

Africa Vet

August 2003

NOTE: This letter may not be appropriate for small children.

Akello was probably sleeping peacefully that night, next to her little sister, with her brother curled up on a mat on the floor, tucked under a grey woolen blanket. Their mud hut was nestled in amongst several others, in a village called Arapai, where I keep some of my cattle for our cross-breeding program. Despite the last week of terror in the neighboring communities, their home area had been quiet and the family was relaxed. As a 12 year old, Akello was responsible for the other kids in the hut, but when they awoke that dark night, to frightening sounds and pounding hearts, she knew there was no way she was going to be able to take care of anyone else. Shouting, angry voices surrounded their homes; it was the rebel LRA terrorists from Sudan, demanding that they come out. Without waiting for a response, the rebels broke the door open and forced the children out into the darkness. Swinging their guns around, threatening everyone, they grabbed Akello and her brother, together with dozens of other children in the village and forced them to run into the starry darkness. Akello's mother wanted to cry out, her father longed to chase after them, but they both knew that if they resisted in any way, they would be brutally murdered with a machete, in front of the rest of the family. They cried out silently, huddling in the coolness of the black night as their children were herded away.

One hundred and seventy other girls also got abducted that week from a nearby school. Carrying torches, the rebels broke into Lwala Girls Boarding School. The girls in one dormitory saw the flickering torches shining in the darkness as the rebels were sneaking into the school grounds, and quietly escaped into the bush before the violence began. But the rebels then surrounded the other two dormitories and the kids were forced by their captors out into the night. Slender, hardy girls were selected out, those that could survive the frantic, brutal journey 200 miles on foot back to Sudan. Most of those that were chosen were between ages 9-20. Some were to become wives to the rebel army men, others would be trained to fight, while a third group would be taken out to the bush and offered as child sacrifices. The rebels come from a cult that believes in gaining spiritual powers through the sacrifice of the innocent. Everyone around my home is terrified. Soroti, the town where my house is located, is in chaos. Many residents fled to distant towns, while villagers from nearby flooded into the town, hoping to be protected by the Ugandan army. About 15,000 refugees are now camped out at the churches and parks, and sleeping on the porches of the local shops.

It's a month later now. I'm back from my short 3 week trip to Uganda. Akello is still missing, although her brother escaped and is back home. Akello's uncle Michael, is my cattle herdsman at Arapai, so we are praying together with him that she and the other neighborhood children will soon be found. The rebels have been pushed back 70 miles from my town. Last week, over 100 of the abducted children died as the rebels forced them to try to swim across a swift river, while the Ugandan army was pursuing them. It's estimated that about 3,000 children have been abducted from Soroti and Kaberamaido Districts in the last month.

Although I'm back in the states, my heart struggles to come to grips with the reality of what is happening to my friends in Uganda. Despite the upheaval due to the rebel invasion, I had a good visit with my Uganda team, and found a new, strong partner to work together with in Karamoja. As you may remember from my last letter, our former partner, World Concern, will no longer be able to fund the management of our projects. I will miss their wise leadership and counsel, but I know that the Lord has good things in store for us all. We will now be working with the Church of Uganda for the next 2 years or so, and will integrate our ministries into theirs. I still have all the funding that you all have been sending to support my ministry through CVM, so most of the projects will be continuing as they have been. The current ministries I am doing include:

- Wholistic Livestock Development Training
- Discipleship Training
- Pass the Doe project - goat (or camel) revolving loans for widows and orphans
- Children's Bible Club (like AWANAs)
- Orphan educational support project
- Women's Micro-Enterprise Development (job creation)
- Soroti Displaced People Project

The last project, for the displaced people is new. We are trying to help some of the refugees that have fled from the LRA rebels and are now camped out in Soroti. They fled from their huts and are now without food, clothing, blankets, or other supplies. We've selected one of the refugee camps that we would like to help, which is called Swaeria Camp, and has about 800 families. We have organized the ministry together with the Rockview Baptist Church in Soroti. Each church member has gone out to the camp and made friends with about 8-10 families. We will be using these friendship groups as a way to organize any assistance that we can do for the people. We also take time to pray with the families in the friendship groups concerning their lost children and homes, and can be there to comfort them and listen to their stories. I had about \$3,000 that I started the ministry with, from former gifts that you all had sent. We gave out basins for bathing and cups and plates, and would like to buy a cooking pan for each family. Other organizations are providing dry rations (corn flour and dry beans) for the people, but many have no way to cook the food. If anybody would like to help, that would be wonderful. I have separate funds for each of the seven projects above, just put a note with your donation to indicate it is for my ministry in that particular project.

Hey, thanks for your prayers and any help you can give. I know it's a tough time economically for everybody, so don't sweat it, but God has given us a chance to reach out to my Soroti neighbors in their point of desperation. Thanks so much for whatever. Pray for me too. I only have one more month left here in the states before I go back to Uganda. Lots of transitional things to do, kind of a stressful time. I love you all. God bless you.

Yours in the grace and love of Jesus,

Val

Dr. Val



Children from Arapai, near their homes

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Akello's uncle Michael, my herdsman

Amidst the jumping, praising and singing, with drums beating out the rhythm of life, a thin, young man slowly climbed the church steps. Leaning on a crooked stick, that he used to steady himself, he made his way into the sanctuary. He lowered himself to the bench slowly, leaning on the shoulder of his young wife. A few minutes later, the time for testimonies came, when members of the congregation are invited to share anything that the Lord has been doing in their lives. The young man steadied himself with his crooked stick as he rose to tell his tale and praise God for his life. Ten days ago, he was tromping through the bush with his buddies, in pursuit of the Rebels. He's an Arrow Boy, one of the villagers who could no longer stand by and watch the terrorist rebels burn their homes and steal their children. He joined the local resistance force and was determined to rout out the rebels. Then the ambush came. Rebels lured the Arrow Boy force down a slippery path, then overwhelmed them in the ravine below. He heard a loud sound and fell down.

One week ago, he woke up in the hospital, paralyzed on the right side, unable to speak and fading in and out of consciousness. In desperation, he had his wife call on the church members to come pray for him. He wanted to follow Jesus and trust the Lord in helping free his people from the Rebels. Today, he walked from the hospital to the church to praise God for his life and his hope in Him. His name is Patrick Oleper, and he's one of our heroes.

Greetings from Uganda.

I want to thank all of you who are praying for the situation here. The LRA Rebels had been terrorizing the villages all around Soroti, burning homes, abducting children and killing people. All the people who live in the villages have now fled into town. A couple weeks ago, however, one of the main Rebel commanders was killed by the Arrow Boys, so the fighting near Soroti has decreased to some degree. Fear, the greatest weapon of terrorists, still controls the situation. There are over 100,000 refugees now here, in Soroti (26 refugee camps), while thousands more are in other camps in neighboring towns. Most of them sleep on old cardboard boxes under trees in the park, in churches, schools and on the porches of all the shops. They roam through the town during the day trying to find ways of getting food for their families. Fortunately, Soroti and the main road going into town are secure, although all other roads leaving the town are closed because of ambushes and a few land mines that have been found.

The most challenging thing about the situation, however, is not the physical problems that result, but the spiritual battle that is going on. The Rebels (aka: "Lords Resistance Army") are actually a cult, who believe that they have special spiritual powers that allow them to overcome their victims. They perform child sacrifices and other occult rituals before major raids and believe that their spirits can allow them to run through showers of bullets without getting hurt. Their commanders are said to be possessed by powerful spirits. When their second in command was recently killed in battle, the rebels fought the Ugandan army desperately for his body, killing several army men with a rocket-propelled grenade. They then took their commander's body back with them into the bush, so that the powers of his spirit could be transferred from his dead body to another commander.

Villagers, like Patrick Oleper, have now formed a local militia, which is doing a good job of tracking the rebels. Many in this resistance force are the fathers of the abducted children. We call them the Arrow Boys because, initially, they were armed with small weapons like bows and arrows, but now they have machine guns as well. One of our animal health workers, whom Dr. Paula Ulrich and I trained a few years ago, has become a commander of this local militia. He used to be a rebel himself, in a former civil war here in Uganda, before he decided to become a believer. Please pray for him and his troop. His name is Edyangu (Eddie Yangu).

Well, the war rages around, but the Lord gives us strength, courage and resources to continue serving with Him. With your recent help, we are working with The Rockview Baptist Church in Soroti to help some of the refugee

camps. Supplying food, water, soap, household utensils and other things like sleeping mats. Thanks so much for your giving. I know it has been a real sacrifice, as I know this is also a very challenging time, financially, for everyone there in the states as well. The families here are so, so thankful to you. We are helping about 3000 of the refugees and it really is making a difference in their survival.

Spiritually, what looks to be a total tragedy is beginning to result in spiritual transformation. Every week more people in the camps are getting saved; the churches are really packed and increasing their number of services; people are praying, repenting and turning back to God. Please pray that a real spiritual revival can come at this time, that the Lord would draw His people to Himself and fill them with His hope, peace and love for one another. Thanks.

Wow, thanks for praying for me too! I'm actually doing well here. It must be the prayers of all of you, keeping my heart at peace and protecting me from any difficulties. It's quite an unusual peace...a solace and clear-mindedness in midst of the storm. I also have a good group of trusted, local advisors to help me make wise choices about traveling down the various roads and when and where to stay. I feel secure in the Lord and comfortable in His hands. Keep praying though!

On a sad note, I'm sorry to have to say, my wonderful pet warthog, Trixie has passed away. While I was up in Karamoja, she contracted some intestinal problem and died within 48 hours, before I could get to her. We'll miss her friendly snorts and rascally nature.

I hope all is going well for you. If you would like to be on my email prayer list, please send me an email to africavet@earthlink.net, within the next month or so, as I may change email systems shortly. Thanks. May God bless you in your home, your work and your soul.

Yours, always, in Jesus' Strong Hands,

Dr. Val

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Prayers for Uganda

Christmas Eve in a Refugee Camp. You're lying on the floor in the dark coolness of the night, reflecting on your life and your hopes. Three of your children are curled up on a flattened cardboard box next to you, with their blanket pulled up over their heads to keep the mosquitoes from biting them. You briefly glance, in your mind, to their sister, who was abducted by the Rebels two months ago, wishing she too was resting here with the others. You're waiting patiently and with a stubborn confidence, for her return. Surely the Rebels are losing badly by now, and the Arrow Boys are chasing them to their defeat. You gaze over at your worldly possessions piled against the wall: a bag of corn flour and a bag of beans, a basin for bathing the baby, your cooking pot, 3 spoons and a knife. Sunday clothes, folded nicely and stored in a plastic bag, hang from the rafters, awaiting the morning Christmas celebrations. This year's Christmas is unlike any other. Looking more intently at the rafters above, you wonder if your own home is still standing. You recall with a cool trembling the night that the huts next door were completely burnt down by the Rebels as they blasted through your village. Somehow your home survived, but now the whole place is deserted, as you all had to flee to town for safety. Looking at your meager food supplies, you wish you had tried to fill another bag with maize from the granary before you ran, maybe you could have tied it on your neighbor's bicycle during your escape. It's been a full six months now, much longer than you had imaged. Hoping everything is still there when you get back...

You breathe a little deeper. Despite the challenges of Life, you and the other refugees are pushing ahead, drawing strength from each other and from God. Each day's search for food eventually comes to an end and whatever God has provided is shared with the family and a few of your more desperate friends. Last month you received a cooking pot from a church in Oregon, so that you didn't have to borrow from your friend any more. And now you're getting at least some food each month from the local church here, who received funds from the Oregon believers also. Then, there is a promise of meat for Christmas day. First time since July. You stretch out a little more on the papyrus mat you are lying on, and smile, saying a prayer of thanks for the people who donated money for the mat. Your back feels much better these days, as the cement floor in the church building where you sleep was getting relentlessly hard. Little by little, things are getting better. In some way, there's a sense of peace-of-mind in the trans-global connection that led to the simple mat you now sleep on, and the dry beans that lean against the dimly lit wall. God does hear prayers. He heard your wailing when your daughter was dragged away. He heard you quietly sobbing with your neighbor in the bushes, as their home went up in flames. He heard the pleading in your heart for a safe place to stay and the calming of your soul. Now on Christmas eve, the calmness descends, things are going to be ok. God is still near, He has remembered you, and will answer your cries. Sleep settles in...

Greetings my Friends,

I praise God continually for your love and faithfulness. This story is a reflection of the hope that you have brought to this place. I just wanted you to know how much everyone appreciates your wonderful love offering and your prayers. There is no way to really thank you except to let you know that you are making a difference. Through your support, my church here, Rockview Baptist, has also started showing the Jesus film in the refugee camps in the evenings. Next week, we will visit the camp of "Unaccompanied Children" and hope to encourage them with the film and through sharing of God's love for them. **Please pray that Jesus will show Himself to the refugees through us.**

I'm missing all of you this winter. Last year was so wonderful, being able to stop by and all of you in your homes, call you up on the phone, fellowship after church, staying in that huge house in Corvallis with the cozy fireplace, ... So many wonderful memories. This year has been quite unique, I even forgot about Thanksgiving until one week

afterwards! **Pray for friendships and Godly companions for me.**

I've been busy up in Karamoja as well. Six months ago, our parent organization, World Concern, unfortunately had to pull out of Uganda due to financial constraints, but now, God has really blessed us with an even more sustainable and spiritually focused alternative. We have now begun to fully integrate our ministry into the local church. It's exciting to see how well the local people and the church are responding and coming behind us. Our new partnership will begin on January 5th next year. I am still under Christian Veterinary Mission, as always, but will now work with the Church of Uganda as my local partner. **Pray for harmony and enthusiasm in our new partnership.**

Thanks for being such good friends and sharing the love in your hearts with us all here in Uganda. I am sorry I couldn't get out any Christmas cards out this year, but please know that you are also in my prayers and that my heart continues to long for your fellowship and encouragement. **Pray for God to bless my friends and family there in the states.**

I wish you all a happy New Year - I am looking forward to what the God will do through us and in us this coming year. I pray for continued blessings of grace and mercy in your lives. Receive greetings from the believers here. They love you.

Yours in Jesus' merciful hands,

Val

NOTE: I have switched back to my Uganda email address (please see below)



Happy refugees with relief items



Refugees with new saucepans

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To my Friends,

At about the nine-month mark, it usually hits me: Cheddar Cheese Deficiency Syndrome (CCDS). I've been back in Uganda about 9 months now, and things have been challenging here. (Work and home transitions, deaths of African friends, disappointments, various fears from within and without, together with the basic sorrows and strains of life in Africa: they all add up after a while...). In a moment of contemplative imagination however, sweet and pleasant Oregon memories began to seep into my mind... Among other things, ... cravings for cheddar cheese have been floating through my dreams! As I rest on the bed at night, I've been seeing visions of the Tillamook Cheese sailboat cruising by the window of my bedroom, Chucky Cheese at the helm, various other rodent sailors manning the lines, I catch a waft of a melted morsel floating by on a huge Wheat Thin with one of the Tillamook Dairy Farmers manning the oars, ... (Oh dear, Perhaps my malaria medicine is having some psychedelic side-effects?! ... Nooo!... I don't take that one anymore, the smiling, turquoise ponies were just too funny-looking!)... Anyway, when my milk from yesterday curdled in the saucepan and I began to imagine how I could transform the tender curds into some cheese-like substance I knew my CCDS was getting severe,... Then I found this verse on cheese curds and knew it must be the message God has for me this month!

Job 10:10 Did you not pour me out like milk and curdle me like cheese?

Things are still tough here, but God is definitely with me. He's the one that put me here in the world, spilled me out into this distant place, added a little rennet, and curdled me like cheese into the person I am today. I had no form, but that which He formed in me. If you've been to the Tillamook cheese factory in the past, you could see how they pour the milk into huge vats, add rennet and starter, warm it, then slice it as it begins to solidify. The soft curd is tossed up and down and mixed all around, till all the whey is separated out, and only the solids remain. Pressure is added, till finally ten gallons of milk is reduced down to one pound of precious cheeeeeze.

At times, I felt like I've been in the cheddaring vat during the last few months: mixing and churning me to separate my curds from my whey, adding a little salt for character enhancement. But now things are beginning to settle out, the whey is draining off and I'm feeling a little more solid again. Thanks for praying me through it. Here are some highlights and updates on the last couple months:

Successful integration of our CVM Wholistic Livestock Development team with the Livestock Extension Programme (LEP) in Karamoja. With the withdrawal of our World Concern leadership from Uganda, we sought and secured another very good relationship with the Church of Uganda, who now oversees our work in the area.

Enjoyable joint village development and discipleship trainings with our new, hard-working, indigenous team. We now have 13 members when we add in the LEP staff, ranging from animal husbandry specialists, to literacy teachers, evangelists and agricultural workers. They come from 5 different tribes and enjoy working together in a spirit of harmony. This really helps us to bring a message of tribal peace to these villages where violence and revenge often rule. This is really a praise, as a spirit of conflict tends to rest on this region, and can also effect us as we live amongst the people.

Communities around Soroti, where the Kony/LRA rebels had invaded earlier, are busy planting their gardens and preparing their land for a new season. It looks like the rebels may not come back, as they are being relentlessly pursued by the Uganda Army, with the help of the US Satellite surveillance system. Everyone is breathing more easily and moving on with what remains of their families and communities. We have therefore, finalized our help with the refugees and have encouraged them to migrate back to their home villages. Thanks for all your great help with them; they have seen God touch their lives at their Point of No Hope. May they continue to praise Him as they go home and tell the story of hope to their friends and families.

Update on the missing girl, the niece of my staff member Michael, who was abducted by rebels last year. She is still missing, together with about 2,000 others. It has been 8 months now. Other children who have escaped have come back with horror stories of torture, cannibalism and desperation. Please continue to pray for her life and her future.

Ebenezer would like me to introduce you to him. He's my new baby monkey; a red tailed monkey, I believe. We rescued him from being roasted by a group of rambunctious little boys, and have nursed him back to health. He is very sweet, and enjoys bouncing around my hut like a 4 legged pogo-stick! I'll try to get a picture soon!

Finally, let me add that my good friend, Dorie is here visiting from the States. She went to Multnomah Bible College with me, in the Grad Programme, and has come out to encourage and visit us in Karamoja. We have totally enjoyed the time together, including a much needed vacation on the coast, complete with snorkeling among thousands of colorful, friendly, tropical fish, and sunny-day, barefoot walks on the warm shoreline. It's been great to have someone to talk to from the States who understands me and is willing to put their footprints with mine in the sand. An added plus was that at the end our week, she opened up her bag and revealed to me a treasure from Oregon, a 2 pound loaf of Tillamook Cheddar Cheese! Maybe my dream of the Tillamook sailboat came true? God is good, and he has a fun sense of humor too!

May He be with you as well, and cheddar you gently, age you to sharp perfection and use you to encourage and uplift others this month. Thanks for your prayers,

Yours, Joyful in Hope, Thankful for Grace, Contented in Him,
Dr. Val



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Contributions are solicited with the understanding that the donee organization has complete discretion and control over the use of all donated funds.



Christian Veterinary Mission

Africa Vet

March 2005

Greetings my friends,

Swirling dust-clouds twist through the land, searching for debris to lift in the air. A thin, young girl quickly skirts past the side of the church, almost being lifted by the force of the winds. This is a difficult time here in Karamoja, as the drought is now being transformed into famine. We did a food survey of the area, measuring how much food people had in their homes and found the average home had 13 days of food remaining, while the next harvest comes in 6 months time. Without any regular income, these subsistence farmers rely on their own gardens to supply food for the next year, and last year's gardens failed miserably due to an untimely drought just after planting. Things are getting rough now.

The typical casual beggar at my door is being replaced by families and friends who now come to my home with questioning eyes, to see if there is some way to receive help in this time of need. My friend, Lotenge, came by on Thursday. She wanted to sell me some dried seeds she had collected in the bush. Not needing the seeds, I thanked her but told her I didn't need them. She touched my arm firmly and looked into my eyes, saying, "But Doctor, please, maybe someday you can use these seeds and plant them to help someone else. Today, I have no food at my home for my children, what else can I bring you that you would buy it, so that we will not go hungry again tonight?" I bought the seeds, and now am organizing a small nursery to grow seedlings for next year.

I later went to Lotenge's village to see how things were there. Walking through the maze of mud huts, the normal buzz of humanity was muted. A few women talking under the edge of their grass thatched homes, a few children tapping stones on the side of a broken plow. As famine sinks into the hearts of the people, life becomes more solemn. About one third of the families in Lotenge's village have packed their few belongings and herded up their goats and cows and left the area, as their food supplies are getting completely used up. Wilted hearts, searching for a place of greater hope.

As I tried to listen for divine breathings, I realized it's time to do something. The Lord would not stand by and watch, but desires us to respond in love. Some Good News: Hope is already on it's way (although it's backlogged in paperwork at the moment). Here is THE PLAN:

1. **Food For Work** projects for those who are able to work. This allows people to perform community service jobs and receive food in exchange for their labor. Others work to establish alternative income sources in the communities, such that next time they will not all be as dependent on their cows and meager gardens. It covers about 40 communities. The Food for Work jobs include:

- a. Constructing natural fences around schools and churches.
- b. Building shades for community literacy classes (who now meet under trees)
- c. Planting tree nurseries

Establishing woodlots and gardens of plants which can produce commercial products in the future (Herbal dewormers, aloe vera, mangoes, sisal, gum arabic, etc.)

Vulnerable In-need People (VIP) food support:

Those who are helpless in the communities, including older widows, orphans, disabled and elderly people, need to receive some dry rations on a bi-weekly basis. This assistance does not provide for all that they need, but it can help them to survive till the famine lifts (hopefully in September).

Fortunately, a few months ago, we applied for some grants to help with the food for work projects. Those proposals have now gone through successfully, such that we have been given approximately \$50,000 of food from the World Food Programme, and \$4,000 of tools and equipment from the National Forestry Authority! God is so good!! We will have enough for helping these communities to work and earn food; we can now focus on what we can do for the VIPs.

For the VIPs, we are partnering with the local African church, who are willing to organize and distribute the food to the needy. They will select about 500 of the most needy people in the communities to start with and supply about 10 lbs of food a week (grains, like maize or sorghum, and legumes, like beans or peas) to each VIP. This costs about \$12 a month to keep one VIP going and \$6,000 per month to care for all 500.



I know that God has used many of you in the past to help out with crisis's such as this, so I wanted you to know what is happening. Your burdens at home there are also heavy, but the Lord may lead you to step out anyway. Please pray and see what the Lord may do.

Meanwhile, we are beginning to hold church services in the villages, to encourage them and to keep them focused on God. We all share the hunger together and seek God together. We know that the Lord will satisfy us in a dry and parched land. Where no thing can grow, He has planted us. We will only grow by His power at work in our lives. I enjoyed meditating on the relationship between grace and strength recently (See II Cor. 12:9-10, II Tim. 2:1), and have seen that I do not need to fear vulnerability and weakness. God is here.

Jesus said, "I have food that you know not of." Let us seek that food first (John 4:32).

Paul said, "I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. ¹³I can do everything through him who gives me strength." Phil 4:12-13.

On my own personal side, I have enough food to eat, only I choose to be with them here in the villages when I can. My visceral aching is not just a growling stomach! Thanks for loving us all. Thanks for praying. God bless you and your families.

Yours in Jesus,

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There's a reason they call them "fire ants". It had been a quiet evening. The rains have begun, so I waited a couple of hours for the breeze to die down before I tucked in a wrap-around skirt and went outside for my evening, starlight bathing time. I carried my plastic basin of lukewarm water the 20 meters across the newly-planted vegetable garden to the bathing shelter. The clouds had cleared and I glanced up to see Saturn perched on the shoulder of one of the Gemini twins. Moving quickly in my flip-flops, in the coolness of the evening, I forgot my flashlight in the hut, but decided that the waxing moon on the horizon would be enough for some good bathing ambiance. As I pushed the bathing shelter door open with the edge of the full basin, I heard an unusual whispering "*kruuuuuuuuuuur...*" sound. I moved to the bathing shelter corner to set the basin down, wondering about the sound, which seemed closer now, but so faint... Suddenly, whatever it was, began igniting my legs on fire! Frantically racing out the door into the blackness, my wrap-around skirt instantly became un-wrapped as I entangled myself in a thorny acacia shrub. Streaking towards the glow of the kerosene lamp in my hut, I had to force to silence an urgent squeal, so as not to alert the night watchman's flashlight to my half-naked, white body leaping through the darkness. I was sure it must have been a herd of scorpions, the way the venom burned up and down my legs. Reaching the light of home however, I found the red fire ants storming my exposed legs, injecting their painful poison on the way. I swept dozens of the crawling insects off my body, as red swellings began rising from every bite.

I met an enemy that night that I will never forget. From that moment, Pain and Fear of Future Pain aroused in me a Spirit of Revenge, which is not easily quenched. Fire ants have no hope of surviving near my home from now on. Every time I see even one, I have a strong desire to eliminate it: smashing them, pressing them into the ground with my heel, stomping on them, drowning them, pouring toxic insecticide on them... Being one with nature has just gone one step too far!

When I returned to the bathing shelter after treating my swelling legs, I was armed with various insect-fighting artillery (aerosol insecticides, heavy shoes for vigorous stomping, long socks to protect my calves against renegade attackers and a huge spot light). I found a 2 meter wide mass of fire ants emerging through the cracks in the floor, crawling on top of each other, with about a kilogram pile of white ant eggs in the center. The *kruuuuuuuuur* sound was louder now, as the crawling legs of more than a million fire ants rubbed on the bodies of the swarm of their cohorts on which they were climbing. Seeing that my bathing water was suspended on the wood plank just above them, I concluded I had probably been standing directly in the center of their assembly, on top of the egg pile. With inordinate glee, I began inflicting my revenge upon them, spraying the boiling mass of insects with various poisons, stomping on the few who tried to retaliate. As the throng began to disperse, they started spreading in all directions, at which time I quickly retreated to the hut as well. Bathing in the morning would be fine.

What a night! As I look back on that fateful evening, however, I have begun to see another view. Those ants had actually come out of the ground, as was common after the rains, searching for a new home for their colony. They carried all their eggs with them, in a drive to relocate the family elsewhere. I had interrupted them and we found ourselves in conflict. Their point of view was also valid.

Conflict is a huge problem here in Karamoja. Cattle raids and rustling, road ambushes and gun fights at the watering hole are present tense daily living. Peace continues to be elusive and some are trying to thwart the efforts of the peacekeepers, for the sake of personal gain. Corruption, greed and envy brew together. Fear and Revenge is integral to life. Although the government continues to promise to disarm the people, very few guns are actually being collected.

Armed warriors try all sorts of methods to keep their guns from being discovered. Many have been hidden away, in grain storage containers or buried under huge termite mounds after coating them with grease and sealing in plastic garbage bags. Some warriors have resorted to witchcraft to try to cause the army to be confused and be unable to locate the guns. One of the saddest acts of witchcraft I saw this year was the sacrifice of puppies. Puppies were being sacrificed, then their remains would be half buried with their heads still above ground, pointed away from the direction of the hidden guns. The curse that accompanied the sacrifice stated that the army would only follow the direction where the puppies' noses pointed, or else they would die as well.

Cattle raiding has also escalated recently, as the effects of the famine have become more prevalent. Hungry, impoverished people with guns and bullets are not a good combination. A father sees his children withering away, and begins to look more critically at the potential of his AK47 which is leaning against the wall of his hut. Morality deteriorates in the face of desperation. Survival instinct prevails over ethical integrity. (We are trying what we can do to help the hungry, with food for

the most vulnerable: elderly, disabled and orphans – about 550 families and with food for work, for those who are strong – 1,500 families.)

Last week we had 3 raids nearby my home. I prayed for 3 hours one night as the rapid gunfire rang out and the shouts of threat and terror echoed in the bush. In the last hour, loud explosions began as the army fired RPG's from their barracks into the darkness. By 1 am, I could no longer hear anything, but 10 people lay dead or injured in the bush, including several children and women, one heavily pregnant. I could not hear their crying in the darkness, but I know God heard them and wept at the cruelty of humanity. One of my own staff, Lodim, who is also the youth leader at our church, had all of his sheep stolen in the raid. Last year he lost all the property in his house, which was ransacked in a similar raid, every bed, every pot and pan and spoon stolen. Now his livestock are gone as well. His hope for going to college is gone. The blood and tears being shed on this land has become overwhelming. Where is Justice? Where is Hope? We must press on, standing for Righteousness, Truth and Love in a land where people put their hope in slaughtered puppies to bring revenge upon their enemies. Please pray for our strength to be restored and our faith to be focused on Christ alone.



Widow with Orphan Grandchildren Receives Relief Food

Other prayer requests:

- Pray for the Power of God to be known in this place, through protection of the Christians and the innocent from evil acts, hunger and sickness.
- Pray for the famine relief effort, that the people will recognize it as a representation of God's love and mercy for them.
- Pray for the Food for Work Projects, that they will lead to sustainable future income generating projects (Woodlots, Forests, Orchards, Training Facilities for Literacy, Road Construction to improve commerce).
- Pray for me. I can get frustrated at the continual presence of evil and at Satan's tricks at deception, confusion, destruction and division. Pray that the Lord will give me insight, wisdom and peace in the storm.

Thanks so much for your prayers and support. I really know that you have been praying because the way God cares for me here is just amazing! Thanks!

SPECIAL NOTE: I will be coming to the states this month, as my good friend, Dr. Lori Walker, is sick with cancer and I'd like to be with her. Please call or write to CVM if you would like to contact me during my time there and they can let you know my contact info. Please pray for Lori too, she's a wonderful woman. Thanks.

Yours in Christ,

Val

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Christian Veterinary Mission

Africa Vet

August 2005

I Praise God so much for Times of Refreshing

Refreshing Rains. God is great!! The famine in Karamoja is just about at its end stages. The refreshing latter rains began last month, following an excellent visit from a prayer team from NW Hill Community Church in Corvallis, Oregon, who prayed the clouds to bursting! After the prayers, we almost got our vehicle stuck in the rising mud from the down-pouring deluge as we fled the flooding villages! The local people were ecstatic, singing songs in the rain and praising God for His providing enough moisture to revitalize their crops. The crops are soon to be harvested and people will once again have enough food to eat in the communities. God is wonderful to us and I know the people have seen God's grace in their lives, as over 2000 families were able to receive both physical and spiritual food from us and the church here through those of you who gave and prayed to help during the famine crisis. Thanks for your sacrifice. You are making a difference. (Thanks Connie and Janice for the great encouragement and also the Tillamook Cheese! – I'm just finishing it up now, but it's finally become more of a Tillamook Blue Cheese at this point!)

Refreshing Friends. Work can make you weary. Especially when you do it alone. This month, God provided a great time of refreshment and joy for me as I had several new visitors that came out to help me here in Karamoja and Teso. The 2005 CVM Africa Shuttle Team came for just over 2 weeks. Each member took a unique role on the team, synergizing together their various gifts and abilities to bring an effective and harmonious ministry to the local people. They were; 6 women, either veterinarians or veterinary students, all inquiring from God concerning their future plans for their veterinary careers with the possibility of becoming veterinary missionaries.

While they were here, we initiated goat revolving loans in three churches, totaling 90 goats. These goats were given to the most needy people in the villages including; widows, orphans, disabled and families effected by HIV/Aids. The team conducted goat-keeping trainings for the beneficiaries to ensure that the goats they received would remain healthy, so that the firstborn young could be returned to the various churches and be given out to the next needy person on the list. During the training, we all observed some excellent spear-throwing expertise in these young women. I hope they don't forget to write that on their next job resume! Who's our enemy? The TICK!! (They drew a huge tick and tacked it to a tree. All the participants in the training took turns trying to spear the tick, from 40 feet away! The winner won a bottle of medicine for killing the ticks on their goats.)

The CVM Africa Shuttle Team also conducted an Ethno-Veterinary Research Field Trial for us. Following their collection of the crude materials from the bush, they pounded it with a large wooden mortar and pestle, dried them in the shade, then extracted the active ingredient and prepared a commercial formulation, all under the acacia tree next to our hut. We then went out to the communities and tested the medicine on cattle with various wounds, to check for both healing power and fly repellent ability. The initial results look very good and I will go back in a few days to make the final analysis.

The team included:

Devon Spencer: The team leader, group encourager, team preacher, the best organized team member and the most culturally sensitive of the team.

Kelly Pasma: Our team "song and dance" leader, a gentle spirit and being from Canada she could understand the British English of Uganda well, and could even spell programme, iarrhea, centre and other brit-words as necessary.

Dr. Kristyn Capell: A much needed vet colleague for castrating the local mongrels. Our morning grits chef and my personal hairstylist, she was voted best African dancer by the local church choir!

Rebecca Hon: Always ready to help out, computer assistant, alternate personal hairstylist and best vehicle pusher, even on the uphill times!

Emily Smith: Fun loving, our extra-curricular event coordinator (jump rope, hop scotch, bubble blowing, etc.). We'll have to climb those mountains next time, Emily!

Lauren Baker: Always making friends, definitely receives the best language-learner award and voted most likely to return to Africa, by my BOZIDEP team.

Staying in the hut with me, this team put up with unexpected visits from various genera of the local animal kingdom, including; friendly frogs and geckos, monster spiders flexing their hairy legs next to their heads as they sleep, mice hidden in the mosquito nets and hungry mosquitoes leaving colorful poka-dotted welts on their forearms. But they also had to endure the torture of fire ants biting their shoulders, a monkey rebounding off their backs or experimenting with the Velcro on their pockets (or other



monkey bad-habits), canine paws of various sizes on their clean skirts and ticks crawling on the rim of their coffee cup! After their Africa Adventure, I know they'll need some time of refreshing in the states before they get back to school!

Vehicle needs Refreshing. I have a MAJOR NEED. My current vehicle is now on it's last leg. Due to the difficult roads we travel on here in Uganda, a vehicle's life span is quite limited. Over the years, the joints, welds and bolts all start to wear out, loosen or break apart. Every two weeks or so now some new problem pops up. Often it may be a minor problem: the dash board lights going out, the hood or tailgate falling off or the headlights coming loose. Other times, however, it results in significant time out for repairing: broken suspension plate, piston rings wearing out, brakes failing, clutch slipping, frame cracking, engine mountings breaking, etc. Breakdowns on these roads can be both dangerous and extremely frustrating, as help may not be available until the next day, which means sleeping in a stranger's hut by the side of the road. You do get a nice opportunity to make new friends in faraway places, but it often doesn't match with the schedule you were trying to keep with your other friends!

My current vehicle is a 1998 Toyota Double Cabin Pick-up and I think it is time for it to retire from these difficult roads. It will do well as an occasional 4WD, as it is still strong, but everyday jolting on the roads is no longer an option for it. I would like to get a stronger vehicle, hopefully a Land Rover Double Cabin Pick-up. These are more expensive, but they can manage any road that I dare drive on (and I have some pretty challenging ones here!). Within the next month, I need to begin raising support to purchase this vehicle. I'm considering a used one in order to save costs. A 2004 model would cost about \$50,000, including import duty and taxes in Uganda. I will be sending out a request later concerning donations for the vehicle, so please pray about it if you are interested in helping. Thanks so much!

Spiritual Refreshing. The final refreshing I'd like to talk about is on the spiritual side. I also needed the "latter rains". The early rains provide growth and substance. They are usually followed by a short dry season. This dry season can sometimes go on for a long time, until the crops begin to wither, stiffen and become brittle. Insects can easily invade or diseases attack at this time. The latter rains revive that which has been grown and bring the final fruit to ripen. I've been growing, but somehow enduring a lot of challenges on the way. Being in the midst of suffering, poverty and heartache for long periods of time can wear on you. Bitterness, Loneliness, Futility, Exasperation, Deep Sorrow... They all had come to search for a place in my soul. I needed a final push of revival in my heart to strengthen my trust in God and to press on to completion that which He is doing in me and through me. I took the last two days just to be with God. It was so wonderful! Just to spend time praying and worshipping our wonderful Creator and Lord! I loved the time alone with Him, to feel the waters of His compassion soothing my aching soul and raindrops of His love reinvigorate my weary heart. While He was at it, He also sent along His Scrubbing Bubbles to clear out the debris that tends to gather in the unswept corners of my soul. I pray that He can also send His Latter Rains to your heart and revive all of our wilting spirits with a "gusher of love". God bless you all. Keep praying for me!

Yours, Swimming Happily in the Flood of His Grace and Mercy,

Val

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