

April

2009

The **CARTER CHRONICLES**

Bob & Hope Carter, c/o Kijabe Hospital, PO Box 20, Kijabe, 00220, KENYA
Email: bob.carter@sim.org Web Site: <http://carter.with.sim.org>

"And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ..."
(Col. 4:3)

Dear Friends, Family and Prayer Partners,

We are writing now from Kijabe, where we moved in February. Bob is on the family practice teaching staff at Kijabe Hospital and Hope is continuing her involvement with HOPE for AIDS. Josiah has moved in with us from the dorm and is navigating the adjustment from being a "dorm kid" to being a "station kid" while trying to keep a foot in both worlds. He has just returned from his "Junior Interim," camping out in the Mau Forest with a handful of other students from his class and learning about forest ecology and Dorobo culture. You'll read from him later in this letter.

Aftershocks of last year's post-election violence continue to be felt. According to domestic and international media reports, scores of thousands of internally displaced people ("IDPs") continue to reside in tented camps; long-standing land issues remain unresolved; and issues of corruption and equal access to resources and services continue to be of concern. The National Council of Churches of Kenya recently declared the "grand coalition" government a failure and called for fresh elections; but many members of the churches represented don't support this call, saying they won't vote even if elections are held due to fears of violent reprisals. Besides, a new electoral commission has yet to be appointed.

What the press isn't reporting is that many churches continue to provide for the needs of those still living in IDP camps out of their own limited resources; and that despite all the unresolved problems, Kenya has not yet fallen apart and degenerated into the cycle of perpetual violence so often predicted. In fact, Kenyans from many different tribal backgrounds are doing whatever they can to work towards healing, peace and reconciliation. And despite what you read in the press, some of these Kenyans are politicians and Christians working within the established political framework to find

sustainable and just solutions to Kenya's many thorny issues. They need our prayers and Divine guidance as they labor for Kenya's future.

In the midst of this, Kenya's churches are preparing to celebrate Easter. The redemption that Christ purchased for us and the victory of Life over Death have never meant that *this* world would become a perfect place. No, rather it means that through Christ we ourselves have been delivered from slavery to sin and the obligatory participation in the corrupted ways of the World. We have a new vision of Life. We are empowered to counter hatred with love, to face adversity with courage, to speak Truth to Power, to advocate for the powerless and to tend the hurting with care and compassion. In the midst of despair we are commissioned to bring hope, and in the midst of suffering to bring healing. We are called to walk in the sacrificial footsteps of Jesus whether in times of plenty or want, and by knowing "the fellowship of his sufferings" to be agents of transforming grace in the lives of individuals, families and communities.

Pray with us that as Kenyan churches celebrate this Easter season they will be given fresh vision for how the practical realities of the Resurrection may be applied, under the empowering guidance of the Holy Spirit, to the many challenges facing Kenya today. Pray that the Church will demonstrate real, godly leadership and that her people will exalt Christ by being living examples of the Gospel throughout Kenya today.

Thank you for praying with us and for us; for supporting and encouraging us; and through your prayers, gifts, emails and letters for being an essential part of our ministry team. We thank God for you.

Blessings,

Bob and Hope

Family News

A Moving Experience

As announced in our December “Chronicles,” we did move from Nairobi to Kijabe on Feb.4. Most of our belongings went into storage for the next six weeks as we temporarily lived in one of the furnished short-term units usually reserved for hospital volunteers. Although the unit was nice, it was a relief to move into “our” new home on March 18 and to finally start unpacking our things from storage. Although we continue to need things that have not yet been unboxed, we never feel tempted to complain because each view of the tented IDP camp down in the Rift Valley reminds us of how fortunate we are to have shelter, food and a welcoming community.

Happy 80th Birthday!

Bob’s father turned 80 years old on Feb. 22. It was hard to not be there to help celebrate such a momentous milestone, but we were glad that Levi and Hannah could be there to represent us. We are grateful for his continued good health and vigor and for the important role he plays as patriarch of our family. He mails out the “Chronicles” for us, serves as our “Power of Attorney” for domestic business, sends or finds couriers for mail and other small goods, and provides a welcoming home for our States-side kids when they are on break or have a few days to get away for awhile. His counsel and encouragement continue to be an important resource for our family. Happy Birthday Dad!

Distant Wedding Bells

We are delighted to announce the engagement of our son, Levi, to Sarah White, daughter of Quaker pastor C.G. White. Levi and Sarah met while working as summer staff in 2007 at Quaker Haven Camp at Dewart Lake (Indiana.) They won’t be tying the knot any time soon, though. Sarah is in her second year of college at Anderson University (Anderson, IN) and they have chosen to wait until after she graduates. We’ll see if they actually wait that long; but they both are patient, goal-focused and responsible to commitments, so they just might do it. We are looking forward to Sarah’s visit in just over a month when she comes to Kenya with a small youth group.

Please Note Our New Mailing Address!!

Our new mailing address at Kijabe is:

Bob & Hope Carter

c/o Kijabe Hospital

P.O. Box 20, Kijabe, 00220

Kenya

Also, for those of you who like networking on Facebook, please keep in mind that internet access from Kijabe is slow and often not very successful. Facebook is notoriously awkward. We spend as little time on Facebook as we have to. Please don't be offended if you send us an "invitation" and we "ignore" it!

Ministry Update

Training Evaluations

In late January we made field visits to some of those we had trained under ‘HOPE for AIDS’ a year previously. We were highly encouraged as we heard story after story of how the training we had provided had enabled them to reach greater effectiveness in their work.

Both local and regional church leaders expressed a strong sense of value in what HOPE for AIDS is doing to equip the Church for effective AIDS ministry. There was broad recognition that HOPE for AIDS is attempting to fill a gap that no one else is filling, and appeals for us to expand the work. Although some secular organizations offer similar training opportunities, these are usually not affordable to church-based volunteers and they all lack the Christian worldview and spiritual components that were so much appreciated in our courses. Unfortunately, limitations of

financial and human resources make it difficult to plan for program expansion at this time.

One of the advantages of field visits is that we gain a better appreciation for the “on the ground” circumstances in which our course graduates are serving, and have opportunities to meet with some of the people their ministries are impacting. Here are a few representative comments “from the field”:

- “Our villages are saturated with HIV.”
- “If I join a group of positives, I will live longer.”
- “Community education about HIV has broken stigma.”

Please continue to pray for the HOPE for AIDS program and team; for its current students and past graduates; and for the people, churches and communities that stand to benefit from the trainings being offered.

Ministry Update (Cont'd.)

Bob

Since moving to Kijabe, Bob has been facing the challenge of making the transition from being a “bush doctor” to being a “consultant physician” in an academic setting. He continues to be amazed at the breadth of medical and surgical problems that come through the hospital doors. This hospital seems to mine the mother lode of pathology!

Although this is still a “limited resource setting,” access to diagnostic and therapeutic capabilities is considerably greater than during our ten years in Zambia. This is requiring Bob to devote much time and effort to reading and looking up all kinds of things he hasn’t had to think about since his days in training over 25 years ago! He feels like an intern all over again, while needing to function at the level of a consultant. Talk about humbling! Please keep him in your prayers during this time of adjustment. Meanwhile, we have a good group of young Christian physicians being trained here, and Bob feels privileged to be able to contribute to their professional and spiritual development.

Kaimosi Hospital Board Report

The Kaimosi Hospital board meeting in January was encouraged and blessed by the presence of Sylvia Graves and Kelly Kellum from FUM. Kelly’s father and sister were both born at Kaimosi Hospital! The meeting went well and we were relieved to learn a few days later that after many delays the new Memorandum of Understanding between East Africa Yearly Meeting and FUM was finally successfully signed. This document provides the legal foundation necessary for FUM to continue to run the hospital on behalf of EAYM.

After three years of service at Kaimosi, the government has transferred Dr. Kamau to the provincial hospital in Kakamega and replaced him with Dr. Juma, a personable and energetic young doctor on one of his first postings. The staff and patients seem to be responding to him very well, and we have assured him of every support. Meanwhile we wish Dr. Kamau success in his new posting.

The Board continues to address many issues required for improving the quality of hospital services. We learned with joy that funds for an ambulance have now been raised, and that the first payment has been made. We expect actual delivery of the new ambulance in August. Meanwhile the Board and new administrator, Mr. John Mulama, are in the process of drawing up a number of policies needed to guide the fair and effective management of the hospital, and of revising and finalizing the hospital’s strategic plan. Please do keep these efforts, the hospital and its staff, board and patients in your prayers.

Hope

Hope continues to work on organizing and expanding the AIDS Resource Center and to serve HOPE for AIDS as its prayer coordinator. She produces a monthly AIDS Prayer Guide that continues to grow in circulation. Since January the prayer guide has been picked up and posted on the “Micah Network,” an internet-based site bringing together various Christian agencies around the world involved in AIDS and other health-related development work. She also continues to organize and conduct a monthly “AIDS Day of Prayer” in Nairobi, attended by intercessors from various denominations. Last week she participated in training the current class of AIDS educators by giving a lecture on the greater vulnerability of women and girls to HIV compared to men.

Introducing Kijabe Hospital

Kijabe Hospital is a 95-year old 254-bed referral-level and teaching hospital located about an hour’s drive west of Nairobi. It is a ministry of the Africa Inland Church, employs over 560 staff and sees over 100,000 outpatients a year. It has a 5-bed intensive care unit and a digitized pathology department that provides tissue diagnostic services to approximately 40 other mission hospitals in East Africa. Educationally, it has a nurses training school, accepts clinical officers and doctors during their internship year, and trains residents (“registrars”) in surgery and family medicine. In any given month there are also several medical students and residents from Western countries on clinical rotations at the hospital.

Patients come from all over Kenya and as far away as Somalia. Somali patients now make up 30-40% of the hospital’s patient population (we sometimes jokingly call Kijabe “Mogadishu General Hospital”). Two hospital chaplains speak fluent Somali. Other tribes commonly seen include Kikuyu and Maasai. Between English, Swahili, Kikuyu, Maasai and Somali, effective communications can be quite a challenge at times!

Spiritually, the hospital takes its Christian commitment seriously. Every Monday the medical staff gathers to begin the week with prayers and devotions, and every Wednesday there is a well-attended chapel service for the hospital staff. Grand Rounds and daily case conferences all begin with prayer. An active 9-person Chaplains Department (including 3 women) provides round-the-clock access to spiritual care including evangelism, prayer and counseling. Around 1000 people of many different ethnicities find new life in Christ at Kijabe Hospital each year.

Please remember Kijabe Hospital and its staff and patients as you pray for Kenya and for our ministry here. We count it a privilege to be serving the Lord in Kijabe.

Something has got to Change - By Josiah Carter

Last week I was in Mau Forest on one of RVA's annual interim programs. The program visits two areas of the forest, Eburu and Arosha Rongai. Eburu is jungle-like, with a dense tree canopy over thick undergrowth taller than the average adult. But we were shocked to arrive at Arosha Rongai and find that it is no longer a forest! It is a wasteland, a smoldering black sea of stumps. There is no more forest, no more bushes, no more animals, no more life. Simply put, it is dead. What we were looking at used to be the largest forest in East Africa.

The ecological significance of the forest disappearing extends far beyond just the trees and wildlife and the Dorobo people, who have lived off the forest's bounty for untold centuries. Due to the extensive deforestation, rainfall is already declining. Lake Nakuru, fed primarily by run-off from the forest, is drying up. The decline in rainfall also threatens Kenya's most

promising game reserve and all the rich farmland in the area, which is one of the most productive areas of Kenya. Combine this with Kenya's current food crisis and you have a serious problem.

The problem is widespread. We see it in the disappearing forest around Kijabe which supplies the valley with water. It is happening all around Kenya. The forests are being cleared, rainfall is diminishing, harvests are reducing and people are running out of food.

It is predicted that unless something changes, Mau Forest will be gone entirely in a year. In the creation story, God charged man to care for the world. What we do with God's charge is up to us. The destruction of Mau Forest and others like it around the world is not good stewardship. Concerned people can be involved through prayer, political lobbying and social

Carter Chronicles

c/o Plainfield Friends Meeting

105 S. East Street

Plainfield, IN 46168

NON-PROFIT ORG.

U.S. Postage

PAID

Plainfield, Indiana

PERMIT No. 56

*Address Service
Requested*

action. Newspaper editorials, internet blogs, chat forums, emails, news websites, all of these are effective ways to spread awareness and ideas. The great part of the age of technology is that

widespread communication is easier than ever before. Let's put that communication to good use, and help turn ideas into action – for the sake of what's left of God's creation and our world.

Praise God for:

1. The many Christian Kenyans still laboring to preserve peace, to care for the suffering, and to find just solutions.
2. Bob's father and his eight decades of faithfulness.
3. The happy news of Levi and Sarah's engagement.
4. The good work and encouraging reports by HOPE for AIDS course graduates.
5. The funds to purchase an ambulance for Kaimosi Hospital.

Praise

&



Pray for:

1. Peaceful resolution of Kenya's many problems.
2. The many IDPs still living without adequate food and shelter.
3. Kenyan churches to receive fresh anointing and vision.
4. The HOPE for AIDS program: its courses, funding and impact.
5. Bob and Hope as they adjust to their new situation in Kijabe.
6. The ministries of Kijabe and Kaimosi hospitals.
7. Ways to preserve God's sustaining creation while there is still time.

Prayer

Reminder:

Support checks should be made out to SIM-USA, designated for Bob & Hope Carter and mailed to: **SIM USA, P.O. Box 7900, Charlotte, NC 28241-7900.** Alternatively, contributions may be made by web-based donation at www.sim.org. **Thank you!**