely, so he handed him 2,000 shillings. (About \$2.00) We were stunned to have made money in our efforts as it was not our goal, but Paul accepted the donation graciously. A few moments later a young boy passed near us, selling peanuts. Knowing that this boy would not be able to return home until he had finished selling all of his merchandise Paul used that money to buy all of the peanuts. We then gave the peanuts to other street kids who were hungry. The little boy who sold us the food nearly cried with joy, having such a display of love shown to him was more than he had ever known.

Later that evening we came across a large group of children. Several of the kids were wearing such rags that they were nearly naked. Two of our TCRC boys gave their own shirts to the naked children, and spent the rest of the evening shirtless. It was a cold evening, and the children were grateful for some new clothes. Our boys mentioned to me that that have so much more than the kids in the street, and they wished they could do more to help. I reminded them that each time they express love to others they are doing a very BIG thing.

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!

PRAYER CONCERNS:

- ✓ **Praise God for the great love He is building in the hearts of our TCRC boys.**
- ✓ **Praise God for the doors he has opened for our three boys to find work and begin a new life journey. Pray that they will grow and learn; that they will work hard and prove themselves in their new environment.**
- ✓ **Please pray for my family as we remember my cousin Robert. We miss him greatly, but rejoice in knowing he is home with his Savior.**
- ✓ **Pray for the staff of TCRC: (Psalm 139: 23-24) For God to search us and know our hearts; test us and know our anxious thoughts. And if there is any offensive way in us, to lead us in the way everlasting.**

Micah 6:8

Justice, Mercy, and Humility... Words that can summon many different thoughts and experiences. I was blessed this month to attend a Women's retreat weekend on the beach in Dar es Salaam. Our guest speaker was a seasoned missionary, with an abundance of gifts and a generous heart. She shared about the many challenges of her life, and encouraged us that in each season, through all challenges and moments of trial, we have a tremendous responsibility to the Kingdom. In many ways it seems our Christian walk can be summed up in the words of Micah. We need to act justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with our God. The lessons of the retreat were a great challenge for me, and awoke many troubles of my own heart. Sometimes my desire for justice can overwhelm me causing me to act when I should be letting God act. I am driven by justice, speaking for those who can not speak for themselves. Mercy is the driving force in the TCRC ministry, especially when visiting the streets. There are so many who just need to see love. They need to see the love of Jesus which has no boundaries or restrictions. Justice and mercy can sometimes be the easiest for me to follow.

The place where I struggle most is in the humility area. I know that I can sometimes try and take matters into my own hands, arrogant as it seems, rather than acknowledging that it is only God who is able. We on earth are merely his instruments. We need to bow before him and plead our cases to him, knowing that he will act in perfect justice and mercy.



1 John 3: 18

Dear Children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth

MAVUNO VILLAGE

This month God opened a big door for three of our young men. Edson, Mashaka, and Gabriel were patiently waiting and praying about their futures. Having finished school, they were ready for a chance to start their lives as adults.

Fellow missionaries, Dan and Bethany Tanner, along with their teammates are in the process of building a village that will care for orphaned children. There is much work to be done at Mavuno Village, and an opportunity opened for our three boys to join that team as workers. At TCRC we are so grateful for the chance that has been given to our boys to begin working under the care of Christian leaders. The boys have a lot to learn as they test out their wings. But they have good hearts, and a willingness to learn.



Mashaka was one of our biggest helpers in the reconstruction of our dorm after the fire. He is a kind, humble, and trustworthy young man.

Edson is a creative and artistic young man. He loves children, and always acted as a father figure for our TCRC boys, teaching them the importance of discipline.



Gabriel is a talented carpenter who loves to work with his hands. He is always ready to learn new things. He is a young man who is guided by integrity and love.