

Louisa Duke
Sunday, June 29, 2008
Subject: Summer at Namwianga

Kamwamba (hello)!

I hope you are all enjoying your summer. Summers here at Namwianga are full of visitors and several medical mission trips. During the middle of May we were blessed with a visit from Meagan's cousins and brother along with an early group who came to prepare for north reach medical mission. In that group was Meredith White, a college friend of mine, who has come over for the entire summer. Meredith and I spent a lot of time praying together in college about future opportunities for service in Africa, and it's a blessing to get to spend this time with her. God is so good. She decided to go on north reach with all of us, and she is spending her time here at Namwianga blessing the orphans and working with other projects including helping Meagan and me with the Sunday school class. I thank God for the friends like Meredith, Deidre, and Ashley (my cousin) who have been able to join Meagan and me in the work here, each for a few months. They have encouraged us and greatly contributed to the work here.

Most of you have heard about north reach medical mission. For those of you who don't know, it was a mission effort begun several years ago to start planting more churches in the Northern province of Zambia. My Dad joined up with Roy Merritt to bring over Americans every summer to work along with Zambians on north reach. It is a two week adventure in which we camp out for 9 days straight, have 8 clinic days in nearby villages, and have a daily vbs with hundreds of children. Zambian preachers and teachers come along and hold Bible studies with the patients while they wait for medical treatment. God has done amazing things through this effort, and this year was no exception.

The early north reach crew from the states was great to work with. After we purchased all the medicines, they came just in time for all the packing. I helped to organize their time here at Namwianga, which mainly included pill packing, getting ready for vbs, volunteering at the orphanages, and shadowing me in my usual medical roles here. One of the students, Samantha Stratton, is planning on becoming a PA, so it was fun to have her work with me. We met up with the rest of the Americans up north, and started our 8 clinic days on June 3. Two of my friends from college, Clint Spencer (who is now a dentist) and Susan Reiss Wicks (who is now a nurse), came this year, which was a lot of fun. I also got to work with an old Camp Tahkodah camper of mine, Christy Beagle, who I hadn't seen since she was 8 - it was great! We had a wonderful group from the states that joined up with a great group of Zambian Christians from all over the country. We saw thousands of patients in the 8 clinic days, with over 2,000 on one day (our biggest day ever). We were located near a large lake which is known for its contamination with a type of parasite that causes kidney and bladder dysfunction (schistosomiasis). Unfortunately most of the people we

treated lived near the lake, and their only source of water was this infested water that constantly made them sick. This is not something that we deal with at Namwianga, and it was sad for me to see so much of it. I've updated my picture website with more pictures from north reach including some of women and children carrying water from this lake we were by.

<http://picasaweb.google.com/louduke>

I spent the majority of my time on north reach seeing as many patients as I could in the time we had. One day I was able to break away from the steady stream and do a little teaching on HIV/AIDS to some of the students at the school where we were that day. As you know, I've been very involved in treating HIV/AIDS patients the past year through our mobile clinic. However, I haven't been able to find the time to do as much preventative teaching as I would like. Apparently things have been building up in my mind for a long time, and I just unleashed it all on those poor students that day on outreach. My fellow teacher assured me that it all went over well, and the students seemed interested. Since this incident I find myself thinking over lessons that I would love to give to other school kids. I think I've just watched too many great people suffer from something that is totally preventable. I've seen too many orphans at Namwianga suffer and die from an illness that was just given to them. All of this has started a fire inside of me to teach and try to prevent these horrible things from recurring. I'm not sure what God is going to do with this desire in me, but please pray that He will guide me in this and show me opportunities to teach

At the end of north reach we were able to go on safari at South Luangwa National Park. There are not many things I love more than getting to see God's amazing creation up close. Some highlights of the trip, and some firsts for me, were seeing lion cubs, one dead and two living hyenas, and a serval (a rare type of cat - that looks like a small leopard). Other highlights would be using regular toilets (after 9 days of latrines) and having hot showers (after 9 days of bathing in a cold river)!

Thank you for all of your prayers for north reach. Continue to pray for the churches that have been started up north through this outreach.

It was tough getting back to usual life at Namwianga when we returned from the north. Meagan and I returned to the babies at the havens to find out that several of them had been very sick when we were gone. We're thankful that we didn't lose any of them. We spent a day catching up on the medical status of each of them and making sure everyone was getting the treatment they needed. I also had to catch up on what I had missed with the HIV outreach program. I found that all of the patients were doing okay when I returned to all 4 villages, so that was a blessing. Unfortunately, on the way back from my first outreach, I began to feel sick. That night I had fever and terrible stomach pain. The next day I thought about all the mosquito bites I had gotten up north. Our camp site

was by a river where there are more mosquitoes than there are here. I decided to go up to the clinic for a malaria smear just to make sure that I didn't have it – since I had never been positive before. Well, I guess there's a first time for everything!! I even got to look at the little parasites in my blood under the slide – not a good feeling... Thankfully we had the medicine I needed and I got right on it. I was down for several days, but had a fairly light case, and I am now well – praise God! I have a little more sympathy now for the Zambians who get this all the time. All of my Zambian friends say that I am now Zambian after my first case of malaria – like a rite of passage I guess J

In my last report I asked for your prayers for my teammate, Don Oldenburg, who was diagnosed recently with throat cancer. I'm glad to report that he has responded well to the chemo treatments he received, and he is now preparing for radiation. Please continue to keep him in your prayers. Pray for complete healing, and pray that he and his wife will be able to return to their work here. I also ask for your prayers for another one of my teammates, Linda Gregersen. She and her husband, David, are in the states on furlough, and they have recently found out that Linda has breast cancer. We were thankful to hear that she is in the early stages, and we are hopeful for a quick recovery. We are all missing them here, and we pray that they will also be able to return soon.

I'm now preparing for a trip to the States for the birth of a new nephew and a time when my whole family is planning on being together. We've been pretty spread out the past few years, and this will be our first time to all be together in the past year and a half. I can't wait!! I plan on leaving here July 1st and returning early August. I hope to see as many of you as possible during that time.

Have a wonderful week!!

Louisa

A little note to my snake prayers: Thank you for your prayers this summer. A couple of our north reach group saw a viper recently, and I've seen what looked like two mambas (one green and one black) in the past few months – but there have been no bites! Our night-watchman killed the green mamba several nights ago in our back yard. Several of us decided to skin it, and we're considering making some sort of bracelets with the skin! I know this sounds strange, but it has been pretty fun, and the skin is beautiful!! Anyway, keep on praying for our safety. Thanks!