



Mission Trip Thrills the Heart of AMH Parish Nurse

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“For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother.”

--Matthew 12:50

By Cathie Ketterer

God opens many doors, and no matter how many times we try to shut them He has a way of letting us know His will for our lives -- if we're willing to listen.

Such is the case with the 12-day mission trip to Kenya that I went on with the Salvation Army women's mission team in May. Words cannot express what an awesome experience it was and how much I appreciate all the support I got to make the trip possible, especially the prayers of protection.

Cathie Ketterer, a parish nurse at Alton Memorial Hospital, spends some time with one of her young friends during a mission trip to Kenya last May.

It was definitely a time to draw close to our loving Father and open my eyes to the needs of His people that He loves so much. I could go on and on about “those poor people”

and the “overwhelming poverty,” but the thing I want to impress is their joy. They have a love and joy for the Lord that you can see on their faces.

Our first week was spent visiting the Salvation Army Territorial Headquarters and training college. Then we spent three days at a women’s Congress. It was a time of learning, singing and dancing praises to our God. Most people spoke a little English and it is taught in school as a second language, but we had interpreters most of the time.

The next week we toured and interacted with children at two schools. The first school was for handicapped children. Their disabilities ranged from severe cerebral palsy to missing limbs. Some children were abandoned there because they are considered a curse to the family. Others went home and others saw their parents on the weekend. There were other children that were mainstreamed in and it was beautiful to see how they helped with those that needed assistance. I began to think how wonderful that would be here and maybe bullying would not exist if you actually lived next to the struggles of another child.

They entertained us with songs and skits and then we interacted with the children. As I went to shake hands with a little boy, he lifted his foot. He did not have any arms. He then demonstrated that he could write his name with a pencil between his toes. I wondered about the availability of prosthesis for these children with missing limbs.

The dorms are filled with twin beds that just have a mattress on a metal frame and mosquito nets hanging from above. All their belongings are in a metal box that usually sits at the end of their bed. All the children wear uniforms. The girls all have shaved heads and the only way you can tell the difference between the boys and girls is that the girls all wear skirts or dresses.

The second school we visited was for the visually impaired. Some had no vision and others had a limited amount of sight. Again, other children were mainstreamed in. Several of the children looked like their eyes were covered with cataracts. I wondered, if they had a surgeon available, if they would regain at least partial vision.

Both schools had cattle and chickens that they raised themselves. The chickens we had for lunch had been in the school yard that morning. Both schools were owned by the government and run by the Salvation Army, which had provided many of the buildings. The thing that struck me the most was the fact that it was a government school but they taught the children about God. I don’t think that could happen here.

If you ever get the chance to go on a mission trip, don't pass up the opportunity. If you never have the opportunity, then look for ways you can help in your own church community. Consider supporting a child or helping pay for a well for someone who has no safe drinking water. They can do so much with so little.

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