



Capstone Ministries

Child and Family Restoration Outreach

"The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone" Psalm 118:22

A prayer letter from Dan and Patty Schmelzer, Kisumu, Kenya

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Golden Communication

"A word aptly spoken is like apples of gold in settings of silver. Like an earring of gold or an ornament of fine gold is a wise man's rebuke to a listening ear." Proverbs 25:11,12

Effective communication goes far beyond language and grammar. A good suspense novelist will use language to create a picture in your mind, drawing you into the story until you can identify with the characters and feel part of the story. Cross cultural communication adds another dimension to effective communication. There are certain patterns and cultural norms, if ignored, can make one ineffective.

For example, in the Kenyan culture, when you go to visit someone with the intention of addressing a topic, it is the culture of communication to sit and talk for some time before bringing up the reason you came for the visit. One may spend an hour in small talk, talking about the need for rain, how the children are doing or current political topics before actually addressing the topic at hand. Like a bird circling something it wants to snatch from the ground, so goes a typical conversation in the home of someone you are visiting.

This may seem ineffective or strange to a Western visitor whose communication style may be more direct and to the point. But such directness, to a Kenyan, can be taken as rude and even insulting.

One of the common activities of our staff is the process of visiting with the families of boys we want to reconcile or those families where the boys are already resettled. Often it is a visit with a specific intention. We may want information on the background of the boy, the family, their struggles or behavior. Such topics are even more sensitive than a visitor who is making a friendly call. Creating a mood in which the family feels free to share takes time and wisdom. It demonstrates just how true Solomon's words from Proverbs 25 really are: *"A word aptly spoken is like apples of gold in settings of silver."* A miscalculation of words can undermine

the objective of the visit.

Effective communication with children adds still another dimension. Children have a sixth sense when they are being probed for information, particularly when it is something that can create guilt or shame. Sharing this information, while difficult, is necessary if we want to truly bring healing and change.

Trust is one key ingredient in effective counseling and communication with children. And trust takes time. Our staff who spend time at our Transition Center have regular and planned conversations with the children with the objective of gaining trust. But it is also important to have conversations that are unplanned and spontaneous. Talking while walking to town, weeding in the garden, walking to school, having a meal; these are sometimes even more powerful opportunities to drop a "golden" word of encouragement into the "setting" in the heart of a child.



Patty walks with Norman on rural road outside Kisumu

Trust also has a spiritual component to it. Shared vulnerability creates mutual trust. When we freely share our failings with each other, ask for forgiveness when we have done wrong, and particularly when an adult does that with a child, a window of trust opens. Every evening one of our staff will take part of the Bible story for the week and share. The objective is not only to have the children know the Bible and their Savior better but also to build a shared relationship of trust around the God who put on the vulnerability of flesh to draw closer to us. Pray for our staff: Paul, David, Ezekiel, Helen, Edwin and Newton. It is through their words that God speaks to the hearts of children.

Praises, Prayers and Recent News

1. **Pray** for the boys currently at the CTC: Thomas, Brian, James and Wilson.
2. **Pray** for Norman who will get the chance to visit with Mark Bean, the son of the Manley Bean who generously donated for Norman's surgery. Mark has been coming to Africa and has been active in Rotary projects outside Kisumu for many years. Mark will visit Kisumu in mid-June.
3. **Pray** for Dan's mom who is doing well and even improving with a medication adjustment that was effecting her breathing.
4. Pray for Dan's brother-in-law Barry who is continues to undergo tests. Pray for patience, endurance and faith for Barry.
5. **Praise** God for our interim manager, Paul Gimode from Mbale. Paul will also be traveling to Maryland in June for a family wedding.
6. **Pray** for our donors who continue to support us in Kenya unselfishly. These are the times that test faith and it is proving genuine among those who think first of the Lord's work even before their own personal financial security. God does promise that when we seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, all the things we need for life will be added as well.
7. **Pray** for Patty as she is in the US for her daughter's wedding. Patty returns on July 2.
8. **Praise** God for little Patty, daughter of our long-time house girl Faith. Patty suffered from a severe case of malaria and was rushed to the hospital the last week in May. Her life was spared by the quick and effective work of the doctors treating her.
9. **NEWS! SaveMart** and Lucky Stores SHARES cards are still available for those who live in N. California. Why not encourage your friends at church or in your neighborhood to use them. 3% of your purchase is donated to Capstone just by remembering to have the teller swipe your card. Call the number in Patterson, send an email or indicate on the return receipt how many cards you would like.

Contact Information

Key Ministries Inc. Kenya Mission
c/o Pastor Paul Johnson
680 West Las Palmas Avenue
Patterson, CA 95363
Phone: (209) 892-1565
E-mail KeyMinistries1@comcast.net
New Website: WWW.CapstoneMinistry.org
Dan and Patty Schmelzer
P.O. Box 3962
Kisumu, Kenya 40100
Capstoneministries@gmail.com

Dan's Diary

It seems that since I have returned to Kenya in late April, it has been a whirlwind of activity: some good and some challenging.

First the bad! I suffered from a bad case of jet lag coming back and couldn't get my body back into sync. Just as that was getting straightened out I had a bad case of food poisoning that sent me to the doctor for a quick injection. That has all passed now (no pun intended).

I am also spending a little more than a month alone as Patty attends the wedding of her daughter on 6th June. I am learning just how indispensable she is to me and the ministry as I am doing her accounting work while she is away. While I feel like a fish out of water in accounting and in the kitchen; I mostly miss the companionship of the woman I love. Hurry home honey!

Not only does the work of Capstone keep me jumping out of bed in the morning with a long "to do" list, there are other activities with which to stay busy.

In May, Patty and I attended the Rotary District 9200 Conference. The highlight was watching a good friend and fellow Rotarian from Kisumu receive the highest honor in Rotary: the "Service Above Self" Award. Also our long time friend from Nairobi Eric Kimani has been selected as the District Governor for 2011-12.

I've started a new sermon series on the Lord's Prayer on Sunday mornings at the Lutheran Church where I pastor as well. I enjoy the opportunity and challenge to communicate cross-culturally.

In late August I'll start teaching Homiletics at the Matongo Lutheran Theological College. It will be one 3 hour class a week so the burden will not be too heavy.

The evenings have been punctuated with strong thunderstorms recently and the regular loss of electricity. One learns to be prepared with matches and candles at the ready.

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Our sincere thanks to Steve and Lisa Nolan from New Hartford, CT for all their work on this new website and for sharing the work of Capstone Ministries at the upcoming LCMS Convention in June.

Donations are tax deductible.

Make checks payable to: Key Ministries, Kenya Mission

As our partners we encourage you to spread the word about this ministry. Feel free to share this newsletter or write to Dan and Patty to add a friend to this mailing.