



It is difficult to comprehend Africa's contrasts and contradictions. There is such a gulf between what is good and what is evil, between what is spectacularly beautiful and what is disgustingly ugly, between what is joyful and what is immeasurably sad and heartbreaking. At times we experience these contrasts and contradictions with such force and so rapidly they leave us amazed and perplexed and a little bewildered all at once. Mostly, those times leave us more grateful than ever that the Lord is in charge and, even though we may not understand it all, He has a plan and a purpose and does all things well. Praise His Name!



The month of June was one of those times—a month of contrasts and contradictions.

For 10 days we were blessed by an 18-member team of young people from Shelter Cove Community Church and Calvary Temple in Modesto, California. It was a treat to have every member of the team with us. They worked hard, played hard, and loved on our boys. They encouraged us and our national staff more than they will ever know.

We kept them busy while they were with us. Their two biggest projects were pouring concrete slabs for our containers and new shop and craft area and making new walkways out of paving stones. Almost everyone got involved in one or both of those projects. The results are fabulous and bring smiles to our faces and to the faces of our boys and staff every time we look at them.



For years, we have dreamed of using the containers our prefabricated dining hall building came in for storage and to form the

sides of a covered work and craft area. But we needed a large, strong, level (something not often seen here!) concrete slab to set them on. Over a four-day period, the team hauled gravel, sand, and cement. They mixed and poured the slab in four large sections. They tamped and



finished the concrete. They got hot, dirty, and tired. And, to put it simply, they did a great job.

While they were here, the town Chief came by and arranged for a local crew to move the containers into place. (They had promised a crane to do the job, but when they arrived with a 30-year old tow truck with a boom too short to lift the containers, they had to be move the containers almost entirely by hand, with a chain drawn wench.) You

can't imagine how delighted we are to have those containers in place and ready for us to erect trusses and put a roof between them.

In addition to the concrete slabs, we were grateful for all of the work the team did laying walkways out of paving stones. The walkways are beautiful and functional and so much better than what we had (crumbling concrete walkways or, in some places, no walkways at all).



The team also painted the trim on one of our boys' dorms, helped in the office, tutored some of our boys, and tie-dyed our boys' bed sheets. Not only did they do all of this work, but they provided the funds to pay for all of the materials as well.



They also got to visit boys on the streets with our outreach staff, visit the homes and families of boys we have been able to reintegrate, and minister to children in the Remand Center (Kisumu's juvenile hall).

We are thankful to the Lord for the team and all they accomplished. We are grateful for the impact they had on the lives of our boys. They followed the Lord's call to come help and minister and we pray He will richly bless them for their obedience and dedication.

As we look out our kitchen window here on our residential compound, every day we see a woman across the street who roasts corn and sells it. Her name is Monica. She has AIDS and is in extremely poor health. But she is there every day earning what she can to support

herself and her family. She used to have a small tree she could sit beneath during the heat of the day, but someone cut most of the tree down for firewood, so she no longer had shade from the tropical sun.

Esther decided to buy her a large, colorful umbrella to make her more comfortable. Monica was thrilled. Now she sits in the shade of her beautiful umbrella and waves each time we go by! When Esther returned to our compound after giving the umbrella to Monica, our guard thanked her and said, "You have done a good thing." How sweet for him to notice and to care.



While the team was here, our staff held a "talent day" for our boys. Previous talent days had involved soccer competition and athletic skills.

This one, however, was for dancing, reciting poetry, and sharing memory verses from the Bible. Some of the dance troops really got into their routines, including elaborate and well planned costumes. It was all great fun. Some of the team members even participated in the dancing.

Ambrose is a 13 year-old boy rescued from the streets by our outreach ministry team. He had run from home after taking 600 shillings (about \$6) from his grandmother. Through the work of our Reintegration Team the Lord enabled us to successfully reunite Ambrose with his family where he was doing well and preparing to re-enter his local primary school. However, one night while he and his father were visiting his grandmother a short distance from his home, thugs bolted the door to the grandmother's house from the outside, locking Ambrose, his father, and his grandmother in the house. The thugs then went to Ambrose's home and brutally attacked his mother and his older sister, Sharon, with machetes. They literally hacked his mother to death and severely wounded Sharon with deep cuts to her arms, head, and torso.



Ambrose and his father heard the screams, but by the time they were able to get out of the grandmother's house it was too late to save his mother and they were barely able to get Sharon to the hospital for emergency treatment. The horror and shock eventually drove Ambrose back to the streets.

Thank the Lord, we were able to rescue him and to bring him to Agape where he is now safe and undergoing intensive counseling. Gratefully, the Lord has provided Megan Barnes, a young lady from southern California, who is a trained counselor with extensive experience in dealing with heavily traumatized children. Megan is having an enormous impact with Ambrose. Not only is she working with Ambrose, but she is also equipping our staff to better help him. We praise the Lord for bringing Megan's skills to Agape in time to meet this desperate need.



One of the tools Megan uses in dealing with our boys is to ask them to draw colored pictures of their feelings. Black is sadness. Brown is fear. Blue is anger. Yellow is happiness. A look at Ambrose's picture shows lots of sadness and fear, some anger, and very little happiness. Please pray for Ambrose. Megan is hoping his next picture will have a lot more yellow and far less black.



The contrasts and contradictions of Africa—giggles, brutality, laughter, savagery, gentleness, disease, kindness, death. From one of these events to another and many others during the month we experienced an avalanche of emotions. We experienced great happiness and joy; delight and gratitude; anger and frustration; sorrow and heartache; hopeless and resignation; and determination and resolve. But in and through it all, and at an even deeper level than all of those emotions, we are constantly aware of the Lord's presence and power and of the incredible privilege He has given us to be here doing what we do. We are grateful to Him.

We are also grateful to you for your faithful prayers and generous support. They are what make it possible for us to be here. Thank you.

Blessings to you. We love you.

Blake & Esther Gibbs

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