

13 June 09

Dear Friends and Family,

“You see, it is hard to understand and even harder to live the true privilege of those who follow Christ: the privilege of the cross....How difficult it is to believe in the sort of Messiah that Jesus of Nazareth represents!

To believe that we win by losing our very selves! To believe that love is everything. To believe that power is a great danger, wealth slavery, comfortable life a misfortune. From “Why, O Lord? By Carlo Carretto

In my last email I told you about Christopher, a 17 year old who fell out of a tree landing on his head and sustaining a severe head injury. He was admitted on 4 April 09 and after being in a coma for weeks, he woke up and two weeks ago he was sitting up in a chair and able to feed himself. Today he is talking, able to see faintly, but our eye doctor assures us his vision will return, and he is walking short distances. His mom is so thankful as are all the nurses who have cared for him. He is ready to go home. However the family has no money and has paid only a fraction of his bill. He will go home soon because of the Service Fund, which many of you have supported, which pays for hospital bills. We are so thankful to God that in His time and His way Christopher woke up and now will walk out.

Two and half years ago I was asked to write my job description for my position as Quality Improvement Officer. I used the model I knew and worked in while in the US in Quality Management. I have always known QM as a department of the hospital and wrote my job description in that way. The job description went to our Hospital Management Team (HMT) and they said QI would not be a department and that I would be under nursing. Actually I felt that was very good though I had hoped that in the future, when my replacement was the Quality Improvement Officer, the HMT would realize the importance of having QI as a department. I have never thought of it again nor did I work for it to happen as I felt it would happen later. (Actually, I have never wanted to be part of the HMT!)

Thus a week ago when Mary Gitari, the Matron and my boss, told me that during the last Governing Board Meeting, the Board members, had decided that Quality Improvement had to be a department, I was so surprised I was speechless (and for those of you who know me, know how shocking that is!) I am not certain exactly when it will happen. Perhaps before we leave on our home assignment or afterwards, but I am thankful to God it has happened and I believe that it will greatly help the hospital and my replacement. Since I know what the QM Director did in US hospitals I believe it will be good for me to lay the ground work and create the job description. I always find God’s timing so perfect but usually very different from my own. However, in retrospect I can see that this is a great time for this to happen. Again I am so grateful that God is in-charge rather than Jerri!

On Tuesday evening we received a patient from a road traffic accident. He had just picked up his wife, who was killed in the accident. He sustained severe chest injuries and so we planned to transfer him to Kenyatta National Hospital in Nairobi the next day. The people from his village came in large numbers to our hospital to see him and just before he was brought out and placed in the ambulance about 100 people came and circled the ambulance and prayed for the man and his 2 brothers that were accompanying him. (The day before we had transferred another patient to Kenyatta and our ambulance had not yet returned. Thus the family had requested that the District Hospital allow us to use their ambulance and that is what we was used.)

We had sent a nurse anesthetist with the patient in case he needed to be intubated. During the trip to Nairobi the ambulance had a flat tire and the driver pulled off the side of the road. As the driver and brother's moved out of the ambulance to change the tire, a group of thieves surrounded them. They took mobile phones and money and then broke every window in the ambulance. Somehow our nurse was able to hide her phone and as soon as they left she called the police. They arrived quickly, arranged for the ambulance from Thika District Hospital. The patient, medical equipment, nurse and brothers were safely driven to Kenyatta Hospital where the patient was admitted and is doing well. We were all so thankful for the prayers of those village people as they were needed that day.

This evening the first of ten mission work teams arrive in Maua. Everyone is excited and looking forward to this summer and teams. In this difficult economic time we are more thankful than ever for the teams. They bring one suitcase of medical supplies and one of their personal items. Those medical supplies save us hundreds of dollars. The teams are working on the staff apartments this summer and their timing could not be more perfect. We are so desperate to have more housing on the compound so we can attract the staff we need for the hospital. Please pray for the safety of each team and for what they will do here in Maua and back in the USA.

GOOD IDEA:

Here are a couple of good ideas that two people have shared with me recently. The first is from Rev. Brooks Harrington, Methodist Justice Ministry of First United Methodist Church, Fort Worth. Recently Rev. Harrington and his wife, Max, came with a team through Zoe Ministries to work with our Giving Hope Program. After returning home he wrote me the following:

“Also, let me share with you a personal commitment that the trip to Maua brought about. I am going to start noting in a small notebook the occasions when I feel the urge to buy a CD or an article of clothing or a snack or an expensive meal. If I can resist that urge, or buy the least expensive meal or "needed" item, and keep a record of the amount

that I have saved, I can contribute that "saved" amount monthly to ZOE/Giving Hope, or to the service fund of Maua Methodist Hospital. For instance, I broke my glasses frame just before I went to Africa. Rather than buying a new frame and lenses, if I can just get the frame replaced and use the old lenses in the new frames, I can contribute that "saved" amount. Knowing how much a little American money can help people there so very much makes this very exciting, and it is a way for me to link my life to Jesus' and to theirs on a daily basis. This could be a powerful way for me to remind myself of all my material excesses and blessings, and to help directly people in need where you are. I am not seeking credit by telling you this; I just needed to tell you two and Greg Jenks (the founder of Zoe Ministries) to make this a real commitment. So now I have made it. God help me keep it. Thank you for hearing me out."

A second email from Rev. Harrington:

"Yesterday I was about to spend \$80.00 on two new belts. I stopped myself and entered the \$80.00 in my notebook, to give at the end of this month."

We have had a bit of rain since I last wrote. However, the surrounding areas have had no rain. We are so thankful for the crops that will grow here and for the rain that provides water for the hospital, the community and area people. We are so concerned for our neighbors, just 15 – 20 miles away, who have no food for the 3rd consecutive rainy season. We are seeing their children in the Pediatric Ward. Starvation is a reality here and it is so difficult to watch up close.



The first picture is of a 16 month old boy who has Kwashiorkor, protein starvation. His legs are so swollen with terrible sores. He is seriously ill. He is too weak to cry but occasionally grimaces as he is in this picture when his legs are touched.

The second picture is of a 25 month old boy who has TB, Kwashiorkor and numerous other problems. His mother told us all she had to feed him was breast milk and that wasn't too good as she is always hungry and thirsty and never had much milk.

These two children are part of the hospital's special feeding program. We are prayerful these two boys will live but we will give food to the families no matter what happens.

In His grip,

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"It's not so much how busy you are, but why you are busy. The bee is praised. The mosquito is swatted." Mary O'Connor