



# 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 since  
2005

# 554

***3 went home in  
January, 2020***



Check out Capstone  
on Facebook.



Capstone Ministries is an RSO of the LC-  
MS (Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod)

## "Familial Bonds"

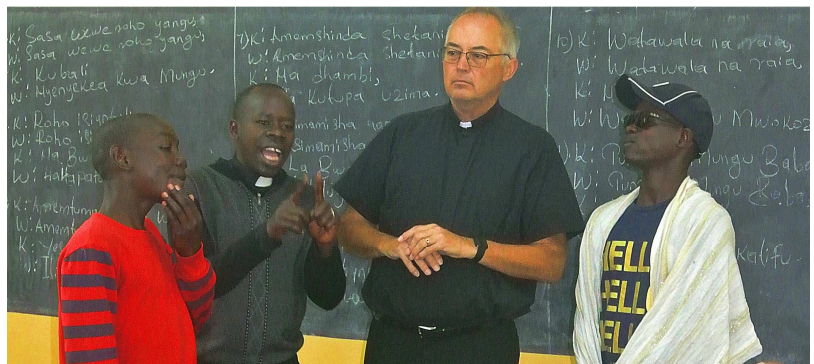
***"Then Joseph said to his brothers, "Come close to me...Then he threw his arms around his brother Benjamin and wept, and Benjamin embraced him, weeping. And he kissed all his brothers and wept over them. Afterward his brothers talked with him." Genesis 45:4,14,15***

Twenty-two long years had passed. Joseph had been sold into slavery by his brothers when he was only seventeen. He enters Pharaoh's service at age 30. Then follow the seven years of plenty and in the second year of the famine, the 10 brothers of Joseph return to Egypt along with Benjamin. In a dramatic scene, Joseph reveals his identity to his brothers; hugs and kisses them in genuine affection despite the history of betrayal between them.

It is a scene not unlike the experiences the Capstone staff face on a regular basis when a runaway boy is returned to the family. Of course, not always does the family immediately embrace the prodigal son. Parents are not God. Grace and mercy are often mixed with suspicion and selfishness in the human heart, particularly when someone has brought harm to the relationship.

In the case of Joseph, the brothers had done the unthinkable: Sold their father's favorite son into slavery and passed off his disappearance as a tragic attack by a wild animal.

Almost always, there is some form of betrayal involved when Capstone staff reconcile a child with family. It is rare for it to be as serious as the case of Joseph and his brothers. Often it is about a betrayal of trust, personal responsibility or favoritism.



**Dan retells the parable of the Prodigal within the African context while at Capstone Camp 2019!**

It is critical, in the process of reconciliation, to recognize the importance of grace and forgiveness. Seldom do those in a dispute need any reminders of the need of repentance, particularly contrition. The challenge is for the offended party to be willing to forgive and love again. Notice how willing Joseph was to see God's hand in all he faced as a direct result of the brothers' betrayal.



**Great, Great Grandmother to Granton Otieno, a recent rescue.**

It is a great advantage to be working on reconciling families in a culture that prioritizes family bonds. While the family is certainly under stress from many factors in Kenya, family remains a foundational element of the society. In Kenya, little is more important than family! It is still common for stable families to welcome into their home the children of a deceased relative. An American might say, "We don't have any more room;" but a Kenyan would not.

Often Capstone staff will reconcile a boy with a paternal uncle when the situation warrants. In fact, we faced that circumstance with a recent rescue, Solomon Omondi. The uncle even came to the Capstone office in Kisumu to pick up the boy.



**Solomon reconciled with his uncle at the Capstone office**

The uncle was overjoyed to receive his "son" home again.

Yet there are still issues to be addressed. Reconciliation is the process of fallen human beings accepting the spiritual reality of sin and forgiveness. Temptations and challenges remain. Recall the story of Joseph's brothers. Even though they hugged and wept on each other's shoulders, years later when father Jacob dies, guilt and shame rears its ugly head again in the brothers' hearts. Once again, Joseph sees a need to reassure his brothers and address them with kind words.

So too, Capstone staff return again and again to the homes of reconciled boys, recognizing the reality of the spiritual battle before them. If there is a small group Bible study, the family will be encouraged to attend one of the 14 groups lead by Pastors Isaiah or Zadok. These small groups come together monthly to hear the Word, encourage one another and discuss mutual challenges.

God bless you for your support of Capstone Ministries. Continue to pray for our staff: Isaiah, Daniel, Johannes, Queenter, Milkah, Jeremiah, Jael, Zadok, and Eunike.

## Vocational Training Option

Around the world, economies are in short supply of skills in the trades. Even in Kenya there is a demand for mechanics, masons, carpenters and welders. With the restructuring of Capstone's Educational Assistance Program, one of the major advancements has been the addition of assistance for those boys who are not gifted academically and want to pursue vocational training.

Capstone now has four students supported in vocational training. Capstone staff visits with those pupils who are performing poorly as they finish primary school; they counsel the child and parents to consider vocational training as an option to High School. This enables a boy to begin to assist the family with a skill that makes him much more employable or even self-employed.

You may support this program by simply marking Education Fund on your check when you contribute.

## Prayers for Patty

Many of you know that Patty has struggled with some physical challenges since October. Here is a brief recap for those of you who are not aware. While we were in Florida in October, she noticed some red spots on her legs. We made a quick stop at a clinic to have it looked at and they immediately sent her to emergency. She was admitted with an extremely low platelet count of 3,000. The normal range is 150,000-400,000. Platelets are the clotting agents in your blood. After a two day stay in the hospital, we decided she should fly immediately to California and seek attention from a hematologist. She recovered and then had a relapse after coming off Prednisone. She remained in CA while I finished the trip in the Midwest and returned to Kenya mid-December. All seemed to be going well as she tapered off the Prednisone over the next two months. The doctor cleared her to travel since her counts had recovered completely. However upon arriving here in Kenya, she has suffered another relapse and has started Prednisone again. That was two days ago.

She is in contact with the same hematologist in CA via an online portal and we have a very trusted Primary Care physician here. We will keep you updated here. Please do keep her in your prayers and add her to your church prayer list. God bless you.

## Lessons I've Learned

This is a new series for this newsletter and future newsletters. I did something similar a few years ago which was more about Mission Perspectives. This will be more personal and reflective.

### The Need for Rest

Several times in Jesus' ministry he invites His disciples on a retreat. ***"Jesus said to them, 'Come away with me. Let us go alone to a quiet place and rest for a while.'"*** Mark 6:31

When a missionary first arrives in the field, he/she feels an overwhelming sense of responsibility and accountability. I remember hearing a veteran missionary speak on this topic a few years ago. He mentioned that he was given simple marching orders when he was sent to the foreign mission field: "Get 'er done!" Seems a bit daunting, doesn't it?

Of course it is important to recognize the importance of the calling and the task. However missionary burn-out is a greater danger than laziness, from my observation. It seems even the Son of God recognized the need to take some time away from the pressures of the people. The verse that follows the words above even states that it was difficult to find time to eat because of the pressures of the people on Jesus' time.

It is important for mission boards, supporting congregations, mission societies, etc to prioritize the human needs of those they send and support. There is a real need for individuals in the field who provide aid and counsel for missionaries in the field. My observation has been that this is lacking for most missionaries. In my opinion a church organization should budget for both "in field" support staff as well as dedicated staff at home for missionary support.

Missionaries too, need to feel free to speak up concerning their physical, psychological and emotional needs.

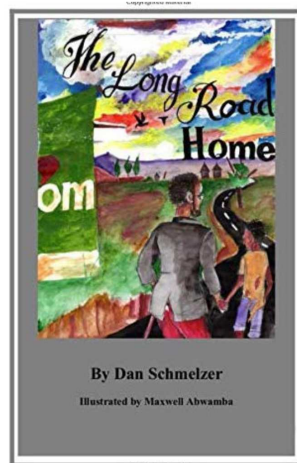
Patty and I are blessed to have a board that is receptive and sensitive to our needs. Unfortunately that is not common among our missionary friends here in Kenya.



## THE LONG ROAD HOME

I wrote and published a new book on life in rural Kenya this year. It is a story set in Katito, a small village southwest of Kisumu on the Kanu Plain. It is a story of challenges, failures and reconciliation. If you are a supporter of Capstone Ministries, this is a must read.

The book is illustrated by a former street boy, Maxwell Abwamba, pictured below. It is available on Amazon.com. If you do a search for Daniel Schmelzer, the book will come up in the search.



## Education Fund

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. The donor is repeating that challenge in 2020. If you would like to designate your gift toward the education or vocational training of one of our reconciled boys or girls, just indicate this on the “memo line” on your check.

## Travel Schedule

Dan will be attending the Best Practices Conference in Phoenix, AZ on Feb. 19-22. After the conference he will be preaching and presenting Capstone at several churches.

Feb. 23....Page, AZ. Shepherd of the Desert Lutheran

March 1....Fort Pierce, FL. Trinity Lutheran

March 8....Arkdale, WI - United in Christ Lutheran  
Adams, WI – St. John Lutheran

## Rescues January, 2020

They are: Solomon, Agnes, Hillary.

