



A refuge for orphans living with HIV/AIDS in Jinja, Uganda



Greetings to all,

www.AfricaOurOwnHome.org

May, 2016

“I will praise You with the harp for Your faithfulness, O my God; I will sing praise to You with the lyre, O Holy One of Israel. My lips will shout for joy when I sing praise to You – I, whom You have redeemed. My tongue will tell of Your righteous acts all day long, for those who wanted to harm me have been put to shame and confusion.” Psalm 71:22-24

The verses above so fittingly describe the stories of so many of our kids in Uganda. This business of transitioning from one culture to another again has me reminiscing on things that have happened over the past ten years. One word resonates in my mind in every circumstance: faithful. God has been more than faithful...to me...to the kids...faithful.



Doreen (right) with friends, years ago

It was one of those days. Our eleven-year-old girl was in the throws of a very bad seizure, at dawn. We were scared. I placed her across my lap as I straddled the back of a motorcycle taxi (boda boda), in the rain, while her body continued seizing (we didn't own a vehicle in those days). I arrived at the emergency room with the child still unconscious only to learn the doctor would be arriving at nine am. And it was only six. No such thing as an emergency at the emergency room.

While we waited for a doctor to come, the child in the bed beside us -- an emaciated, malnourished baby -- breathed her last. The nurse informed us that this was the third child the mother had starved to death, because they all had AIDS and so did the mother. “What can they do to keep her from doing it again?” I asked the nurse as the horrific scene unfolded before my helpless eyes. “Nothing,” the nurse answered with a shrug. “There is no 'child protection service' here.”

Our own little girl, the one who had the seizures, was diagnosed with epilepsy and put on medication. Another medication to add to her daily regimen. And we went home. She had seizures very frequently, the medicine made her very sleepy, she couldn't remember things, wasn't doing well in school. Then one day, the school headmaster called me. “Your girl has ele-ka-trocuted herself.” “What?!?!” “You come and collect her from school, because it is like she is not thinking clearly. It is like she is sleeping but when she is awake.”

I arrived at the school to find Doreen, sitting alone on the back steps. I tried talking to her, but she didn't respond. Her teacher left the rest of the class and approached me to explain. "They are repairing the electricity in the class room and one of the wires was exposed. She touched it and fell down." Well of course she did. One thing about our kids, you can trust them to find a little mischief. And one thing about schools in Africa. You can't trust that no live wires will be hanging out in the reach of curious little children. Later, the doctor said, "She's just stunned. She will be better tomorrow." We certainly hoped she would.



Joshua, Abraham & Mulikidi

She was. And she never had another seizure again. "Big Mark told me to touch that wire." she explained to me later. "And if Big Mark told you to jump off a cliff, would you do it?" "Eeee, Mommy. I cannot jump off a cliff!"

She's a young adult now, by the way. She says that she thanks God she has HIV, because it is how she came to know Him and it has given her a doorway to share Him with others.

Faithful? Yes, God is faithful! With love, Mommy Holly



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