

A Little R & R

After a very busy few months, Kyle and I, along with Jason and Madesha Stapelton and family, decided to take a little weekend getaway to Lake Malawi. Jason and Madesha had been there a few times before and invited us to come along. We stayed in a little guest house on the beach and ate different combinations of eggs, rice, chicken, and potatoes for each meal cooked by some of the local women there. It was a much-needed weekend of rest and relaxation. It was also neat to see some of the cultural differences between Chimala (a farming community) and Kyela (a fishing community). While we were there, some Tanzanians asked us if we wanted to take a canoe ride to another part of the lake to see some multicolored fish and to stop at a village that is known for their pottery. We agreed, and all piled into their homemade canoes. The hand-carved logs that we were riding in weren't exactly the most stable sea vessels ever made and we had some anxious moments as the water lapped over the edges. Out on the water you could see so many other canoes filled with people of all ages out fishing with nets. Kyle and I couldn't help but be reminded of the story of Jesus telling the apostles to cast their nets on the other side of the boat. It just kind of brought the story to life for us to see people that depended on catching fish to make their daily living. When we returned from the canoe ride, we spent most of our time swimming or just sitting on the beach watching the waves.

Tumaini Returns

Many of you might remember a story that I wrote in our April/May newsletter about a woman named Tumaini who almost died from an HIV-related brain infection. We often wondered how she was progressing. Last week, I was walking past the laboratory toward my office and I hear, "EH!" I am getting to know this phrase very well since I hear it or "MZUNGU" frequently followed by someone running up to me saying they have a "shida" (This means "problem"). I turned my head, and a lady with a big smile came walking toward me saying, "unakumbuka meme?" (Do you remember me?) I stared for probably 30 seconds, racking my brain and trying to remember this smiling face. Then, it hit me. TUMAINI! Her crossed eyes caused by the slight brain injury had cleared and now she stood before me looking healthy and happy. She thanked us over and over and again and kept saying she wanted to bring us a gift. We told her thank you but her health and her visit were a big enough gift for us.

The Allison's Visit

We were absolutely blessed to have Fielden and Janet Allison visit the mission this month. This great couple has lived and worked among the Christians in Africa for over thirty years and are currently traveling the continent teaching Marriage and Family Enrichment Seminars. Their main purpose in coming to Chimala Mission was to teach their Marriage and Family course for the Bible College here which was very well received. Kyle and I were also able to have them over for dinner and talk for a while. They were such an encouragement to us. During our missionary devotional the next night the Allison's facilitated some team building exercises with us which were really beneficial. It really helped us learn about each other and how each person viewed our team as a whole.

IHCF

As we informed you several months ago, the New York Avenue elders had approached the International Health Care Foundation (IHCF) to assist in helping with the hospital ministry.

IHCF is a non-profit Christian organization based out of Searcy, Arkansas, and they are very experienced in running a number of Christian hospitals/clinics throughout the continent of Africa. After nearly a year of discussions and meetings, the New York Avenue elders decided to continue running the hospital and are currently working to find other means of raising funds for the ministry. For those of you who volunteered to give a donation and were waiting on a decision with IHCF, and who still wish to give may send their funds to our supporting congregation - Central Church of Christ, 3501 Cheviot Ave., Cincinnati, Ohio 45211.

Financial Struggles

Over the past few months, financial situations here in Tanzania have become even more difficult. The government had increased the minimum wage from 60,000 Tanzanian Shillings a month in December to 80,000 Tsh in January, then again to 100,000 Tsh in July. That is a 66.7% increase in salaries in only seven months. As you can imagine, this increase will nearly double our salary overhead, but is also causing prices of food, clothing, and other basic items to sky-rocket. Yet at the same time, the people here are largely unemployed or self-employed farmers who are unable to make anywhere close to those types of salaries. Not to mention, the HIV pandemic is knocking out the young working force and is crippling the economy. To put this in terms of the American culture, this would be like increasing the \$6.55 minimum wage to \$10.92/hour. Or in other words, increasing a minimum yearly salary of \$13,624 to \$22,714 - all in less than seven months. This entire country really needs your prayers-prayers for good leadership and wise choices.

Baby News

As many of you already know, Kyle and I are excited to be welcoming a new addition to our family towards the end of March. I am in my third month of pregnancy, and am feeling pretty good. My appetite is coming back, and my morning sickness is starting to subside. I have been to the doctor here in Chimala and he was able to take an ultrasound picture of the little guy. The ultrasound picture cost us a mere \$8. One of the other missionaries joked that we could probably get an ultrasound every other week of the pregnancy for the same price as one ultrasound in the states. If the activity of the little guy/girl in utero is any indication of the baby's future energy level, we are going to have our hands very full! The baby was flip-floppin' and squirming around like crazy! I am even starting to feel the baby move a little and that has been quite interesting to experience!

Our Goal Date

When preparing to come work here in Tanzania, we were advised by some wise, experienced Christians to set a tangible and realistic goal commitment time and then assess the possible future commitment. Our original commitment was 1 year and we are quickly approaching that end date. Melissa and I have spent a great deal of time praying, thinking, and seeking the counsel of many individuals as we ponder our future. After considering numerous factors, Melissa and I have decided to come back to the United States at the end of our one year commitment and plan to return just a few weeks short of our one-year goal date. We plan on departing from Tanzania on January 6, 2008. This has been one of the most difficult decisions we have ever had to make. We love the people, the language, the

culture, and I absolutely love my job at the hospital. Unfortunately, we just feel it is time for us to pursue other avenues of ministry in our home state of Ohio.

Thank You

Though we are not departing quite yet, we would like to take this opportunity to thank each of you from the bottom of our hearts. I don't think you could ever know what an impact you have had on this country, this hospital, and to the hundreds of people we care for each month. You have been incredibly generous and have been wonderful communicators and supporters. We can never thank you enough for the care packages, the notes, the emails, and the phone calls. On hard days, it is these things that keep us motivated and give us the strength to continue. Melissa and I pray daily for our future and are honestly unsure of where it may lead us. But we know that God will guide us and protect us and point us in the right direction. May God bless each of you and your families as you serve him and his people generously through your gifts and contributions to our work here.

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