

# Reflections on the Journey

## Parker Hill Community Church



Every time I go to Kenya I am blown away. I learn so much about myself and who I want to become. I feel

that this medical trip that I was on was the best trip yet. I realized that I definitely want to pursue the medical field. On the April trip, I spent much of my time seeing patients and writing down their symptoms. I learned how to ask certain questions that would hopefully make it easier for the doctors to make a diagnosis. While doing a lot of hands on work was fun, the memory that I will remember the most is meeting a young teenager named Emmanuel. I have never had the connection with somebody like I had with Emmanuel. We talked about our dreams and our goals in life. We talked about soccer and what teams we thought were best (my teams definitely were). I really hope that we will stay in touch. Hopefully I will be able to see him again when he comes to school in the states. I can't wait to go to Kenya again. The experiences that I had there have changed my life forever. I can't wait to see what God has in store for me next! *Brandon Golden*



When I reflect on our most recent service trip to Kenya, I think what I enjoyed most (aside from the smiles and attitudes of our Kenyan brothers and sisters... DESPITE their hardships!) was taking a bit more time to appreciate how others interacted and engaged and a little less time trying to "fix" everyone I cared for medically. Let's face it, they will be in a similar condition medically two weeks after our trip as they were before we arrived and ministered to them. I believe the smiles, laughs and common grace we shared together go quite a bit further than the medication and limited care we were able to provide in the short term. My prayer is that they saw "a little bit of Jesus" in our faces and sensed it in our hearts. I actually had one blind woman say to me (via an interpreter), "I know you love people because of your manner and laughter." She could see my smile although she was blind. *Lee Davis*



Thank you so much for your support of our Kenya Medical Team. As you'll see, they had a fantastic journey. Your generosity made the following life-change possible.

Thank you.  
- Paul McGuinness



It is hard to put into words what I have learned while in Kenya because I think God is still opening my eyes to the lessons He wants me to get from this trip. One thing I have learned is that there is truly a gift that is returned to a person that serves the Lord.

Some of the greatest joy I felt while examining and treating the people of Kenya came from their actions and not their words. Even though we had great interpreters it was still very difficult for everyone to express their feelings. The smiles, kind and often staring eyes, and the hugs shared spoke volumes over the language barrier.



Even though we brought a ton of medicines and supplies, when we started seeing patients it seemed like the supplies would not last past the first clinic day. God had other plans, just like when he fed 5,000 with only five loaves of bread and two fish, our supplies were adequate for the needs of the patients. The only thing I wish He would have supplied more of was time! It broke my heart to turn people away on our last day. Even with the healthcare issues in United States people are never turned away from emergency rooms and it seems wrong to label what is going on here in the US as a "crisis" after being in Kenya and touring one of their hospitals.

I am reminded of the abundant and really excessive blessings God has provided for us in the US. Now, I am more humbled to use what God has given us to the fullest. I am also reminded that just as God provides for the little sparrow, the lilies and even a blade of grass, He cares and provides even MORE for the people of Kenya. The joy they share is evidence of His loving hand on them. I am so thankful to be used by Him to bless them. I am ready to do it again when He calls! *Abbey Datman*



Easter morning we participated in local worship services held in small huts with muddy floors. These huts of worship were filled with young and old Kenyan brothers and sisters praising the Lord with abandon and deep faith. The singing by the children was like the voice of many waters surrounding the throne of God and the preaching by the pastors was clear, powerful and relevant. We each had an opportunity to give a short testimony and were received with great love and enthusiasm.



On Wednesday a group of us headed to a local village outside of Segera. We were about a mile away when our truck bogged down in a mud-hole. All attempts to rock it out failed so we strapped on our back packs, grabbed some medical supplies, and walked the rest of the way in the equatorial heat. From a distance, we became aware of many people outside the village and we felt inadequate as we knew we would not have time to see all these folks. When we got closer, we realized people had lined both sides of the road and that a group of children were poised to march in front of us with song as we were escorted to the schoolhouse where we would render care. We paraded into the building under a canopy of wooden sticks held high by jubilant children. It was a humbling experience. A young girl, about 6 years old, was brought by her mother for removal of sutures from her scalp. She had been hit by a rock during play and someone had placed the sutures some time ago. I felt positioned by God to play my small role in removing her sutures. She never made a sound as I removed them with my fingers and a scalpel. She had on a pretty white dress and I only wish that I had taken a picture, but the image in my mind and heart will never fade. ☺ *Carl Barisgian*



I think God chose this mission for me to help me get over my self-centeredness. From the moment I read about a medical mission in the church bulletin my thoughts stayed focused more on the role I would play and what kind of an impact, if any, I would have rather than that of God and the people I encountered. As much as I tried to shift my thoughts it always came back to me. So, in order to help me overcome my self-absorbed ways, God surrounded me with talented, compassionate, experienced people who like to hug and are completely in touch with their emotions. A few meetings and several thousand hugs later, we all got on a plane to Kenya. What I became aware of right away was that this was the first time I'd left my son to go on a mission without feelings of nausea or guilt. I've been to far away places to serve medically, but this was the first time I went to serve for God. This was the first time I'd gone with a group of people who had love in their hearts, not overshadowed by hostility and fear. We arrived in a beautiful country and met more people whose talents, abilities and emotional intelligence far outweighed my own. During the mission, I was not playing a medical role; I was not one of the leaders; I was not the one people went to looking for answers; I was not the one everyone knew. It was completely different from what I'm used to; from what I expect and want. It was surprisingly easy to adjust to. I was given the opportunity to shut my mouth and listen for a change, and that allowed me to open my mind and unhardened my heart and appreciate what God makes possible. I met the most wonderful, welcoming, loving people. There was so much hugging and hand-holding and smiling. This trip was one of a handful of times in my life when I felt like I was exactly where I was supposed to be, doing exactly what I was supposed to be doing. I definitely feel that this journey helped me more than I helped the mission. It has allowed me to get in touch with some of my emotions, leaving me feeling thankful and inspired.

☺ *Jess Schletteret*



Some of the best images of Kenya that I have are the smiling faces of the children. All of the kids seemed to be genuinely happy, excited to interact with you, and so very open. Even having nothing in their lives materially, there was a joy in their lives that was unmistakable. It made you think about what we really need in life to be happy, or maybe what we don't need. Seeing the thatched huts, no running water, dirt floors, and real poverty, it was definitely an eye-opening experience. They had nothing, yet they were happy. Maybe for them, it was not about "things", but how we relate to each other. In the children of Kenya, I can honestly say they taught me a lesson in humility, and in things that really matter, or did not.

Along with the children, the people of Kenya graciously welcomed us and displayed great warmth and kindness wherever we went. As we observed them, it was clear that the people focused their lives on families and relationships, and that reaching out and helping others was the norm, not the exception. In caring and loving others, and in serving others, they were abiding by what Christ asks each of us to do. In Ephesians 4:1-6, Paul speaks to what it means to live our lives within the body of Christ. Truly, through their faith, and how they chose to live their lives, they were following Christ's example of loving and serving others.



Lastly, the most powerful experiences I had in Kenya were the relationships built within our team and the interactions we had as we together reached out to the Kenyan people with unconditional love and a desire to unselfishly serve them. Although we started out not knowing each other well, we came to see in each other all the gifts and traits that make people so special to each other when they look for the best in each other. It was if we became "children of light" to each other, and Paul speaks of this in Ephesians 4:17-32. This was such a powerful experience it has affected us for days after we

returned. As I look back on the experience, it takes on a surreal quality, almost as if it were in another world, in "another galaxy, far away". As I reflect on the experience, it makes me want to go back, to re-experience it again. It is also an experience that cannot be adequately described so that others can truly understand it. It can only be experienced. And we are called by God to live our lives in this way. ☺ *Jeff Warner*