

July

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,

Today (18th July) is Graduation Day at Rift Valley Academy, and while we don't have any children graduating this year, Josiah is "on duty" as sound tech for the event. His turn will be next year, God willing. He has done fairly well this year and has managed to maintain his cumulative GPA despite a rough beginning. In so many ways the decision to move from Nairobi to Kijabe this year has been proven right. Adjustments have had to be made, but we feel blessed to be here and the Kijabe community has been so supportive of us.

Life is precious, and health is a gift all too often taken for granted. This past quarter has brought us much sad news. We lost a friend to cancer, and have learned of several others who have been diagnosed with it. Some lack insurance and are at risk of being driven into destitution. Another had to leave missionary service and return home for treatment and care. A family friend died of a massive stroke. Another couple we know and love lost a son from an overdose. Here in Africa we see daily the ravages of AIDS; and at Kijabe Hospital we also see the ravages of war as we continue to treat Somali refugees who have been unable to avoid the violence. Truly life and health are fragile gifts, to be treasured and kept with gratitude.

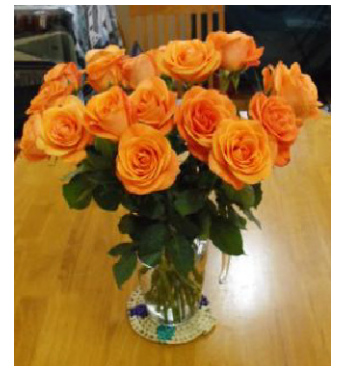


In Kenya rain is another gift; one that seems to have been in scarce supply so far. There are fears of a poor harvest this year, on top of the economic and agricultural disruptions of last year's post-election violence. The past 3 or 4 weeks have been cold here at Kijabe, but not very rainy. We have been grateful for a fireplace and a

good supply of firewood, but have seldom needed to make use of our umbrellas. This remains a concern for prayer.

Stephen has just come to the door as I am typing, with this week's delivery of flowers. Stephen is disabled in one arm and partially disabled in one leg. He has a family to support, but since he cannot get a job or engage in subsistence farming he is "self-employed" selling flowers. Once a week he travels to

Nairobi and collects the rejects of the flower industry – the ones not good enough to be shipped to Europe or the U.S. He then re-sells them for about 10 cents a stem. We have a standing order for twenty stems each week. He is always cheerful even when times are difficult. His deliveries help us



to keep perspective, and the flowers bring not only beauty but also a reminder of how continually gracious God is to us.

Indeed we have much to be thankful for: life, health, adequate food and shelter, peace, purpose, freedom, friendship, physical and mental ability, and certainly God's grace and forgiveness and His Presence in our lives. We are also thankful for you, whom we treasure highly among God's gracious gifts to us. Thank you for your faithful prayers and encouraging letters, cards and emails as we continue serving in the ministry He has given us here in Kenya.

Blessings,
Bob and Hope

Ministry Update

Bob

I continue to oversee the Outpatients Department (“OPD”) at Kijabe Hospital. This includes not only general outpatients but also Casualty (“Emergency Room” in American English), the “Express” clinic, and Private Clinic. One of the biggest challenges is that the numbers of patients coming for care is more than twice what the facilities were designed to accommodate.

The workload is a challenge to our overworked clinicians, who are often forced to reduce the time they would otherwise spend asking questions and doing good, thorough exams. They do amazingly well despite the constraints they face. I assist them with consultations and, when time allows, use the consultations as teaching opportunities.

We could hire more clinicians, but all the exam rooms are already fully in use. That would be like hiring six men to dig with three shovels! Ultimately, we need to renovate and enlarge the OPD; and in fact plans were drawn up over five years ago. The problem is funding. Meanwhile we are struggling to “make do” with what we have. Please pray that fundraising efforts in September for hospital development will be successful.

As a member of the teaching faculty in the hospital’s Family Medicine training program, I also prepare lectures on various topics from time to time, and supervise interns and family medicine registrars. Two weeks ago I attended a one-day training workshop along with three other doctors from Kijabe conducted by the Kenya Academy of Family Practice on leading “practice-based small group” continuing medical education modules. I am now one of four people at Kijabe approved by the KAFP to conduct these modules. These modules will become a central strategy in helping doctors in and around Kijabe to obtain the Continuing Professional Development credits needed for annual medical licensing renewals. We hope to implement these modules by the end of this month.

Besides my professional activities at Kijabe, I also continue to serve on the board of Friends Hospital, Kaimosi and to be involved in AIDS-related ministry, helping ‘HOPE for AIDS – Kenya’ to continue to develop and refine its strategic plan and training program, giving lectures on HIV and AIDS at St. Paul’s University, and encouraging the Churches AIDS Network of Kenya in its pursuit of official registration, which is still inexplicably blockaded despite reassurances to the contrary.

Hope

Moving to Kijabe has enabled some exciting opportunities and challenges for me. I am easing back into clinical medicine by making rounds with the AIDS Relief team on HIV-infected inpatients and seeing enrolled clients in the outpatient HIV clinic one or two days a week. I function as a “student” while awaiting Kenyan registration as a Clinical Officer, and am very grateful for the chance to learn from the expertise of the highly experienced AIDS Relief team here.

This experience is encouraging me to pursue my life-long interest in pediatric nutrition. Currently I am conducting a nutritional research project among children under 5 years who are enrolled in our AIDS Relief program at our Naivasha clinic down the escarpment in the Rift Valley. It is fascinating work and promises to produce documentable data on nutritional needs in this HIV-affected population, community resources and constraints, and potential solutions. You can read more on our web page as this effort progresses.

Spiritual activities have included hosting in our home a Sunday evening fellowship of several SIM missionaries stationed here at Kijabe. We have also been hosting a “caring community” of 7 or 8 junior class students from RVA. Now that school is over for the year they have returned to their families and homes. We are praying in particular for one student and his missionary family. This will be the last time he can travel to his “home” of over 13 years due

to immigration restrictions in that country. His family must make some very tough decisions and adjustments.

Last month our newly formed community prayer committee in Nairobi held its first prayer retreat to seek God’s way forward for our community HIV prayer meetings. We had a great day of praying, but still need and want more time to pray together. The daily AIDS prayer guide that I have been writing and sending out monthly continues to increase in circulation. This month Trans World Radio (Kenya) requested permission to broadcast a daily devotional based on the prayer guide. Please pray for more wisdom and discernment as I produce these each month. Pray also for others to come alongside and help. There seems to be a felt need for ways to motivate prayer in the HIV and AIDS arena.

After over half a year of effort I had nearly completed the indexing of the HOPE for AIDS Resource Library when I lost the memory stick on which all the information was stored! I was using a memory stick because I was working on computers in different locations and had (foolishly) not saved the information on any of them. I hate repeating tasks, but maybe there is a reason for this. Anyway, please pray that I get the job done soon. Hopefully the task will go more quickly the second time around.

These are some of the things that have been taking up my time. Thanks so much for your prayers. I need an ample supply of God’s wisdom, grace, calm and strength to balance professional roles, ministry goals and family life in a way that honors Him.

Someone's Knocking at My Door

by Hope

Oh no! Someone's at the door with a piece of paper and an envelope! I grumble in my heart, "who is it and what do they want money for this time?", as outwardly I try to summon a friendly smile before opening the door.

Our mission station management has instituted a system whereby anyone wanting to do "fundraising" must be screened through the station manager's office to validate their need. We know not to respond if they don't have that letter from the manager, but instead to refer them to the manager's office. He tries not to inundate the mission community with too many "fundraisers" at a time. Still, several come through each week, and they all have truly legitimate needs. They are often apologetic to have to ask for help, but by this time have exhausted all other possible resources and are grateful for any little help that is offered. Since this is a large mission station, if we each contribute a small amount it can add up to a significant assistance.

David, the man at my door this evening, is as it turns out a grounds and maintenance man at RVA. He explains that his daughter has been in the hospital but has now recovered and is ready to be discharged. But she cannot go home until the hospital bill is paid. The bill is 12,000 shillings (@US\$160) which is just over three times his monthly salary. He then tells me that besides his parents and siblings he has also been supporting several extended family members who are internally displaced persons (IDPs), homeless since the post election violence at the beginning



of 2008. Their houses were burned, all their livestock either killed or stolen, and their land taken away from them.

The government has tried to tell all IDPs to go back home, but has failed to put in place adequate security measures for those who do. Some who have tried to return have been killed with impunity by the communities that drove them out.

Five of David's relatives recently relocated to a different community, leaving him now with only 12 extra people to support.

He says they eat only one meal a day now, when they can afford the maize meal and the greens. He cannot remember the last time he was able to afford the luxury of sugar, and laments that just buying the greens for one meal for everyone in his house costs about 50 shillings (@ 65 U.S. cents) daily, which takes 1/3 of his month's income. The maize meal, salt and cooking oil take the remainder. Yet somehow they have been managing – until now when this

significant hospital bill has overwhelmed them. He is grateful for the recent rains which have allowed him to grow some vegetables to supplement their meager meals, and shares how he and his family have put their trust wholly in God's provision.

Ashamed of my initial grumbling heart I make a very willing contribution to his fundraising efforts, feel embarrassed by his profuse thanks, and close the door with an entirely different attitude. Please pray for David and the many other desperate Kenyan families struggling with similar problems. They do not all live near such supportive communities as Kijabe to help them.

Kidz Newz

Nathan continues working the night shift for American Eagle regional airline in Bentonville, Arkansas. This summer he has already traveled to North Carolina and California to see friends on his days off. He faithfully continues to write a thoughtful weekly devotional blog. Check it out at www.christ-centered.blogspot.com.

Levi was hired by Taylor University for three weeks at the end of his third year there, to help them implement changes in their web site (<http://taylor.edu>) - which he loved. Currently he is doing a summer internship with Mango Tree Media (<http://mangotreemedia.com>), a new and growing web development company in Fishers, Indiana. He is hoping that this could lead into additional part-time employment while he concludes his studies at Taylor, and then possibly become a full time position after he graduates.

Hannah toured the Balkans in May as part of her honors program at Houghton and thoroughly loved it. Afterwards she saw more of the continent visiting a number of her European friends. Our world traveler now has a summer job at Camp of the Woods, a Christian camp in upstate New York. They are keeping her very busy, but she is enjoying the experience. She has, however, learned that she does not want to teach Kindergarten!

Josiah completed the 11th grade at RVA this week and is now enjoying some relaxation time. Despite fracturing his collar bone in the first rugby game of the season, he was able to play in the last two league games plus a couple of informal games afterwards, and is still enthusiastic about the sport. This past term he took metal tech and enjoyed designing and making several useful gadgets. He hopes to finish his final project, a hearth shovel, during shop hours this coming week.

Kaimosi Hospital Report

Efforts to revitalize Kaimosi Hospital, where Bob serves on the board, continue to move forward at a turtle's pace. The chief constraint, as usual, is lack of financial resources.

- The renovations done last year have been immensely helpful, but more are needed.
- A whole 40-ft. container full of urgently needed donated medical equipment is ready to be sent to Kaimosi as soon as shipping costs have been raised. It remains to be seen whether this will happen any time soon.
- Staff salaries continue to lag behind the superior government health worker salaries offered with the assistance of wealthy Western funding. This has not

stemmed the "brain drain" out of Kenya as intended, but has only served to drain health workers out of mission hospitals serving the neediest rural areas of Kenya.

- Last week Bob accompanied John Mulama, hospital administrator, to the central offices of the National Hospital Insurance Fund. The NHIF is two months behind on reimbursing hospital claims, which has compromised the hospital's ability to pay salaries and outstanding debts. We are hoping to see a significant response from NHIF in early August.

- Also in August we are looking forward to delivery of the hospital's new ambulance. Currently there is no working ambulance in the district, so this will significantly enhance the hospital's service to the community.

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*

Praise

&

Prayer

Praise God for:

1. Good healing of Josiah's collar bone.
2. The precious gifts of life and health, and for the legacy of godly lives well lived.
3. The opportunity for Bob to be trained by the KAFP in "practice-based, small group" medical education modules.
4. The groundswell of interest in AIDS-focused prayer within the Body of Christ.
5. His grace in the lives of our four children, including good summer job opportunities for Levi and Hannah.
6. The new ambulance expected next month at Kaimosi Hospital.



Pray for:

1. Successful treatment for our cancer-afflicted friends, and comfort for those who have lost loved ones.
2. Rain in Kenya, and for a good harvest.
3. A successful fundraising effort for OPD renovations at Kijabe Hospital.
4. Wisdom and effectiveness for Bob and Hope in all of their various ministry activities, both professional and AIDS-related as well as "family ministry."
5. Sustained good health throughout the cold (and should be rainy) season.
6. Hope's nutritional research project.
7. The many IDPs and other families in Kenya struggling against hunger.
8. Resources necessary to continue service improvement at Kaimosi Hospital.

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!**