



**Travel Journal #6, Monday, 10/11/10**  
**by Chris Mars**

The morning sun in Africa does not rise like it does in Indiana, slow and peaking over the horizon. It comes on strong, like the electric power, at the flick of the switch the traffic, people and animals burst to life. It has been 15 year since my first trip to Africa and on the surface not much looks any different, but the technology of the world has blanketed the continent very quickly. Cell phones & computers are now commonplace to a people who still live in mud huts with thatch roofs. But the Sudanese adapt to life's challenges each morning in their own and unique manner. I have seen a mother with child slung on back, sweeping the porch of her hut with branches from a tree while talking on a cell phone. God is good. I must remind myself that while western influence is strong this is still a tribal community dating back long before the days that Jesus walked the earth. But regardless of how different our lifestyles might be God's presence is everywhere in Yei, Sudan.

Today was a divide and conquer approach to our day's activities. After breakfast Tara and Maria headed to the New Generation Dreamland Children's Home to work on an art project with the kids. Clint and Rose headed into town to do clothes shopping for the new orphans that really don't have any clothes to call their own, as well as general supplies that are needed to bless the School. Lisa stayed in Yei to do a medical outreach that was announced during Sunday's service. While I worked on a new project for the widows living at the outreach church just about 10 kilometers outside of Yei. They will be starting a cell phone charging shop for the neighboring villagers charging cell phone batteries for 1-pound Sudanese for a 2-hour charge. While they are waiting Pastor Eli will be able to spend time ministering to people of the community. Pastor Eli also

If you don't have a Facebook account you can view the wonderful pictures of Sudan just by clicking on the following link...  
<http://www.facebook.com/album.phpaid=25752&id=110136282355916>

has cleared and planted 1 acre of ground nuts (peanuts) which are growing well and will be clearing the grass off the second acre to be planted by next growing season.

Tara and Maria had a great day ministering to the children, reading bible stories and then drawing pictures from the stories. Art and visualization is not often taught in Sudan schools, so this was a great way to get the right side of the children's brains working to see the beauty of God's world. Some of the children according to Clint's last trip showed the need for improved art skills, but just over the past year some have been inspired and blessed with improved art skills. The girls also had a chance to really bond with children as they attended their daily classes and observed how the school operates.

Clint and Rose were "personal shoppers" for 100 children. They had a long list of items including sizing 100 pairs of boys and girls shoes, new clothes for the children (with a goal to get the 29 newest children their own clothes that will fit), 2 new bicycles, and a sewing machine and fabric among other items. As they tunneled their way through the maze of shops in town and sorted the various sizes out, waited for shop keepers to assemble items (did I mention that everything takes 3 times as long to do in Sudan) they finally back tracked their way to pick up all the items when they got a phone call from Tara. She asked that famous phrase: "Oh, while you are out," could you pick up a few more items. By the time they loaded up the truck it was filled with 2 new 20-gallon cooking pots, a half dozen washbasins, and LED lanterns for the cooks at the school. Finally they loaded up the dump truck (yes I mean dump truck) full of new purchases for the school and headed back to pick Lisa and I up.

Lisa had setup up a medical outreach for the children of Pastor Stanley's school in Yei, Sudan. By the time I had returned from my shopping trip just after noon. She had already seen close to 300 children with medical issues ranging from cuts and scrapes to urinary tract

infections and upset stomachs. One of the teachers worked with her on treating the countless ringworm cases that the children have.

We all loaded up the truck and headed to the children's home. Every time the truck arrives you are met with a flood of children waiting to greet you. Once again we came bearing gifts so we unloaded the truck as the kids tried to peek a look into the packages to see what we brought. Suddenly cheers erupted as they began to see the new sandals and clothes in the sacks. Clint started the distribution of the shoes with the story Jesus washing the feet of the apostles and then we conducted foot washing before each child was fitted with new shoes. Washing the feet of orphans is a humbling experience on levels you and I only dream of, the children are loved, schooled and feed well, but the touch of a loving and nurturing hand is what they need the most on a daily basis. There are just not enough hands to go around so the gentlest touch or hug brings joy that only God must know.

As the sun set on our day (and our time in Yei, Sudan) the children gathered around to sing us a fair well song. Close your eyes and imagine being miles away from the city in the surreal Sudanese countryside being serenaded by 100 tiny voices singing the praises of God. After the song the children prayed for us (no one asked them to do this) and they prayed with conviction, arms raised, eyes tightly shut praying out loud for a group of people they have just meet and might never see again. The power of their praise rocks your world.

After the prayer I opened my eyes and looked down and saw Charles, a young boy who has birth defects in both legs, his knees bow inwards and it is difficult for him to walk. Charles was looking up at me and was praying to me. His intensity was overwhelming. I have never prayed for anything with power he was directing at me. I now know that God's love was being directed through this little boy who has so little in the real world, but more than me in faith. I reached down and hugged him

knowing that our mission was now done. We were now friends in Jesus name.

We all leave for Uganda in the morning and will spending another day of shopping in Kampala with Pastor Solomon. Then our team will part ways to travel home. Good-bye Sudan...hello USA!



We gave each child a cinch bag (donated by Bethel College) with a ball, toy and 3 pieces of candy inside. It was like "Christmas in October". It was so much fun!! Their faces were priceless!! These are a couple photos from that.



Before we gave them the gifts the children did a program for us. We were so excited and couldn't wait to watch what they had planned and practiced for us. One photo is the older children singing for us.

