



Artists in Christian Testimony

Bill and Julisa Rowe— Telling the Story through creative and performing arts

The Rows' Rovings



*In Memoriam
Peggy Sue Lasswell.
Loving and dear mother and grandmother.
She will be deeply missed.*

“The Lord gives, and the Lord takes away. Blessed be the name of the Lord.”

(words according to Job)

How true we have found this statement, particularly in the last quarter. In October, Julisa flew to New Jersey to welcome her new niece (first child born to her brother and sister-in-law). The following week, Bill's mother died. A trip of welcoming became one of goodbyes and Julisa flew back to Kenya to be with the boys while Bill flew to Missouri to bury his mother.

“Why the death? Why the diseases? Why the loss of a good paying job?” They say art reflects life. We are by no means alone in our sorrow and loss. When all this happened, the adult drama team at Nairobi Baptist was in the middle of rehearsing a production based on the book of Job, which wrestles with the above questions about

suffering and pain, how we deal with loss, and how we view God. During the rehearsal process, in our cast of 15, we counted 5 deaths of close relatives, and much sickness and job problems. And this is why we chose to do the play—because so many in Kenya are facing loss, suffering, injustice and need to know that they are not alone. It also helped us to see that God is God, and he does have all things in His hands and is holding the world together.

The response to the play was as we hoped—so many saw themselves in the situations in the play and gained a better understanding of how to view God and their own problems, as well as Satan's role. “Fantastic, fantastic play. Powerful message.” “The woman with the miscarriage—that was me.” “That's just how Satan works in my life.” People came back the second night to see the play again and are still talking about its impact and how it spoke to them in the midst of their sorrow and problems.

It may seem an odd play for the Christmas season...but what greater reminder of the reason for the incarnation? People in Kenya are surrounded by death, sickness, injustice, corruption, violence, but Christ came to bring hope and, ultimately, justice. What a hope to look forward to indeed!



The Lord gives: Olivia Harper Smith with her parents, grandparents and aunt



Satan and his minions taunt God



Job's wife berates Job

Job addresses a despairing couple



The Trinity enacts the story of God among man

God speaks to Job from out of the whirlwind



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HIGHLIGHTS OF 2007



- 10 days of training in Cairo with believers there who are reaching out in drama and worship.



- **Bill's visit to the TransMara, to train Maasai pastors in worship**
- **Bill's two trips to Mombasa for Outpost courses in music and worship**
- **The adult drama team at Nairobi Baptist had a busy and fruitful year, doing dramatic Scripture reading often in the Sunday morning services. People make a point of saying how much they appreciate it and look forward to the readings as it helps them listen to God's Word and hear it in a new way.**

We did a one-act play on Philemon in place of the sermon in May and toured it to a sister church in June. Julisa oversaw the youth in a production of "Meditations on the Cross" - an Easter dramatic worship service that we put together some years ago.

Julisa directed a group of youth in a 5-week sketch series on Daniel for the Sunday School program. Kids dragged their parents to church!



MINISTRY IN EGYPT

Julisa has been asked to return to Cairo in February to hold a drama conference. Please pray for the funding details and organizational details. It's a big task!



SUPPORT STATUS

Living on support is a continual exercise in trust. We praise God that we have been able to come through the year, to this point, debt-free, in spite of having to pay a large amount to the Kenya Tax Authority and other increased costs. At one point, we could say that we were at 80% of our support goal and we are so grateful to all of you who have faithfully continued to give this year and those who have joined our financial team. What a tremendous blessing!

But there's always a "however," isn't there?! A weakening dollar means that we now lose \$300 a month in the exchange. Rising cost of living (rents, food, fuel, tuition, etc.) makes it even harder to make ends meet, let alone have breathing room for rest or household items. We know that our situation is not unique—many of you face the same problems wherever you are. We just ask that you pray with us for God's provision in abundance. We know He is able. We are now at 67% of our actual need level.



Would you consider giving a special one-time gift at the end of the year, or at the beginning of the coming year? We have very little that we are able to put aside for ministry expenses, which includes travel. Trips, such as Bill's return to the US for his mother's funeral, and the upcoming trip to Cairo, are uncovered except by special gifts.

PRAYER POINTS

- Praise that financial supporters continue to join us. Pray that the additional funding needed will be found.
- Pray for our ministry plans for 2008. We would like to begin a certificate in theatre/Drama in worship program. There are also many courses to be taught and drama plans for Nairobi Baptist.
- Praise for friends for the boys and their continued adjustment.
- Pray that we would find the time and funds for family rest. There is so much to do, so much traffic, pollution and opportunities!



- Two drama courses were launched! "Drama in the Church" went for 2 weeks in July and "Drama for Outreach and Development" happened in August. Each class had 15 participants who were excited about their training and ready to continue it in their churches and areas of ministry.

- We both taught in the Graded Certificate Course in Music, training music leaders who wanted official certification in music theory, worship theory and performing arts theory and practice.



- Bill played first trumpet with the Nairobi Symphony.
- Bill conducted the choir at Nairobi Baptist in their Christmas concert.



- Julisa was in a play by a professional group in town and made good contacts with those in the "industry."
- Julisa was also recruited for a minor role in a locally-made film on AIDS, done under Good News Productions. More good contacts with the acting world here!

KIDS' KORNER

The boys have adjusted well to their new school, St. Christopher's. They are learning well and have made good friends. Their adjustment to Kenya is also improving. Kendall is not so overwhelmed by all the changes and having friends to play with on weekends and at school is a big help.

We took some small trips out of town—to a friend's farm and to Lake Nakuru game park—which were enjoyed by all of us and helped us to experience the beauty in the country.

They have enjoyed field trips, through school, to grocery stores, animal parks, museums and swimming clubs. And, of course, we all enjoyed our trip to Egypt in April, even though it was a working holiday for the parents! In between training 9 drama teams and 4 worship teams, we were able to visit the pyramids, the museum and take a boat ride on the Nile. The boys also enjoyed the luxury of eating at McDonald's!



Kendall with his best friend, Ngugi.



Our little prince! Nathaniel played the role in his class end-of-year play.

RESPONSE CARD

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