

Five Weeks in Africa

I was so touched by the insights in this blog from Kelsey Williams that I had to share her post. Although only 20, Kelsey has insight and maturity that is rare for her years. So many stories she relays challenge me to go deeper in my faith. She has allowed me to share this post from her recent mission trip to Africa.

By Kelsey Williams

The three weeks spent living at Our Own Home In Jinja, Uganda, has come with a lot of beautiful opportunities that have birthed a deep weightiness in my heart.

The raw realities of life have stripped away the blinders from my eyes to things I've never before seen. Every day promises a new story of boundless tragedy and penetrating pain that pierces me to the core. The resounding question that leaks from my lips heavenward, "Abba, how is it that sincerely abundant life is found in a place where death prominently persists?"

I have seen more effects of death in three weeks than I've seen in my life of twenty years. Even still, I've seen a people full of life and joy, a people who hold nothing back but give freely.

Sixteen-Year Old Girl

A sixteen-year-old girl who lives at the home vomited at

school yesterday. She also had a fever; both are classic signs of malaria. She was taken to a nearby clinic and sent home on a boda, a motorcycle taxi, with an IV in her arm. She had no paperwork or knowledge of the sickness she had nor what medication she had been given. To add to the confusion, she was suddenly losing her vision and hearing. This sent nurse Tina out at 7 p.m. to find the clinic to uncover the record. It turned out to be malaria and she had been started on a medication through an IV (a very aggressive treatment especially for her case). The particular drug has very intense side effects and explained the loss of vision and hearing. Tina got the situation under control but the reality of fact that these things can be done without anyone being notified is alarming in my American mind.

Neema, a Mighty Prayer Warrior

There is a twenty-five year old woman, Neema that I have been rooming with for the past three weeks. She told me of her sister who passed away less than a year ago. She was nineteen years old when she was bit by a cat and infected with rabies. Neema told me her sister's last words, "Do not cry or be sad for me, I am going Home."

Neema is an incredible woman of God. Every night I have heard her get out of bed at three and she wouldn't return for an hour. I asked her about it one day and she told me she arose to pray. I asked if she set an alarm and she smiled and said, "No. Somethings are just meant to be by God." Her faithful devotion took the air from my lungs.

Milton, the Giver

When I was in Nebbi, Ben, my beloved friend, gave a young man, Milton, about thirteen years old, a bag of seeds for eating. He thanked Ben and then dug out a handful of seeds and places them in the palm of eagerly waiting children around. He dug out another handful, one after another, until he reached the

end of the bag. The final handful was placed into the last set of anxiously cupped fingers. Milton took not a single seed for himself, but gave it all away. I looked at Ben in bewilderment, and he pulled another bag of seeds from his backpack. Milton was able to enjoy them this time but he had held nothing back for himself, not being sure that there would be some for him.

I later learned that Milton was not one of the kids living at Acres of Hope (where they get three meals a day). Milton lives in the village and is probably fortunate to have one meal a day.

Milton was willing to give every last seed away to kids who would eat three meals that day while he suffered from hunger pangs. There was no declaration of his entitlement to the bag of seeds since it was given to him; there was no argument as to who deserved the food.

I could go on and on with stories of both death and life. My heart is wrecked. **I cling to Abba's arm because there are great heights and depths that I cannot understand but I know He can.** He is sovereign through it all and His love is a well that won't run dry – and I've seen dry wells.

Sole Hope Ministry

I had the opportunity to visit Sole Hope Ministry today. Sole Hope is a God centered ministry that brings relief to people, mainly children, infected with jiggers. Jiggers are tiny bugs (considered a flea) that burrow mostly into human feet – in severe cases they can be found all over the legs and body. Jiggers dwell in and eat the flesh, leaving oozy wounds on the host.

Many people in the villages have never been taught good hygiene, something most of us would consider common sense, but how can you know if you've never learned? They don't have much access to running water and even less access to soap. They

also do not have facilities to excrete bodily waste so people are walking barefoot through feces, both human and animal, a good place for jiggers to breed.

Sole Hope is focused on reducing the bugs living in human flesh. On the compound, they have dorms where they bring twelve children to live for a couple weeks. During this time, the children have the jiggers cut out, a painful process that can last multiple hours for four days in a row. They are taught good hygiene, given shoes made at Sole Hope, and a basin and soap for washing in.

Sole Hope also has clinic days where they spend a few hours in the village washing feet, removing jiggers, and passing out shoes. I tried to go to two of these days but both times there had been too much rain and the village was a mud hole.

On the compound though, we got to see the shoemakers. Shoes are made from old tires, fabric, and milk cartons. I was amazed at the quality of the shoes and very encouraged by the ministry and people running it.

The shoemakers.



The seamstress who sews the upper part of the shoe.



The final product.



In spite of the hardships I have witnessed, I am overwhelmed by the beauty of what God is doing here in Uganda and all over the world.

Abba is actively loving His people back to Himself and I am so thankful to be apart of what He's up to because I know it is good.

I am unlikely to have any Internet in Fort Portal so just be praying through that time with me for open ears and open hearts, both for the Americans and Ugandans. Hoping to get another email or two out when I return to Jinja but, if not, I'll be sure to send something out upon my return.

Much love,
Kelsey

Kelsey has given us so much to think about. One of the stories that really affected me is Neema's story. Just a year ago she lost her sister to rabies – something that is treatable if medicine is available. I was astounded at her 3 a.m. prayer meetings with God every night. What a powerful prayer warrior she is!

What has touched you from Kelsey's words? Please share below.



Today's guest post was written by Kelsey Williams, a college student studying nursing. She says, "The Lord has laid it on my heart to bring nursing skills into international missions and words cannot describe how passionate I have become about this calling on my life. In the mean time, I enjoy getting to know new people and letting them know how dearly they are loved by their Father in heaven. I also enjoy talking to people about my experiences in Africa and recruiting them to come with me."