

Imperishable Seed

Uganda

December 2017

Merry Christmas!

I was just talking to a friend and we can hardly believe that another year has already passed. This also marks the end of my fourth year in Uganda. It's been an eventful four years, but I couldn't possibly detail everything in the span of one letter. So I have decided to give an overview of a few of the things that have happened since I returned from my furlough in September.

James and I have been busy at the university with various practicals for BVM 3 and BVM 4. My favorite is always the suturing practical. This is where the students actually get to start learning how to hold surgical instruments, tie knots, and practice various suturing patterns! We also have taught anesthesia basics, ear surgery, and eye surgery. I loved the eye surgery because the last procedure is an enucleation (surgical removal of an eye) so I can dissect the eye and discuss some of the structures. The eye and the kidney are the two body parts that to me are clearly a product of intelligent design. Plus, the tapetum lucidum is just beautiful. I'm currently working on a prototype to help teach cephalic IV catheter placement using a foley catheter filled with red dyed water, a rabbit skin, and a 1.5 inch PCV pipe.

At my latest youth event, I had the opportunity to be a part of a camp that is sponsored by my church. I just love youth camps as they are a great time to build deeper relationships. I had fun putting together a 'Minute To Win It' game time. It's amazing what fun some balloons, cups, spoons, cotton balls, and Vaseline can be. I also taught a lesson called "Loving Others." My lesson linked with the first two teachings of the camp called "Loving God" and "Loving Yourself." Loving others is an integrated result of a genuine love of God, in which we know our value in His eyes and thus have a Godly love for ourselves.

Sadly, recently I was slowed from participating in the more rigorous physical activities since I pulled my Tensor Fascia Latae muscle and pinched my S1 nerve. I had been playing squash (similar to racquetball) early every morning with a friend, but I failed to end our time together with proper stretching. Moral of the story, I'm not twenty anymore and I need to take things a little slower. Good news, I'm almost fully recovered.

On one of my most adventurous days, Dr. James and I had the chance to take a day trip with the USPCA surgical team and one of our recently qualified COVAB students out to an island in Lake Victoria. Once there, we performed ten surgeries (spays and neuters) to help reduce the over population of the animals on the island. It's not every day that you get to look out from your 'surgical theatre' and see a nice beach and a wide expanse of water. This was the very day we were glad that we weren't at the university. There is a contentious political debate taking place in Uganda, with strongly-opinionated debaters on both sides, so the university students were demonstrating. After a week or so, things quieted down and now it's business as usual for us.



Coming up to her one year anniversary, the USPCA vet, Dr. Josephine, is doing very well! She is still learning eagerly and completed her first successful canine leg amputation on her own! We are happy to see her progressing so well and feeling confident to do more complicated procedures on her own. Recently we completed an extensive orthopedic procedure on a dog with a broken leg. It was a spiral fracture with three fragments, so we are praying that the 6mm pin and four cerclage wires will successfully save the leg.

My guard recently approached me with a business idea and the request for a loan. An owner of a local chapatti stand (fried flat bread which is a popular street food) was wanting to sell his business to move back to the village. I granted the loan because I see great potential in this young man and have seen him model good character as he does his daily work in these past couple years. He had also previously joined our weekly Bible study. So I wish him all the best, and thus far the business is progressing as predicted!!

Also keeping me busy, I designed a brochure for our all-church retreat in February, added new members to the Tuesday night Bible study I host, and made an alien head piñata for my friend's son's birthday. I've just begun hosting a monthly 'Truth Group' for participants of the Living Wisdom course I attended earlier in the year. That's one of the blessings to being single; I have more flexibility to offer my house to host gatherings.

I gave a presentation at a local international school to their 'Early Years' class about farm animals and veterinary professionals. I'm not sure what they found most interesting: listening to the goat's heart through the stethoscope, petting the baby bunny, or the balloon I made out of the large animal OB sleeve. Before you receive this letter, I will have also given a presentation at another international school for a 7-12 grade annual career fair. I really do love how diverse my life is here, but it also makes it hard to answer the question, 'what does your typical week look like?'

However, my life here is not all easy and exciting. In the midst of a normal Sunday morning church service a call was received to inform the congregation of the sudden and shocking loss of a member of the pastoral and leadership teams, and a friend of mine, Steve. We worked together many times with the youth group and were often cast for small skits at church to illustrate the sermon. Why were we cast? Because we were outgoing and loud enough so we didn't need microphones. He will be greatly missed by many around the city, but most especially by his wife and four children. They are in the UK right now for memorial services and will return soon for a memorial service here. May we realize how short life can be and live more purposefully.

Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. James 4:14

One day at a time,



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