

*"Rejoice always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus." - 1 Thes 5:16-18*

Dear Friends,

Please forgive me for the length of this update, but November has been quite an eventful month for the Maasai ministry and Cazier family.

November is traditionally a month when Americans pause to give thanks to the Lord and celebrate His blessings that He has poured out on us. We celebrate a holiday called "Thanksgiving" to gather as family and thank God for family; for His provision for another year; and, historically, for a bountiful, safe, and successful harvest.

As November draws to a close, our family has much to be thankful for, even in the wake of several trials that have come our way this month.

*"Consider it pure joy my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance" - James 1:2-3.*

That was a verse in my morning devotion Sunday, 11-Nov; and it's a good verse to remember when we are undergoing various trials. Later that same day, 4:45 in the afternoon, in broad daylight, I was carjacked at gunpoint by 3 thugs armed with pistols, about 2 miles from our house, within the confines of our neighborhood (considered one of the "safest" neighborhoods in Nairobi, and only a few yards from where teammates and other friends live. I had just dropped Leslie at youth group and was returning home. As I rounded a corner a young man walked right out in front of the car. When I slowed to avoid him, he whirled around and pointed a pistol directly at me. Two more thugs came from the back and they commandeered the car, ordering me into the back seat with one of them. As they were demanding money and while I was digging it out, I was able to put my phone in my back pocket and consider what to do. After surrendering money, they demanded the phone, but that's when I went; opening the door and rolling out onto the ground.

Fortunately, since the thugs did not know how to drive, and the car was only in 1st gear; it was not moving that fast; I only received minor injuries of a large bruise on one heel and some thorns in my hands from stuff growing alongside the road. Unfortunately, since they did not know how to drive and the car never got out of first gear; they hit the throttle very hard after I jumped out. At 7-8000 rpm in 1st gear a 4-cylinder Toyota engine is only designed to run about 200 metres and then it blows up. For those wanting the details, the engine threw off 2 bearing caps on the connecting rods, broke 1 rod and has 3 holes in the side of the engine block. Yet, I am grateful that:

- Leslie, Cara, or Dori was not with me during this jacking
- It was not one of the women who had come to drop their kids at youth group as well, just a few seconds or minutes on either side of me; or the kids who had driven themselves.
- I'm still alive and was not injured worse than I was and it's only the car that was severely "injured"

The following week, 18-22 Nov, teammate Dan Crum and I made a trip to Elangata Enterit, a remote bush location where CMF missionaries used to live back in the 1980's and 90's, when CMF's ministry to the Maasai was more focused on direct evangelism and church planting; instead of strengthening a young, established national church, as it is today. One of our primary goals regarding these mission houses and other buildings that CMF no longer needs, is to turn them over to the local church cluster (geographical grouping of churches) for management to benefit and strengthen the local church, national church, and to continue and further the spread of the gospel in the communities where these houses/buildings are. They are often used as meeting places and training facilities for Bible education courses, HIV/AIDS education, gospel presentation, and the like.

However, on Monday when we arrived, we were met by about 70 men from the community, who insisted that the buildings should go back to the community because they had been built (at CMF expense) on "community" land. They would hear nothing of explanations from Dan and I, or about 8-10 church leaders who went with us; of why it would be best for all, including the community, if the property was managed by the church for community benefit. Even though who will care for them for the "community" is very vague, we really had no choice but to submit to their demands; as they were prepared to take the buildings and management of the property by force if necessary. Nearly all the men were armed with orinkas (war clubs) and knives, and even at least one with bow and arrow.

We continue to learn more about what it means in Maasai culture to "give" something, especially land; meaning that it is for our use only as long as we need it; and also the importance of "community" and what it means to make decisions in community. We have learned more about this situation as well; that this is an area where 2 powerful educated men are using their education and influence to stir up the masses into a frenzy, for their own personal gain; and they want to get CMF in the middle of their own personal, clan struggle to use us for their benefit, or to blame us if something does not go their way.

The next day, Dan and I were able to meet with the church leaders and encourage them as they try to sort out God's plan and the meaning of the disappointing outcome of this meeting and property with the community. I reminded them that the same Jesus who died for them and me, also died for people that hijack planes and fly them into buildings, those that hijack cars and

rob and terrorize others, and those that hijack community meetings for their own personal gain.

The trip was also fraught with several minor "nuisance" problems; like leaving my ratchet tie down straps on top the trailer and driving off, losing them; nearly losing all of Helen's (teammate) ratchet straps that I borrowed after mine were lost; the bed of the trailer coming loose from the frame and nearly coming completely off; the rear cargo door latch breaking on our Land Cruiser, requiring us to climb over all the stuff loaded in the back to get the back door open; backing the Cruiser into the trailer while it was unhitched and breaking the support stand off the trailer tongue; and a few other small things. Yet, we are grateful that:

- We returned to our families safely.
- Now that we (CMF Missionaries) are out of His way at Elangata Enterit, God is free to work, unencumbered by our limitations; and to strengthen the Body of Christ and shine forth His light in this spiritually dark place.
- That the church can now focus on being the church (*"Going therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you"* - Matt. 28:19-20A), instead of being preoccupied with who will manage and oversee this former CMF mission property.

As Dan and I were returning from this trip on Thursday, 22-Nov (Thanksgiving Day), I received a call from Dori informing me that Leslie had been severely burned on both her hands and singed her hair that morning when a chemistry experiment went awry. Yes, we have school on Thanksgiving Day as it is not a national holiday in Kenya. She was heating a mixture in a beaker that was to make some smoke, when; we believe because of a hairline crack unnoticed in the bottom of the beaker; the mixture came in contact with the heating element and flared up suddenly giving Leslie severe 2nd degree burns on the back of her right hand and palm of her left hand, breaking the beaker in the process. Leslie is slowly recovering, but it may be another 10 days - 2 weeks before she gains full use of her hands back. It is time-consuming too, as the dressings need to be changed 3 times daily and it is taking Leslie a lot longer time to do just about everything. Yet, we are grateful that:

- Leslie was not burned more severely and was able to turn her face away in time to prevent severe face burns there. Please pray for complete and total healing for her hands to return to full use; also encouragement when she feels frustrated from lack of using her hands.
- Another student, who had looked nearly directly over the beaker just before this happened, had turned away.
- This has given Dori and Leslie wonderful mother - daughter bonding time as she is requiring assistance with many things.
- Connie Crum, RN and precious teammate, who has provided wise guidance and compassionate care for Leslie's healing.

In all of these trials though, we remain grateful:

- It's only 17 days until CRYSTAL COMES HOME!!! - please pray for focus as she concludes the semester and takes final exams; and for God's Hand of protection as she travels.
- That we are still all together as family and that God has given us more days to minister in His name. If you think we have suffered, please read the book of Job in the Old Testament.
- That we are considered worthy to serve a faithful God who does not change. *"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and for evermore."* God did not change because of a carjacking, a hard community meeting, or a burn accident as a result of a chemistry experiment. He is the same today as He was at the first of the month, always has been and always will be. Praise His name!
- For supportive and faithful CMF teammates and Indy office staff who have prayed with and for us, encouraged us, and comforted us in these trials.
- For you, our faithful support partners; who consider this work worthy enough to have joined with us by giving of your time and finances by giving, praying, and encouraging sacrificially to this ministry and our family.
- That I was able to return to the USA for 10 days in October and share in the joy of being with my parents and family to celebrate Dad & Mom's 50th wedding anniversary. We rejoice in their many years of faithfulness to the Lord, each other, and our family.

I would like to say a special "Thank You" to those of you that listen to God's voice and pray for our family and ministry whenever you are prompted by the Holy Spirit, whether it's at 2:00 in the afternoon or you are awakened at 2:00 in the morning; to pray for our family, here and including Crystal and our extended family in the USA. Even though you may not know at the time exactly what to pray for, thank you for your sacrifice and obedience to the Lord. We may never know, or know only after we are taken home to Heaven; the trials and tragedies that we were protected from because of your prayers.

As we move forward into the Christmas season, may the joy of celebrating our Lord's birth be with each of you and encourage you to continue serving Him, or to begin to follow Jesus if you do not yet know Him.

Thanking the Father for your faithfulness to our family and ministry to the Maasai of Kenya!

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