

I'm sitting on the front porch watching the first rainstorm of the season. It is a bit early for this weather, but the smell of fresh rain and the cool air are a refreshing change for our wilted bodies and dehydrated earth. I feel like standing in it, just to soak it up. I guess that is not necessary, as we have already been standing in a shower of cool blessings from Nambaaza. Trying to tell it all would be like darting from droplet to droplet with my uplifted cup. I can't capture them all, but I am certain that I can catch enough to fill your cup –just as the Lord has filled ours.

KAUKA COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Lucy and I were exhilarated and exhausted by end of three full days of teaching –she with grades 1-3; I with grades 4 and 5. The community school has been a dry dustbowl of silent boredom, and now that they have tasted some Truth, they cannot get enough. At the end of the second day, I leaned over and told my translator, “I have to take a break! I’ve given them more than I even planned, and they still want more!” She replied, “They are thirsty for knowledge!” (Is this a teacher’s dream or what?!) They sat spellbound at the Bible story of God sending His own Son to poor people in a small village like Kaponde, to shepherds who had to stay in the fields with the livestock, to people who needed a Savior. They identified and thirsted to know more. They discovered that the world is round, and that there are continents and oceans beyond Kaponde. They made maps, and learned to read their own language, to speak beginning English, to care for their colds and scabies. They discovered excitement in the classroom, and just would not rest! I am having a ball in this shower, happily tired, and praying, “May my teaching drop as the rain, my speech distill as they dew, like gentle rain up the tender grass and like showers upon the tender herb. For I will proclaim the name of the Lord; **ascribe greatness to our God.**” (Deut. 32:2,3 ESV) Please pray our teaching will be salty and that the children will continue to thirst.

MAC AND LEESA


This was the McCauley’s first visit to their future home and neighborhood in the bush. It’s not much to look at right now, but God is there, and vision is budding everywhere. They were both humble and refreshing in their service, and therefore well received by the headmen, patients, community, and church. Leesa gave a CHE (Community Health/Home Evangelism) lesson at the women’s conference and addressed patients’ needs, teaming up with nurse, Ita Mabbola. Mac surveyed the property, together with the help of community men and the Sr. Headman, as well as setting up a community meeting and visit to the chief when we return for our next visit. These will be key for future planting and preparations of God’s field. We are loving their presence with us.

WOMEN’S CONFERENCE



With this being the first women’s conference in the bush, no one knew what to expect. I asked Ita when we arrived, “How many do you think we should expect?” She was silent. That is

her indirect way of saying, “Not many.” I pressed gently, “Can we expect fifteen?” She hesitated with a dubious look, “Maaybee.” Theresa gave insight that food was probably part of the problem, and that those who could not contribute were shy to come. We prayed about it, and God more than doubled our expectations for people AND food. Over thirty individuals arrived; but ONE GROUP sprouted over the next two days. My team of women –Lucy (MC and), Beatrice (translator), Theresa (workshop leader), Ita (Kaponde women’s coordinator) all worked beautifully together. There were more blessings that I can catch in this small space, but one that refreshed me was seeing two polygamist wives (different families) respond to some of the sessions. One pulled me aside, “Pray HARD for me!” I said I would. The other never spoke to me, but I observed something germinating within. Both marriage situations are raw and sensitive. “Ask ye of the LORD rain in the time of the latter rain...” One commentary explained that the latter rain ripens the grain, whereas the former rains (in October), fructify the seed. Pray for the former and latter rains in all the women’s hearts. There is a great drought within.

THE TEAM

It was an unusual, first-time experience to be on the team without Jim present. Everyone did their job, and did it very well, but the dynamic was different without his leadership.  While we were there, the team had to weather one member’s storm cloud and lightning bolts. By morning, the Son had taken over, restoring the usual brightness that characterizes a very close-knit team. We are most grateful for strong relationships, for commitment to obedience, and for loving forgiveness between us all. God has grown a resilient team, able to flex and weather storms. That is a blessing!

Sunday Arthur preached a strong and passionate message on “Deep Faith.” After church, he counseled a former witch doctor about his need for salvation. The man responded in prayer and surrender. Arthur also led Mr. Shakalimbwe’s oldest son (26) to trust Christ as Savior (Shakalimbwes are the newest couple, saved in September.) He also spent two entire afternoons speaking with the men about their involvement in constructing and developing the building as volunteers. It was not something which ex-patriots could have done effectively. We are so thankful for Arthur’s insight, vision, and boldness in the Lord!

 We arrived in Choma close to dusk, dropped off team members, picked up groceries, and headed for the farm. Halfway there, we lost the lights and most of the brakes –not a good combo when Rachel is driving in the dark! We couldn’t call Jim, as we were out of signal range, so we crept along until we saw Jim’s headlamp shining at the locked gate. He hollered as I’m trying to coast to a stop, “Hey, turn on your lights!” I hollered out my window, “They don’t work! I’m not driving this way for lack of adventure.” Mac says from the back seat, “That was such a male reaction –‘turn on your lights!’” And everyone –tired and silly- laughed away tension with good hearted humor. It was a great ending, a refreshing blessing to face stuff together –with some fun. Thank God for His protection , and please pray about how He might provide us with a reliable car.

The storm is over. The birds are singing. This letter must come to a close. We would appreciate your prayer for our next bush trip. Jim will be consulting the church about our leadership needs being covered while go to the chief's. We do have a shortfall of capable leaders for both works. Two of the former leaders have not yet been useable, due to matters of faithfulness. Pray that the Word of God will do its work in their lives, and that the Harvesting Lord will send us more men for the field.

Singing in the rain,
Jim and Rachel, Mac and Leesa

"... as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it." ESV