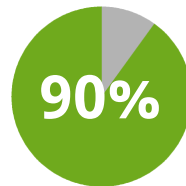


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Flourishing in Kenya



MYLINDA BAITS



SUPPORT PLEDGED



GLOBAL



“ Every time you cross my mind, I break out in exclamations of thanks to God. Each exclamation is a trigger to prayer. I find myself praying for you with a glad heart. I am so pleased that you have continued on in this with us, believing and proclaiming God’s Message, from the day you heard it right up to the present. There has never been the slightest doubt in my mind that the God who started this great work in you would keep at it and bring it to a flourishing finish on the very day Christ Jesus appears. It’s not at all fanciful for me to think this way about you. My prayers and hopes have deep roots in reality. All along you have experienced with me the most generous help from God. He knows how much I love and miss you these days. Sometimes I think I feel as strongly about you as Christ does! So this is my prayer: that your love will flourish and that you will not only love much but well. Learn to love appropriately. You need to use your head and test your feelings so that your love is sincere and intelligent, not sentimental gush. Live a lover’s life, circumspect and exemplary, a life Jesus will be proud of: bountiful in fruits from the soul, making Jesus Christ attractive to all, getting everyone involved in the glory and praise of God.”

Paul's letter to the Philippians resonates with many of my own thoughts and feelings for you and for my friends across the world. You see, I do thank God for you and am so thankful for your friendship and support from the day we met up to the present. If we haven't seen each other in a while, I do miss you, because we have experienced deep connection and love at some point and that has made a lasting impression on me. It continues to spur me on and inspire me as I build new relationships globally. Thank you!



I love the exuberance of Paul's description of the flourishing of God's work through people. I returned home recently from a rich and full time in Kenya, witnessing God's abundant beauty. I was honored to co-facilitate a First Aid Arts Responder and Facilitator (<http://www.firstaidarts.org/>) training in Nairobi with my good friend, Ruth Yeo Peterman. Gathered were 35 leaders from across the African continent representing 20 different organizations serving various populations. Most provide spiritual,

educational and psychosocial services to survivors of displacement, violence, war, poverty and sexual or labor exploitation. All brought their personal experiences of struggle and strength, wisdom, and passion for healing the wounds of the world. All found a creative community of care to support their work in beautiful and artful ways.

I was inspired by Biu, who cares for vulnerable children in South Sudan, where the food scarcity situation is so grave that she is forced to leave every 8 weeks to replenish so that she can have the energy to care well for those she is called to serve. Though she did not consider herself to be an artist, her bravery and creative spirit to step into leading a new group tool for emotional awareness was awe-inspiring. I



smiled with a glad heart when I received a huge hug and a handmade card at the end of the training.



Phillip, a creative peacemaker and trainer from Uganda, exuded enthusiasm and engagement as he shared with me how he planned to implement

some of his new learning at a training the following week. He would share how trauma affects the body and brain with the exile communities he serves. I am thankful that his love flourishes and deepens as he makes Jesus attractive to all.

If I shared all of the inspiring stories that I heard and witnessed, it would fill up too many pages. I left Kenya awestruck by the courage, commitment and deep roots of my Kenyan, Ethiopian, Sudanese, Ugandan, Zimbabwean, Congolese, Indian, South African and American friends. We saw, heard and honored one another through song, dance, drawing,

shared conversation and mutual learning. We were also challenged to expand our cultural understanding, a bit messy at times, but good. We used our heads and tested our feelings and in the end, enjoyed the bountiful fruits from the soul. It was beautiful!

After the training finished in Nairobi, I was honored to accompany Boaz Kiebarak, a Kenyan pastor and peacemaker friend who I met earlier this year at the Conflict Transformation Colloquium in Thailand, to his home in West Pokot County, Kapenguria, Kenya. I spent the next 3 days meeting and praying with his family and friends, drinking chai, milking a cow, visiting ministry and mission sites, eating snacks at a home for orphans, walking through the verdant fields of a food security and women's empowerment project, drinking chai and eating ugali, sukuma wiki and chapatis, listening to elders share struggles and stories of peacebuilding amidst tribal



warfare over cattle rustling and bride prices, preaching at 2 churches, drinking chai and making chapatis and ugali, praying, singing, dancing, tending the fire, drinking chai and eating some more. I was welcomed and offered radical hospitality, given gifts of grace and a beautiful Pokot skirt and cape. It was beautiful! The deep connection and love I experienced in Kenya has made a lasting impression and imprint on my heart. I got a taste of the kingdom on earth as it is in heaven and I am changed because of it.



Where have you seen beauty lately? How can we love not only much but well? I hope and pray that YOU, like my African

brothers and sisters, are making Jesus Christ attractive to all, getting everyone involved in the glory and praise of God!

Let it be so, Mylinda

