



Travel Journal #4, Saturday, 10/09/10
by Maria Winston

Last night we fell asleep to the beautiful sounds of tribal music coming from drums and people who were singing in a nearby village. They sang long after the lights went out at midnight, it was the best way the Lord could ever lull us to sleep. At dawn I woke up to the sound of rain and laid there in the dark waiting for the rays of sunlight to filter in as my bladder screamed for release from the need to go to the bathroom, the steady sound of rain did not help any...!!!

Today we got a late start as we had to prepare for our trip out to the orphanage once Clint and Chris picked up the rest of our luggage from the airport. Breakfast was scrambled eggs, bananas and a slice of bread with peanut butter and dark African PURE honey, Coffee (thanks to Kathy Smarella) or tea for some. Esther (who cooks our meals and warms our buckets of shower water) has taken good care of us. Earlier Tara and I were admiring her gracefulness, she seems to glide as she walks tall and elegant, but her kindness is what has won us over. Today she spoke to us about her late husband who used to be a pastor and told us about her ministry in reaching out to the women from the village. She is a perfect example of a woman of God full of His grace.

**Esther was mentioned extensively in last year's Sudan Trip Journal. Follow this link for more on Esther:
http://app.razorplanet.com/acct/40324-9375/resources/Sudan_Missions_Trip_Log_September_2009.pdf.
Then click "Ctrl" "F" and then type "Esther".

The team was well rested and all of us were hyped to get out to the orphanage to see the children. Although there was an empty seat in the dump truck we all opted to ride in the back as we get the best panoramic view of the villages with mud huts and the lush landscape. It truly is like a live picture straight out of a National Geographic magazine. We also get to greet the village people as we ride along, the children run out to the roadside once they hear the truck coming and wave enthusiastically with huge beautiful smiles---priceless!

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>

Today was the day assigned to create the bracelets for the Art for the Heart of Africa benefit event (www.artfortheheartofafrica.com). Tara told a story about friendship and how Jesus wants to be their friend forever. The children's eyes showed a deep yearning for Him and we were amazed at how intently they listened. She ended with a prayer that left those of us present humbled to tears as each of their little eyes closed and many prayed silent prayers. The Lord was profoundly felt in this poverty stricken orphanage in the remote outskirts of Yei, Sudan. As we worked on the bracelets Lisa was at the other end of the room tending to the children's medical needs, instead of the lollipop alternative she gave a hug which the kids just ate up. Rose took many pictures and stopped for an occasional hug. Clint and Chris took turns playing soccer with the older boys, while one played the other videotaped, it was Clint's idea since he actually got tired while running around-can you believe it, church family? Clint Schwartz actually got tired! The boys loved Chris with his great height, witnessing Jesus in this place was so awesome!

One of the routine things we do during dinner time is give our own personal update of how our day went. Today was a hard one for all of us, tears rolled and there were constant sniffles as Clint prayed for strength for all of us while dealing with the realization of just how big and wide the need is at New Generation Dreamland. We talked about how the children have totally captured our hearts. We hurt in knowing there is impending turmoil coming to Southern Sudan. We worry about the children's safety, but in the end we ended in agreement that we are here to remind them of how much the Lord loves them. Clint asked us to just absorb how the Lord is changing our lives even through the hurt and allow Him to do His work in our lives. The children do seem happy and content, they have a healthy glow no doubt stemming from the delicious looking meal they are served. Today Chris was SO tempted to go ask for a plate of food from them, they had beans with vegetables and a vitamin fortified corn meal porridge...I have to admit I was also tempted...Lisa said she almost asked them for a taste yesterday.

We have also started wondering how hard it's going to be to say good-bye to them. I cannot describe the feeling that comes over us from their enthusiastic greeting every time we drive up to their compound-lump in the throat every time-so saying good-bye seems unimaginable. Praying for strength

inthat department.

Blessings for all from the Heart of Africa