

Prayer Letter

January 2008

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Important Info...
All packages that are mailed to the P.O. Box must be 8 1/2 x 11 or smaller. Letters are very much appreciated as I can read them over and over again.

Karubuni

Hello Family & Friends,

Only a month has passed since I last wrote to you and yet a great many things have occurred. Your heart will undoubtedly leap for joy and desire to shower our gracious Father with praises as I recount the circumstances of one event. Yet, the majority of these accounts will pierce you like sharp arrows. I pray you will remain steadfast in faith and prayer with me. For those of you who share these newsletters with your children please screen the content beforehand.

On a personal note, let me first request your prayers on behalf of my family and me. I received word only last night that

my Aunt Glenda had passed away Tuesday. Her death was a surprise and is difficult for us. There are, however, some special circumstances involved that are causing a greater pain for us all. At this time I'll refrain from saying more until the matter has been decided. Please pray in particular for my Aunt Sue the eldest, and who I'm close to, as she is taking this very badly; too, she is extremely worried about me and wanting me to return home immediately for good. In my family, she has been the one who best understood why I came to Africa.

Let me now turn to events in the village.



My little buddies – Halima (Momma Halima's girl) and her cousin Salum enjoying some pineapple on my porch. These two have a special place in my heart. When Momma is working away from the house Halima often comes over to our house to eat and nap.

My Accounts...

First Account:

In early December Paulina & I were headed off to bed one night when we felt we had to investigate a quarrel that had escalated between neighbors. A verbal argument between Momma Sophia and her husband had now become physical. Our very presence as foreigners is shaming to them in such instances – thank goodness! I began to call out to them trying

to calm them; her husband began to walk away. But, M. Sophia was still very angry and threw an enormous rock hitting him in the back. With that, he began hitting her again. I called out

and he stopped and walked away and I grabbed her by the hand, yet she refused to come with me. Apparently, he was interested in a woman a few doors down which is acceptable in their culture and naturally M. Sophia did not like this. The two women began yelling at each other. So, I walked down and calmed the other woman and returned to M. Sophia and calmed her after some time. The two have been separated by family as is usual practice. Family was present for the fight, standing around watching and children came out to be entertained. This is the second violent domestic disturbance in our neighborhood in the 6 months we've been here.



My landlord's grandson Aiidi. We traded chores – I sewed up the holes in his shirt and he paid me back by sweeping the floor.

Second Account:

You may remember Mouwa the young granddaughter of my landlord. The first time I introduced her to you was when she spent an evening on my porch reading the gospel in Swahili to other children gathered around. Just before Christmas she celebrated her *coming-out ngoma* – after which a girl is considered a woman and ready to marry. She's 14. She became sexually

active last year and would have been severely beaten by her father had our team leader not intervened. Much teaching occurs before and during an ngoma, including crude sexual instruction, the "fact" that a woman can't be satisfied with only one man, and how to manipulate men. The celebration lasts three days starting in the morning innocently and ending well into the night with

great drunkenness and orgies. Mouwa spent today disrespecting my house helper Salome because she's a Christian (I forced her to leave), and mocking an evangelist speaking in our neighborhood.



Steve & Carol Lyons – our postal carriers from Dar!

Please continue to be in prayer for our team, the Zaramo, and God's work here.

Cont' My Accounts...

Third Account:

A week ago I spent most of the day attempting to address medical concerns that my neighbors brought to me. The day broke my heart and I seriously wondered if I could ever return once these two years were over. In particular, I sat at the bedside of a good friend's (Momma Sudi) mother (Bibi Sudi) as she lay whimpering in agony. Since July she has been diagnosed with urinary infections (UTI). They sought the help of Tim & Emily which is often times far better than their own system; they followed everything Tim advised, took all their medicines, and even traveled to Dar multiple times visiting two hospitals. Each time she was diagnosed with a UTI and sent home on antibiotics after receiving nothing more than a urine screen. She has deteriorated terribly, now in constant pain and practically unable to urinate. Her family assumed, and rightly so, that she would soon die and the eldest sister insisted she return to her homestead and was transported to the sister's village by bicycle. I went to Tim & Emily's and we spoke at length about this matter; according to her medical chart that I reviewed she was to have an ultrasound that never took place. I felt like this was a condition that could very well be treatable. Eventually, we made arrangements with a missionary doctor just back from furlough. Tim took her early the next morning to see Dr. Joel and she returned that night to her sister's in a bit better condition. They left again this morning to see a specialist recommended by Dr. Joel.

In between the above issue a mother brought her one year-old baby to see me. The clinic had diagnosed Baby Aziza with chicken pox. She had maybe two pox still intact and the rest she had scratched off leaving raw, oozing flesh fully across her chest, neck, chin and upper lip. The clinic did nothing for the child except prescribe 3 medicines that would be difficult at best to find in the city let alone in the village. There was not even so much as an anti-itch lotion available. We gently cleaned Aziza and I "gloved" her hands to keep her from scratching more with gauze and we gave mom soap and instructions for washing and "gloving."

Fourth Account:

Without going into detail I want to briefly mention that we've recently had strife on our team. We have talked publicly and openly as a team about this issue and where needed members confessed and reconciled with teammates.

Fifth Account:

This past Sunday 140 students from Dar came to our villages to hold a week long open-air campaign. In this culture open-air (vs. relationship building) evangelism usually pushes Moslems away and builds tension. We are hoping they speak and act with great gentleness and in love. There are, however, reports that 5 Zaramo have confessed faith in Christ, but this has not been substantiated yet.

Just tonight I stood observing a preaching event. As I observed I stood next to the only two Zaramo Christian women in both villages. I watched them with such huge smiles on their faces as they prayed and sang out to our Lord. I had to bite my finger to keep from crying as this is inappropriate in most situations. I couldn't help but think of them standing there "hoping against hope," having waited all these years for their neighbors and friends to know Christ all the while these hoped for have ostracized and persecuted them. Mocked them and ignored them. How can I not stay here for the next 50 years if needed and stand with them?! And yet, my heart and faith seemed so small next to them. Oh Church, won't you pray with all earnestness for them and those they wait for?

Sixth Account:

It is time for good news. Our friend Dulla has confessed faith in Christ!! Every time I talk of it, even as I write now, I weep. Originally, Dulla had a significant dream he felt was from the Lord. He asked Tim to teach him the Bible, then asked if they could meet daily, then asked for a Bible to take home. He and Tim met a former Moslem teacher who preached the gospel boldly to Dulla. Tim was talking about confessing the Lord in Rom 10:9 and Dulla said he was one of those, he believed! He has shared this with close friends and now even his brother who is a Moslem teacher. If the 5 formerly mentioned are true to their confession we could be starting a Zaramo church far sooner than we thought possible!

Praises

- Dulla's confession
- Salome & Melina's steadfastness in faith
- The friendships developing, particularly with M. Sudi, B. Shaiibo, M. Franki, & M. Hallima
- Even though Mwanaisha is no longer my language helper we remain on friendly terms
- My personal spiritual growth has been amazing
- B. Hallima went to visit her son & Amina and took the Bibles to Amina we gave her



Open-air campaign; stage in center

Prayer Requests

- Dulla to remain steadfast and grow as he's discipled
- A desire in his wife to study the Bible
- Healing without scarring for Baby Aziza and healing for B. Sudi
- Peace in our neighborhood from domestic disturbances and feuds
- An amazing softening of Mouwa's heart and lack of desire to "show-off"
- Redemption of the ngoma practices
- I would learn and retain a lot of knowledge when Dr. Joel comes next week for his village clinic
- Continued team healing; involved members to remain steadfast and regain their joy in serving
- Competent follow-up after the open-air campaign
- Wisdom for the team regarding including Dulla in fellowship and possibly starting a church
- Encouragement, endurance and continued discipleship for Salome and Melina
- Recurring stomach bug on the team
- New language helper works out & we feel comfortable with one another

*Pray for wisdom,
courage and
strength.*

*In Him,
Monica*

Pictures from Tanzania...



Photo from campaign



Photo from campaign



My Saturday work party! Dulla asked for work the day I planned to re-screen and place protective wire on my screen door so I let him help. His cousin Aiidi is on the left, Noorlu is on her knees watching while holding the stools and little Halima is just watching and being entertained. In the far distance you can see a wall of photos – that’s where Paulina and I display the photos we get sent.

Me – proudly showing off the repaired door on a windy day.

Our new gate!! You can see the skeleton of the old one to the left didn’t make it too well. The view from the gate looked right into our back door and my bedroom – privacy yeah!



**Monica Miller in
Tanzania, Africa**

EFCM
Monica Miller
P.O. Box 63367
Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania, Africa

Email: monica.miller@aimint.net

[http://mysite.verizon.net/
resxpvo/monicamiller/](http://mysite.verizon.net/resxpvo/monicamiller/)



Zanzibar is not only famous for its spices but also for its former slave trading. This opening leads into a large cave where the Sultan once kept up to 200 slaves.



This is the entrance of the cave.



A few of us spent a couple of days on Zanzibar island during our vacation. This is the view from the ferry dock.



Zanzibar is known as the spice island so we went on a spice tour. These kids followed us around making all kinds of neat things with plant leaves. Here they are weaving a basket.



We made a stop at the beach for a bit of fun. I thought this hole in the rock wall made a cool picture.

<http://mysite.verizon.net/resxpvo/monicamiller/>