

Uganda Unfolding

Educational Care in Uganda

Welcome to my World of Work

Module 2: Caring for God's Children

Preventive and Corrective Discipline



The stories from the teachers were painful and difficult to listen to. Even as they spoke, their body language said so much. As the recollections of severe punishments by teachers and parents were shared, I noticed tensed bodies, teachers wrapping arms around themselves as if to protect themselves, flinching as they remembered being beaten, their faces involuntarily expressing their emotions as terrible memories were brought to the surface. Their stories spoke of punishments that did not befit “the crime” and the legacy of deep hurt and lingering shame.

“I was in P3 (gr.3) and had to walk a long way to school. We were late, so my sister suggested that rather than be beaten for coming late, we hide in the bushes and go home at 1:00 and tell our father we had been sent home to get school fees. The next day my father came to school to pay fees and learned that we had been absent. The head teacher punished us, but our father punished us even more. We were caned 10 times by the head teacher but more than 100 times by our father. I still have a scar on my buttocks.”

“When I was in P4, I had to use the latrine after lunch and I ran to class a bit late. Instead of letting me sit, I was beaten. Then the P7 teacher heard all the noise and came to see what was happening and also beat me for two reasons: I was late for class and I had failed question #4 in my math test. This teacher was from the same clan as me and she said, “We from this clan don’t fail such easy numbers.”

“I was in a very large class in S5 and we were very noisy during preps. We were told to move on our knees from the valley to the top of the hill and then we were caned. “

“Someone took the keys to the dormitory and locked the matron inside. Everyone looked for the keys, but couldn’t find them. We were all lined up and each teacher, 70 of them, caned us.”

“I had not tied the belt of my uniform, so I was tied to a post, and was asked, “Am I a goat?” I had to stand there in the sun the whole day.”

Despite such stories, most of these teachers, when they began this module, were convinced that children needed corporal punishment in order to be moral and obedient children. They quoted Proverbs 13:24, “He who spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is diligent to discipline him.”

That was the opening I needed to remind them of the imagery of the rod and staff in psalms 23:4, “Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil; for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.”

And then we reviewed again that children are image bearers of God and we began to discover how punishment and discipline differ. And slowly transformation took hold in the hearts and minds of the teachers and they gained courage and resolve to try new and different ways of discipline.

Prayer & Praise

PRAISE

- ◆ For the positive Educational Care trainings that took place in May
- ◆ For good health and traveling mercies in the past three months
- ◆ For the generosity of a strong support community that has helped me reach my support raising target
- ◆ For vacation in Canada this summer for our every five years family reunion. It will be good to grieve our loved ones who have gone before us and welcome new additions

PRAYER

- ◆ For a smooth transition as I make yet another move to what I hope to be my permanent home in Uganda
- ◆ For partners to move beyond expressing interest to firm commitments for trainings
- ◆ For safety in general amidst a seeming increase in insecurity

Vignettes from my World



A British friend has kindly let me use her car while she is away. It's a good vehicle for me as I learn to drive on the left side of the road, navigate narrow and hilly streets with open drainage ditches, and maneuver around cars, motorcycle taxis, bicycles, pedestrians and even the odd cow, goat or chicken. The other day I braced myself for a new "adventure", actually a "fearventure" as I needed to cross a very busy road to get more wifi data. It's a bit like those bumper car arcades, except here we try to avoid "knocking" anyone or getting "knocked" ourselves. So far so good...nothing and no one has been injured in the telling of this story! I'm delighted to tell you that Resonate Global Mission has given me the go ahead to purchase a vehicle. It will be comforting to drive in a newer, more reliable vehicle.



Life here is not all "song and dance," but sometimes it is! I've enjoyed learning about some of the music and dances from different cultural groups in Uganda. I was able to host Joan Norman from the CRCNA USA office and we enjoyed a colourful evening performance at the Ndere Cultural Centre along with a dinner of traditional dishes including matoke (green bananas steamed in banana leaves) with groundnut (peanut) sauce.



The star of the show, completely unrehearsed, was the child who went MIA (missing in action) during the part of the show when children from the audience were invited down for a special activity.

Recently, I was honoured to attend the burial of the mother of Dr. wa Kitavi, our Regional Director, on behalf of Resonate Global Mission. Ndila wa Kitavi's story is a remarkable one. She was a practitioner of African traditional religion, and she served as a "priest" in her village for many years before becoming a Christian at the age of 80. Her story is one of being transformed by God's power and grace.

And I also witness those transformations as I live and work here. Paddy, a school principal who attended training in May has become so convinced that discipline needs to be done in a different way, that he invited me to partner with him and we conducted a one day workshop with all his staff. "I want children to know that even when they misbehave they are loved and valued by God."

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