

CELEBRATE

GLOBAL MINISTRIES SUNDAY!

2011

Accompaniment at Its Best!



When I first arrived in Swaziland and began serving with the Kukhany'okusha Zion Church (meaning "New Light Zion Church"), I was timid, watchful, slow to jump in. I was trying to establish expectations, boundaries, roles, etc. Plus, it is my personality to "go big" – but at this time in my life, I am here to learn about the people I am with, and how I can be a conduit of peace in the midst of unknown situations. I am purposefully trying to be cautious regarding my actions and responses to people and places. Not only is this important to me, but it is also a core value of Global Ministries to intentionally deconstruct decades – no centuries – of missionary colonization by the dominate western value system. As a new GM Volunteer, I take this commission seriously. And being in Swaziland, I find that my race and my home country play a BIG role in how I am perceived, and what expectations are set upon me. This especially holds true when visiting the mission sites of Kukhany'okusha: Neighborhood Care Points (NCPs) – where we serve one meal a day to orphans and vulnerable children, offering stability, and spiritual support. At three of our eight care points, we offer pre-school education. The goal is to eventually offer this at all NCPs.

I have now been here over six months. And yet, sometimes it feels like six days. I am less timid, and more playful now. I am getting to know the people – the customs – the history – the ways of living. In the beginning, when I would visit our NCPs, the kids were shy; some of the small ones would even cry upon seeing a white person! And I, still learning how everything works here, didn't want to "push" them into befriending me if they didn't want to. And, I also didn't want to continue the historical pattern of earning trust by bribing kids with sweets. Slowly but surely, the children and I have warmed up to each other. We don't talk much (since my siSwati isn't that good, and they are so young, they don't have many English words in their vocab yet) – but so many exchanges can be experienced just by holding hands, singing, dancing, and laughing together. Now when I arrive, kids come out to the car and say "umlungu!" (which means "white person"). When I get out of the car, they often greet me with smiles and hugs. And, they even remember my name – Sisi Lizzy. So while the request for sweets still continue, I laugh and say no, simply relying on my relationship and my ability to 'just be' with the kids – having fun together! It is a powerful message – and it is accompaniment at its best. :)

*Lizzy Beach, Volunteer, serving Kukhany'okusha Zion Church in Swaziland
Follow Lizzy's Blog at: <http://lizzybeach.tumblr.com/>*

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You make the difference...

The prayers and help you provide through your local congregations make possible the work and witness of GLOBAL MINISTRIES, which is supported by Disciples Mission Fund of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM) of the United Church of Christ.

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