



Jensen Missions

Africa Mail

George & Joy Jensen
P.O. Box 12519 Meru
Arusha
Tanzania
East Africa

Support Mail

Jensen Mission Fund
P.O. Box 41
Dyer, AR 72935

Electronic Mail:

Web sites

www.jensenmissions.com
www.alifeofjoy.blogspot.com
www.mytb.org/George-and-Joy
www.life-with-linz.blogspot.com

George & Joy, Julia, Jacob, Luke, Lindsey

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Seminar at Kisongo

The Kisongo congregation, close to ACSOP, hosted a two day seminar Saturday and Sunday, February 20 and 21. Jacob, Luke and Lindsey went Saturday morning, and George and I joined them after a Bible class with a recent convert. Sean Hochdorf taught the Sunday morning Bible class on the Home. There are many areas in which many Tanzanians need improvement, and certainly the dynamics of home life is no exception. It is very common for husbands to beat their wives, and so that is one topic that the missionaries must address over and over again.

George preached two lessons on Sunday. His assigned topics were "Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage", as well as "Does the Bible Speak About Abortion?" He was also asked to address the idea about whether or not Christians can use abortion as a method for family planning. His lesson on abortion was right after lunch and the room was warm and stuffy, but no one fell asleep. Abortion is a huge problem here. It is against the law in Tanzania, except in such circumstances in which the mother's life is in danger. However, there are many "butcher shops" and the law is pretty much ignored, by both government and civilians. Sadly, the blood from innocent babies is crying out from the ground in Tanzania, as in many other parts of the world.



A Sunday in Kioga

Last Sunday, the 28th of February, we made our usual last Sunday of the month visit to the Kioga congregation. It was a beautiful Sunday morning, with a pleasant view of the green hills at the foot of Mt. Meru.

There was a large crowd. When a loved one dies, it is customary to accompany the family wherever they worship. Very recently an elderly man died, and his wife attends Kisongo; therefore, a number of friends and family visited on this particular Sunday.

Due to the big crowd, there were not enough cups to serve everyone the fruit of the vine, during the Lord's Supper. When all the cups were empty, they took the tray to the front of the room, where apparently there was already a bucketful of water, behind the podium. The empty cups were put into the water, and as we sat silently, we heard swish, swish, as the cups were "rinsed", and then they were put back into the tray and filled once more. There were a number of people present who had deep chest coughs, and so once again we were reminded of how fortunate we have been to enjoy good health the majority of the time.

The following article is a post Lindsey recently made on her blog.



Keeping Up Appearances

...Today has been so busy...milk, sweeping, mopping, cleaning, laundry, making bread...I'm glad to have a chance to sit down for a bit. Mom and I were talking the other day about something, and I thought it might make an interesting blog.

I have let myself go in the area of appearance and such. Really. Of course appearances aren't everything...we should be more concerned with what's on the inside - but when it goes too far the other way, that's not good either. This is somewhat of a struggle for me...I'm not sure if I'll be able to adequately put it into words, but I'll give it a try.

Living here doesn't lend itself to prettying you up. People look at us differently here {of course} - we're not natives, we live in a different kind of house, in general we have more money than they do, and we're white. Since people look at us so differently already (we're the ones "Oh, from Amerika!"), I don't dress myself up as much as I would in the States. I don't want to seem to be saying "look at me!" with my more "fancy" (I use that term loosely) American things.

I wear flip flops quite literally everywhere I go. Each morning my hair goes straight up in a clip. My daily attire consists of a big t-shirt (Most of them are hand-me downs), and an old skirt or kanga I got from the market, or stretch pants.

Sometimes I stop and actually look at myself...what happened? It didn't happen overnight, but because three years of being with people who mostly have only a tattered, stained kanga, or tattered, stained pants to wear with a ragged, stained shirt, maybe some shoes, maybe not. Even so, I don't have to look like a cave woman!

So I resolve to wear some earrings {Hey, I've worked up to studs!}, and maybe put some lotion on my feet, but the next Sunday an old lady comes to sit by me. Her kanga is worn and holey, as is her shirt, her sandals are made out of old tires...and her feet. Her feet are slightly deformed from having such a hard life, her toenails are all split, and the skin so cracked they would be impossible to ever fix. Then I look down at my own feet, then back at hers...and I had been worried that mine are sometimes dirt stained or not as smooth as I'd like.

I would love to get all prettied up sometime and have somewhere to go, or have something to do that I have to get a little prettied up for. But there isn't, which is perfectly okay, but just because some around me are like that old woman, doesn't mean I should completely let myself go. I'm trying to do better, but I look at that old woman's feet, and it's a strange, mixed feeling. I want to do better with myself, but as I look back at the old woman smiling at me with her toothless smile, I wonder...how can I? ~Linz~



Over the past number of weeks I have been working two days a week with brother Ahimidiwe Kimaro. Ahimidiwe is a preacher at the congregation in Kisongo. Together, we have been going out on Thursdays and Saturdays teaching non-Christians and trying to visit and encourage week Christians.

Each person and lesson presents different challenges. For instance, one young couple we have studied with presents a great challenge, in that neither of them can read nor write. So, great patience is needed to help them understand each concept that is taught. We are also studying with the wife of one of the members at the Kisongo congregation. Her husband has also been studying with her, but she is a Lutheran so she has many denominational ideas to overcome.

Every day is different and interesting. Please keep this work in your prayers, so that many lives will be touched and changed for everlasting good. **Jacob**