

Dear Beloved Friends:

Greetings from Kenya! How are you doing? Can't believe I only have three weeks here. To be honest, I do not want to go home. I wish I can stay here longer. Anyway I will keep enjoying my last two and half weeks here in Kenya. Elaine is getting much better. Thank you for all your prayers. Since we need to teach four classes, we divide our work in half. She teaches Standard 1 and 2, and I teach Standard 3 and 4. The way students learn in Kenya is very close the way I was taught in Taiwan. That is many repetitions and memorizations. I believe most of us do not prefer this kind of learning which totally lacks of imagination and creativity. Therefore, Elaine and I are trying very hard to teach them how to think and find the connections between the things that they are learning. Learning is not for testing, but it is for knowing how to live the life. I just hope our hard working and preparation can somehow have a little impact on their lives. That is my focus and prayer now.

Mitumba, the slum where the school is located is a crowded and dangerous place. Fire happens a lot there. Because the distance between each house is too short and construction materials of the house are very easy burned, when the fire starts each time, many houses will be destroyed. About two weeks ago, the fire happened around two in the morning. Because it was too early and the streets were very narrow, the fire department did not send fire fighters and fire engines. People who live in the village could only do their best to put out the fire. The children in school were terrified and stayed up all night because they were very afraid the fire would come to destroy their only shelter. When they told me about the fire in the next morning, I just wanted to hold them very tight. I could not imagine if the school had been burned down. The school is their only hope. Two weeks after, when people still are rebuilding and repairing their houses, fire came again. When I was writing the draft of this prayer letter in the school during my break, a staff just came to the teacher room telling us there is fire happening in the village. Elaine and I rushed out of the room and run to the gate. We saw the big flame and black smoke was coming out from our neighbors' tin roofs. People were running, screaming, and trying very hard to move out their furniture before the fire would consume them. We saw fire was getting bigger and closer to the school. Some of the children who live in the village started crying. Elaine and I could only pray and try to comfort them. After forty minutes, the fire engine finally arrived. About another twenty minutes, the fire was put out. Thank God! Our school was spared from the fire again. Like last time, we did not hear anyone was hurt or killed by the fire. However, I have never seen such frightening scene before. When we went home, we passed and saw the houses that were burned down. It was a heart breaking scene. They did not have much before and now they lose everything. Strangely, I just had a feeling in my heart that told me this is the place where I want to serve and help.

I never understand the weather here. Sometimes it can be very unstable and the temperature difference between day time and night time is very big. Many children catch cold because of the weather. To watch them being sick sometimes really makes me feel grief especially when I think about they probably just have thin blankets to cover at night and torn sweaters to wear in the early morning. If they get sick, they will just stay at the dormitory. Except they are very sick, they will not be given medicine or sent to the hospitals. However, I know the staffs try their best to take care of them. It is just too hard.

Limited resources are the unchangeable reality in Merciful Redeemer. At least they have water now. They used to go to very far to fetch water one and half weeks ago. The older kids had to do that every day. Sometimes, I just feel they have too much to handle in their young lives. However, God has His own ways to take care of them all the time. Jesus said, "Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?" (Matt 6:26) From the children's lives, I see God can make lives strong and beautiful. I praise God for giving them running water. It really makes their lives easier and healthier. They can drink as many as they want now. (Can you imagine when you are sick, there is no clean water to drink?) They can even take shower once a week now.

I think I was talking about the weather, but somehow I lost the track of my topic. Well, I have to tell you the storm that I experienced last week. Last Wednesday morning was like the other days - cold and cloudy, but it had a little sun shine. Therefore, we thought it would be another sunny day. After the second period, our staff meeting started. It was a long, boring, and pointless meeting because only the head master (sort of a school principle) was talking. Then sun disappeared, and it was getting colder and colder. Suddenly, our room was like being attacked by little stones; the rain drops just fell on the tin roof making loud noises. The raining sound was getting louder and louder until we could not hear the head master. While outside of the room was raining, inside of the room began to rain too. The water just kept running into the cracks of the roof. I had a funny thought maybe God felt this meeting was boring too. Thus he sent a storm to us. Of course, that was just my funny imagination. When I went to check how the children were doing, I found they all got wet. Many of them were shivering. I could do nothing but hold some of them and pray that God could stop this storm soon. After three hours, it finally stopped. The children seemed to get used to this kind of weather. Although they were wet and cold, they still wanted to have some fun. The ground was all slippery and muddy, but they just enjoyed very much to slide on it. When I heard their laughter, I could not help to think how wonderful it was to be a child. Although the aunties (social workers who take care of them) would be very busy with washing their clothes, they had to have rights to be who they really are.

Again, I want to thank you for your prayers and support. Without your partnership, it is impossible for me to serve here. The following is what you can pray for me and this ministry. May God keep using you and me!

1. My safety and my health. Even I ride a van, it may be dangerous sometimes. I had bumped my head very hard in the van three times a day because the road condition was very bad and the driver was careless. My head was hurt that day, and I had to stay at home for one day. Now I have a cold. I just hope I will recover soon.
2. I plan to find supporters to keep supporting this school. May God call people to join this ministry!
3. May people be more careful with fire! No more disaster caused by the fire.
4. My relationship with God.

Thank you! May God keep you and bless you abundantly!

In Christ,
Grace