

A.R.M. REPORT FOR KENYA TRIP – 2006
By Brianne Mundy

I was really blessed to be able to go on the trip to Kenya in the summer of 2006. I was not for sure if I was going to be able to go or not, but we ended up getting a ticket, and I am so glad that we did. I met so many new friends that I will cherish for the rest of my life. This is the second trip that I have taken, and I felt more a part of the group and work that is going on in Kenya. I really enjoyed being able to go with some of my friends, and to be able to share this experience with them.

The first testimony from the trip happened during the first couple of days after we had arrived. My left eye had really been bothering me a couple of days before we had. It was blood shot, and I could not wear my contacts because it hurt so much. I did not want to wear my glasses the whole trip, so I asked for prayers. My church family was also praying for me back home as well. For the rest of the trip, my eye did not bother me, and I have not had problems with it since.

I enjoyed being able to help Lauren Smith out when she was teaching the little kids in Sunday school class. It was so neat to teach them songs, and have them sing them, even if they did not know what the words meant. It was also fun teaching them stories from the Book of Mormon, and having them draw pictures about what they had learned. We even had some of the street kids come in and listen to the lesson.

Another thing that I really enjoyed about this trip was that we were able to go visit a lot of youth at their homes, and to just sit and share testimonies with them and encourage them to go to the camp. One thing that I wish is that we could have had more time to visit. There were so many that asked us to stay the night and to have dinner with them, but we just did not have the time. We had many more places that we had to go. This is one of the areas that I think that we need to work on. Eric O* makes sure that they get visits, but the people are spread out everywhere that they do not get visits very often. I think that it would be a good idea to send youth over for longer periods of time. Their mission could be to just keep going and visiting the youth who are a ways away from other church members and other youth. These youth need to have visits that are longer than just a couple of hours, and that was the only amount of time that we could give them, and I could tell by talking to them that they had lots of questions to ask us, but we did not have time to cover them.

The Youth Camp could not have gone any better. This was the best camp that I have ever been to, and I have been attending church camps and retreats since I was in 4th Grade. I believe the reason I felt this way was because these youth had such a desire to learn more about God, the church, and just how to become better people. I was in charge of teaching two classes, and they both went over very well. I taught about how we should be a peculiar people, and also about stewardship. I wish that I would have had more time to share with them, because they had so many questions. Most of them had never heard about stewardship or tithing before. I believe that is a subject that needs to be taught. I think that we do sometimes do not teach them because they do not have very much money. That is not the point. We need to teach them, because they want to do what God has commanded them to do. Some of them told me that even though they do not have an increase of money to tithe, could they tithe their time to replace the money? They really wanted to do this, and I am still receiving e-mails with questions on what to do about tithing and how it works.

At the camp, we had youth from Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda. When they all arrived, they were in their own groups, but at the end of the week, you could not tell who was from where. During the dedication service at the end of the week, one man named Nixon said, "I feel like we are one family. I thought we would be different because we are from Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, and U.S., but now I can see that we are all the same family." Another man named James said, "I have learned two things: discipline and how to live as a family." This camp really brought everyone close together. This was the hardest time that I have ever had with leaving a camp. I remember we were all piled in Eric's car, with luggage piled up on all of us, Lauren, Matt, and I all squished in the back, and we are all bawling our eyes out because we did not want to leave. I felt a love for them that I have never felt before. Even now when I am writing this, I feel the love that we shared there, and it brings tears to my eyes.

I believe that there needs to be more youth sent over to Africa. The youth really connected with us. I think that some of them might have thought that this church is just for the older people. Mostly all they have seen was older gentlemen coming over, and so they might have gotten that impression. When they see that the youth are just as fired up as the adults, then they will become fired up as well. I think

that it was also good that Lauren and I were able to go because then the young ladies see that they can be a part of this church just as the young men.

This trip really strengthened my faith, and has kept me close to the Lord. I really feel like this is where the Lord has called me to work. A piece of me will always be in Kenya, and I hope and pray that I can go there as many times as the Lord will allow me, and possibly for long periods of time. I fell in love with my brothers and sisters of Africa, and I want to keep witnessing and sharing the love of Christ with them. Thank you very much for allowing me to be able to have this experience, and I hope that we will continue to have these youth camps. The youth is what is going to raise the church in Africa. They have a fire inside of them that no one can get rid of.

A REPLY FROM KENYA

By Eric O*

Brianne, I just read your testimony of the Kenyan trip. You know only half the story. The song (Loving each other) that you and Lauren led the youth through has become more like an anthem to those who attended Otieno Oyoo. The study materials book has been to many a hymnal (as they sing from it), and a number have gone through the material like school home work. A number too have suffered for the gospel back home as they returned with excitement to the villages to bear witness of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The youth always sat back to be taught lessons that had no relevance to them, until they saw young people sharing their very lives with Jesus Christ. That was different.

As I read about your experience at the camp, your (and others) not wanting to leave the camp; Keren crying as she was leaving the camp to go back to her parent's home. Unity across the nations, races, tribes, gender and age. We were in a place with so little physical facilities to offer - the stuffy sleeping rooms with frogs and sweaty bodies. Yet the feeling was there of oneness. Your testimony reminded me of only one place - Zion. You seemed to be describing Zion. An experience - a foretaste of only one thing - Christ in us all and with us all.

* Name withheld for privacy.