

April 2007

Returning with Africa in My Heart

I have returned from my trip to Africa and feel privileged to have been able to go there. Thank you so much for the many prayers and warm thoughts that reached my heart each and every day while I was there. They served as fuel for my soul, and I sent them out into the hearts of the people I met. I also felt the presence of Mother Mary, by which I was lifted tremendously.

Upon my return, I pondered how very fortunate we are in North America and how much we have to be grateful for: all the things that we easily overlook, such as water to drink, warm running water in our homes to bathe with, a blanket, mattress, and three regular meals each day.

It is amazing how much we do have that we do not recognize as wealth, and how little it takes to transform another person's life by sharing just a small portion of our abundance. In this arena, I find Nature herself to be a great teacher. Regardless of the season, she offers her bounty—snowflakes in winter, wild flowers and insects in spring, wheat fields and thunderstorms in summer, and a kaleidoscope of colored leaves in fall. Never do we see or feel a sense of lack from her; instead, it is as if Nature knows that the more she offers, the more she has to offer. This made me look deeper into my life to see if I can give more than I did last week, and I find that I can.



While in Africa, I met several people working within the NGO (non government organization) structure who truly emanated joy—a joy I do not often see here, in spite of our wealth. These people's joy came from giving of themselves without judgment upon the situations they were

witnessing or upon others. I saw young men and women staying focused on the goal, which was to improve living conditions and facilitate peace between people, without looking for a perpetrator or victim. They used whatever skills and training they had, and sometimes they only had a warm handshake and a smile to give, and these brought healing, too. They offered up their clothes, and shared what little to eat they had. They offered time; they offered an ear to listen and bear witness to another's suffering. They offered themselves, and in so doing, their sense of self grew.



Africa as a continent is a land of possibilities, miracles, and grace, and in both Ethiopia and Uganda, I felt an undeniable heartbeat pumping the seeds of opportunity into the air. The humanitarian aid and resources that I believe are needed from us are time, experience, education, compassion, and financial aid to “water the seeds” which will produce a wellspring of opportunities for the disadvantaged women and children in Africa to regain full command of their lives.

The people of this land exude love and an unwavering determination to be self-reliant. They deeply want to be educated, as well as healthy, so all they need from us is a “hand-up,” which I will work hard to provide.

The children are shockingly beautiful, wide-eyed, and loving, and deeply in need of food, education, and health care. Wherever we were, the kids followed us, and they demonstrated a real interest in us and seemed grateful that we were there. When we smiled at them or played games with them, they glowed with joy, and laughter filled the air.

In the coming months, I will write and speak about the experience, and share with you all how truly magical, life-altering, and awakening this trip has been, and encourage you to go to Africa also. I plan to work with Philip's Hope Foundation (Philip is our Ugandan guide and friend) and the Mary Tidlund Foundation to raise the funds necessary to meet the needs of the many projects we visited. As a group, we are planning a fundraiser in June, and I hope I can count on your ongoing support to help rebuild a nation, one heart at a time.



In Peace,
Moreah