



Capstone Ministries



Restoring Children! Strengthening Families!

"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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The number of
street boys
reconciled with
family by
Capstone
Ministries this
year!

494

*2 went home in
January*



Check out Capstone
on Facebook.



"SHARES" CARD HOLDERS

For those in California who use the "Shares Card" with Savemart supermarket, the program has changed to an E-Scrip Program. Easy instructions on p. 3

““There’s No Place Like Home””

“Fix these words of mine in your hearts and minds...Teach them to your children, talking about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.” Deuteronomy 11:18,19

Dorothy clicks the heels of her red magic shoes three times and repeats: *“There’s no place like home.”* Even the fantastical Oz with its yellow brick road, glittering Emerald City and Wizard cannot compete in Dorothy’s heart for the value of home. Home means family and security to a child. Trust and value is not earned as it is out in the rest of the world. They are assumed blessings. Nothing can replace home.

Home is also the best place for spiritual development. As God’s people prepare to enter into Canaan, Moses looks back to Mt. Sinai and the foundational elements of instruction in God’s 10 Commandments and his Covenant promises; he emphasizes that the structure of instruction does not replace family. Levites, priests, prophets, and pastors do not replace Mom and Dad talking about God with their children.



There is much ignorance and spiritual immaturity in Kenya. Rural churches are infected with legalism and corruption. With good intention, many a missionary and mission minded churches have come to Africa, observed the need and concluded that something must be done. Often that means separating children from the family structure in the name of “mission work.” Orphanages, rescue centers, etc. spring up to do what families have been unable or unwilling to do. Often the bright-eyed black faces of children become the fund raising campaign to support the

(Cont. p. 2 left column)

effort.

What could possibly be missing from this happy picture? Ringing in the hearts of those children are the words of Dorothy, "There's no place like home!" That is a truth that does not leave the heart even for those raised in very trying circumstances at home.

The value of home is repeatedly emphasized in Scripture. And in Kenya, home as a building block of society, is assumed. A Kenyan derives his/her identity not from occupation or experiences but from "where he/she comes from." Even the wealthy, educated, well-traveled Kenyan feels the pull to return to his ancestral home.

After living in Kenya for just a few years, we began to develop a plan for the reconciliation of street boys with their family. As early as 2004, Patty was the one who first coined the expression: "Rescue, Reintegrate and Reconcile" as the objective of our ministry. God made it clear to us that despite the challenges for rural families, reconciliation not division of the family was His will. We knew that poverty was severe, emotional and spiritual issues existed, alcoholism and other additions were tearing at the fabric of family. But we also knew God was able. In 2005, we began to put Capstone Ministries together under the umbrella of reconciling families.

Recently we did some reminiscing and rereading of some of our old newsletters, written before Capstone Ministries existed. Our first three years in Kenya were spent working as administrators for a children's home for street children in Kisumu. Every month we would write a newsletter about our experiences. We were struck with how well developed the concept and need for reconciliation was expressed in those early years. I'd like to share a few paragraphs from some of those early correspondences.

From May, 2004: *"Home issues have been on our mind lately. We are providing a home for 106 former street boys. For many of them their family home was a disaster. But we have come to realize that all of them need that connection to their family roots. It is part of the cultural identity of the individual in Kenya. The reason many of them are in this place is that something went wrong with their connection at home. It may have been poverty, a family quarrel, a remarriage, a death of a parent or a combination of several factors. Some of these situations can be solved and recently Patty and I have begun to think more and more about finding a way to reconnect and strengthen the home of our boys. It will mean they will be able to return to their home permanently."*

"In the Kenyan psyche, home is not just the place where you grew up. In the melting pot of America, few of

us have a strong connection to a particular place built by countless generations living on the same plot of land. America is a mobile society that takes home with them. Not so in Kenya. One's home place is part of the individual identity. In fact, one of the ways that Kenyans greet each other is by asking, 'Where do you come from?' meaning, 'Where is your home place?' The more we can work to build this sense of individual identity within these boys, the more secure and stable they will be as adults.

From June, 2004 : *"We do not want to warehouse street children. We want them to know their home, have a sense of identity and feel comfortable with they are reintegrated into the community from which they came."*

From February, 2005: *"At one point he burst into our office, almost in tears of joy as he declared, 'My family could hardly recognize me when I was home, and even me, I didn't know my life could be like this!'*

I believe the Lord is at work in each of our rehabilitation. We are all living in a place far from home. In a sense, the world is like the street. It is filled with filth and perversion. People abandon us, use us, and manipulate us. But the Lord does not want us to become like the world or to call it home. He wants us to live with our eyes set on our future home, our real home. The Lord is speaking to us too when he says, 'New things I declare; before they spring into being, I announce them to you.' Isaiah 42:9

So many things have developed along the way since the Lord gave us that vision so long ago. Capstone has been refining and adding different elements, discontinuing and adjusting as we did our annual self-analysis. We focused more on the importance of follow up within the home, added 12 home Bible study groups, added home based care in the form of the lunch, high flyer and school uniform projects. We started the Moringa Project. Recently we adjusted our education support to include local schools and vocational training. We added Capstone Camp, mentorship of supported students and staff capacity building. In all, the objective remained clear: **Rescue, Reintegrate and Reconcile!** God bless you for your support of Capstone Ministries!

Do you use the “Shares” Savemart card when shopping?

Attention: Program Change

The Shares card is being changed to an e-scrip program. Savemart has made it easy for you to make this change from scanning your card. Here are the easy steps the next time you are shopping in Savemart in California or Nevada:

It’s as simple as providing your phone number at checkout:

1. Sign up for the NEW* Shares program by registering your phone number or Save Smart Rewards Card with eScrip.
2. *You will no longer use your S.H.A.R.E.S. card (effective April 1, 2016). Register your phone or your Save Smart Rewards card number (this will not be your S.H.A.R.E.S. card)
3. Shop at Save Mart Supermarkets and provide your registered phone number or card at checkout.

You can also go to the following web address to make the switch:

<http://www.escrip.com/merchants/identity/savemart/index.jsp>

Donation: For Capstone and support for Dan & Patty

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email _____

Donation Amount _____

Designation? _____

New Rescues

Capstone has rescued 2 boys and reconciled them at home during January. Note: Of the 69 boys rescued from the street in 2018, 84% are still at home.

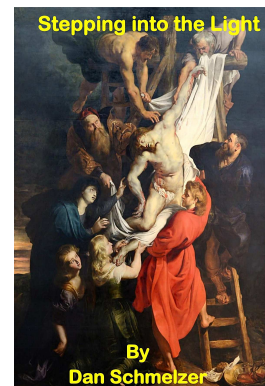


Nicolas Okoth #493



#Francis Odhiambo #494

“Stepping into the Light”



In March of last year I started writing a book on the life of Nicodemus. It has been published and is available on Amazon.com. It is a book of historical Biblical fiction. There are only three references to Nicodemus in the Bible—all in John’s Gospel. In John 3 we find him coming to Jesus at night and three years later he is with Joseph of Arimathea removing the crucified and lifeless body of Jesus from the cross. “Stepping into the light attempts to fill in the gaps and answer how Nicodemus went from curious and secretive to boldly standing next to Jesus in broad daylight.

The book attempts to answer that question by placing him at various incidents in the life of Jesus. The reader can look over his shoulder and gain insights into what it may have been like for a Pharisee and member of the Sanhedrin to become a disciple of Jesus.

Mission Perspectives: “Standing on Shoulders”

Steve Green wrote a wonderful hymn several decades ago entitled: “Find us Faithful”. The third verse stresses an important reminder, especially for missionaries:

*Surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses
Let us run the race not only for the prize,
But for those who've gone before us
Let us leave to those behind us the heritage of faithfulness
Passed on through godly lives
Oh may all who come behind us find us faithful*

There are no lone rangers when it comes to mission work. Long before the missionary finds him/herself on the scene, God has been active working through others. Even when a missionary is working with an “unreached people group”, the Holy Spirit has been active, opening doors, creating scenarios of receptivity. For the rest of us who are working in areas where the Gospel has been proclaimed faithfully for many years, we often need the reminder that we are “Standing on the Shoulders” of many faithful saints some of whom were in the very same position of responsibility as we are now. That sense of thankfulness for faithfulness helps the missionary to remain humble and sensitive to God’s greater plan.

There can be an assumption by some that position brings wisdom. No missionary, mission agency or mission board looks more foolish than when they are consumed with the ego driven perspective: “Now that we are here...blah blah blah!”

Over the years we have witnessed a broad spectrum of personalities and mission perspectives. Honest humility, unfortunately, has been rare. The mission executive who is on a “Quickie Tour” who listens intently to those on the ground is even rarer. All too often he/she is there to “direct and correct.” That is sad, and all too common. Ego has no place in mission work.

We have some good friends who came to visit some of their missionaries serving in Kenya. They came to listen, encourage, rejoice, weep and support. They were grateful and thankful for God’s faithful servants working to share the Gospel “on the ground.” They knew there was much they did not and could not understand across the culture. Not once did we get the feeling that their missionaries felt any tension or stress by their visit. They would even babysit missionary children so that Mom and Dad could have a night out. They spent time with us even though we did not come from the same Christian denomination. They seemed to sense that many faithful people had come before them and were serving the Lord on their behalf.

Godly humility and honest thankfulness for the faithful service of others is one of the most important characteristics for missionary, mission supervisor and mission boards. We are all “standing on the shoulders” of the faithful who have come before us.

Education Fund

We have realized that boarding school may not be in the best interest of every boy who qualifies. Some may be better off staying at home and going to a local high school. For others, particularly those who are much older, it may be better for them to receive vocational training. So we have adjusted this program to do things in the best interest of each boy. Parents and students will be given more flexibility to choose a direction in education that best suits them.

So we are seeking donors for the Education Fund. One of our long-time donors offered to match all gifts to the Education Fund in 2019 up to \$5000. To date we have received \$3000 toward that matching goal. If you would like to designate your gift toward the education or vocational training of one of our reconciled boys, just indicate this on the “memo line” on your check.

Sandra Awuor, on right, is our “Poster Child” for the Education Fund. She is receiving her “Targetter”—a prep guide for her exams after grade 8. She along with 14 other children have received this prep guide.

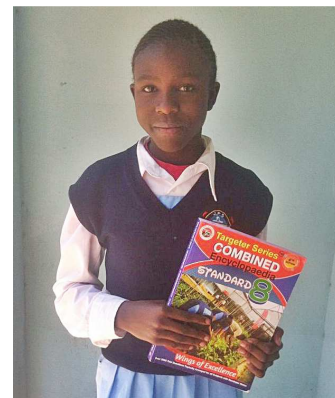


Photo of the Month



A weaver taking a bath in one of our water dishes in the vard.