Victory magazine

Hidden With Christ Ministries
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Hidden With Christ Ministries
P.O. Box 745
Forest, VA 24551
USA

Hidden With Christ Ministries
P.O. Box 383
Moshi
TANZANIA

We would love to hear from you!

Please email us at:
info@hiddenwithchrist.org

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TIME FLIES...

by Rita Langeland

Each quarter, I travel to Tanzania to oversee the work of Hidden with Christ Ministries in that beautiful East African country. On my last trip, I was struck by the truth of the old adage, "Time flies!" I marveled at the sudden realization that it was twenty years ago (February 2003) that I first stepped off a plane at the Kilimanjaro International airport. Two faithful friends/Board members (Dr. Jon Hohmeister and Freya Mermis) accompanied me on that initial God-appointed adventure. I could not have imagined all that would transpire over the next two decades of ministry in East Africa, which were birthed out of that inaugural trip overseas. I thought it was a one-time obedience test from the Lord, but instead, I found out it was a lifetime assignment! Thank you for being a part of it all through your prayers and generous support over these many years. Only God knows the number of lives that have been changed for eternity.

As you know, with the closure of the Treasures of Africa orphanage and the restructuring of our care for orphans into a home-based model versus an institutional model - through the TOA KIDZ Project - many things have changed dramatically. First and foremost is the fact that the children who lived at Treasures of Africa Children's Home are now able to experience life in a family setting. For many, it is the first time ever, especially if they came to TOA as infants. For others, their memories of early life have long ago faded, and all they can remember is life in an orphanage. So, we are thrilled with the fact that they are now experiencing the love and security of family life. (You can read two stories about TOA KIDZ on pages 7 and 9.)

Another thing that has changed is the ministry's financial support - which has dropped considerably since the orphanage's closure. Whether that is a function of the economy or whether people mistakenly think there is no longer a need to support the TOA children, I do not know. But regardless, we need PRAYER for this issue. Hidden with Christ Ministries continues to pay all expenses related to private school/English medium education from Primary school through University level for ALL the former residents of Treasures of Africa as well as other orphans who did not live at TOA, PLUS we are sponsoring children from the foster families which have taken in the TOA KIDZ. In essence, the education budget has more than DOUBLED since we closed Treasures of Africa.

We have trusted God to supply all these many years - through drought and famine (quite literally) and God has never failed. So, I am simply asking you to agree in prayer with us for **God's provision in this current season.**

I am standing on this verse of promise which I was given years ago by a faithful intercessor:

The Lord will guide you always; He will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land,
and will strengthen your frame. You will be like a well-watered garden,
like a spring whose waters never fail.
Isaiah 58:11

May this biblical word of promise be manifested in your life as well!

I was just a young donkey colt, and I had no idea this was going to be the most important day of my life. It began like any other day in the village. My owner got up before sunrise and gave me some hay to eat and water to drink. Then he tied me to a wooden post in front of the house where I could watch the people of our village walk by.

Later in the morning, two strangers came near, and began untying me from that post. I had never seen them before. A neighbor was watching and asked them, “What are you doing untying that colt?”

One of the men answered, “The Lord needs it and will return it soon.” The neighbor nodded his head and allowed them to take me.

I wondered where I was going. I also wondered who this “Lord” was they were talking about? He sounded like someone important. Because I was still young, no one had ever ridden on my back before, but I knew I was strong enough to work. Maybe my first job was to carry an important person! That could be exciting!

Though the village I lived in was near to the city of Jerusalem, I had never been there. But today, these strangers walked with me up to the Mount of Olives. From that high place I could see the beautiful city of Jerusalem that I heard people talk about so many times.

They led me to a man who was dressed in a long white robe. He had a kind face, and a gentle voice. Someone threw a blanket over my back and the kind-faced man sat down. Now I knew why they had taken me from my home. I had been given my first job assignment. I was to carry the white-robed man into Jerusalem.

The man patted my neck as I walked down the Mount of Olives. His touch was as gentle as his voice, and I could feel his kindness as he stroked my head. He didn’t act like a big important person, but the crowds of people began to shout praises at him as if he were some kind of king.

“Praise God! Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord!” the people shouted. They took palm branches and laid them on the road for me to walk on as I carried the man.

I did not understand why the crowds were so excited to see him. But there were some people watching the procession who did not look happy. These men were dressed in fancy robes and looked important. They scowled as we passed by. They yelled out, “Teacher, command your disciples to stop saying these things!”

But the white-robed man answered, “I tell you, if these people keep quiet, the stones will cry out.”

When he said that, I was really confused. I never heard a rock say anything before.

When we arrived in the city, the white-robed man dismounted and patted me on the head one more time. I watched as he walked toward the Temple and disappeared into the crowds. I never saw him again.

One of the men who had untied me from the post in front of my house, walked me back to my village. He tied me up right where he had found me and thanked my owner. He turned and headed back to Jerusalem.

It wasn’t until a week later that I learned the kind man’s name and heard what had happened to him. His name was Jesus and some people who hated him had nailed him to a cross.

I overheard my owner as he talked with some friends. He told them, “Jesus rode my donkey colt into Jerusalem! If I had known they planned to kill him, I never would have loaned my donkey to take him there to his death!”

I tried to listen to everything that was said about Jesus. Hearing that he was dead had made me very sad. But knowing that I had been the one who carried him to the city where he lost his life, was heartbreaking.

Then a few days later, a man came running into my owner’s house shouting, “Jesus is alive!!!”

My big donkey ears perked up! How could this be, I wondered?

Out of breath, the man sputtered, “He is alive I tell you! The tomb is empty! His disciples have seen and touched him! It’s all true!”

My owner encouraged the man to sit down on the porch. He walked over to a well in the courtyard and quickly drew a cool drink of water for him. “Now tell me everything…” he said as the man caught his breath.

“I was in a meeting place with Simon Peter and the other disciples. They explained that some women from their group had gone to Jesus’ tomb early in the morning and found it was empty. They claimed to have seen angels who asked them, ‘Why are you looking for the living among the dead? Go tell the disciples He has risen just like He said.’ Simon and John ran to the tomb to see for themselves and found it empty, just like the women had told them.”

“But what does this all mean?” my owner asked his friend.

“It means Jesus really is the Son of God! And He came to offer Himself as a sacrifice on the cross to pay the price for our sins. His death and resurrection made a way for all people who would believe in Him to be forgiven and to be with God in heaven forever when we die! Do you believe that? If you do, you can become a Jesus follower too!”

“I do believe…I do believe…” my owner said softly. I am sure that I saw tears in his eyes

I stood quietly, taking in all that was said. If Jesus was the Son of God, then my first job was far more important than I could ever have imagined. And that day was more important than any day I had ever lived. I had been given the great honor of carrying God’s Son to Jerusalem, so He could carry the sins of the world on that cross. I was just a lowly donkey, but God had made me for a very special purpose. Now I understood why God had created me with a cross on my back.

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Obey God and leave all the consequences to Him.

Dr. Charles F. Stanley
Pastor and Founder of
In Touch Ministries
1932 - 2023

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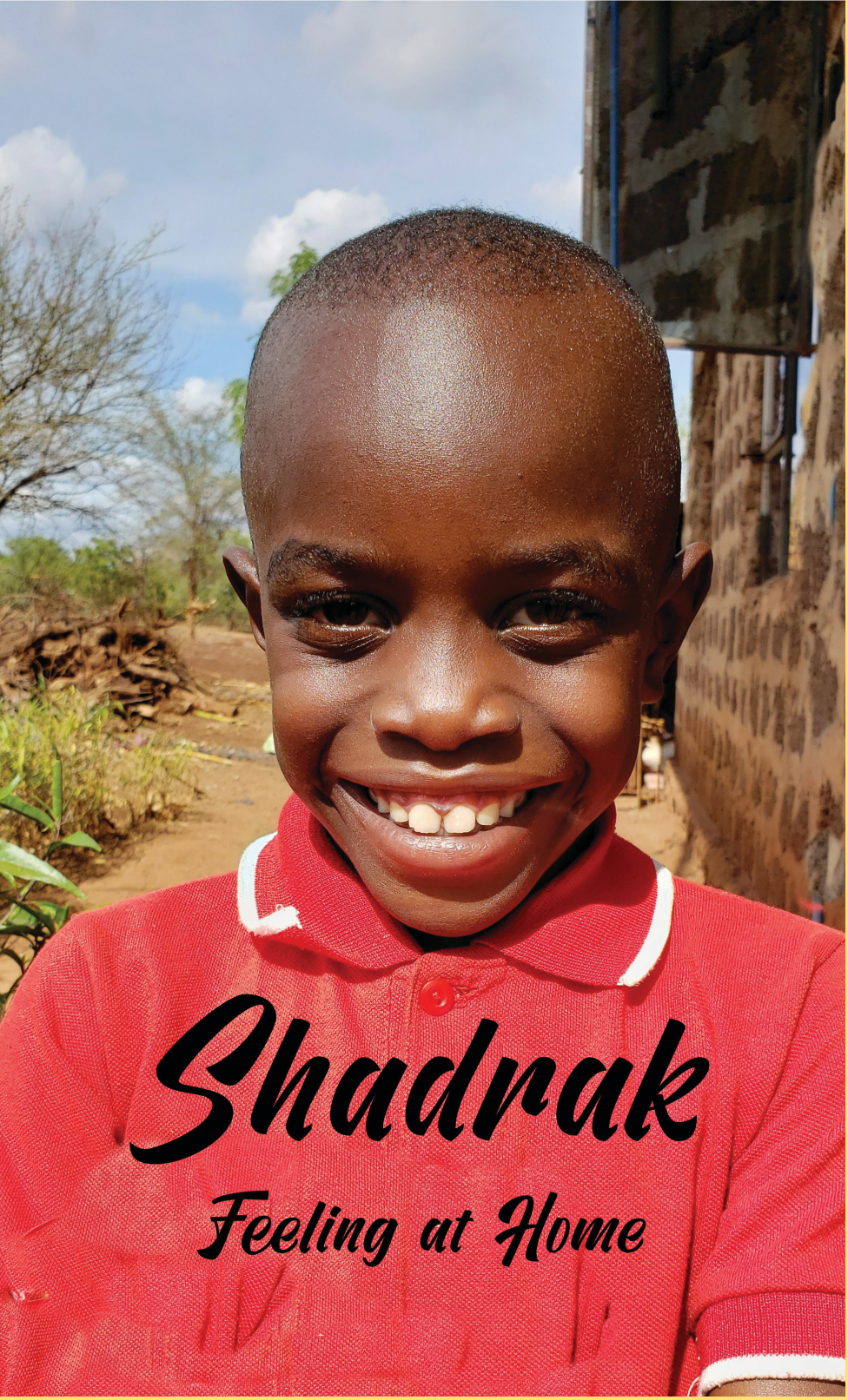


Shadrak

Feeling at Home

By Rita Langeland

When Hidden with Christ Ministries first announced the plan to place all the Treasures of Africa children into families and move them out of the orphanage, we had mixed responses from many people. Some feared for the children's safety and care level. Others mourned the fact that there would be no place called "Treasures" to visit.

But as one of our college students wisely explained to our younger students at the first TOA Reunion Christmas Banquet, "Treasures of Africa is not a building …**WE ARE THE TREASURES OF AFRICA**!" A truer statement has not been spoken.

The main goal of moving the TOA children into families was so they could experience the "normalcy" of family life. Living in an orphanage – no matter how well run – is not a normal setting for a child to grow up in. It doesn't teach family life as it should be, and the children do not receive the individual attention they all desperately need just because of the sheer numbers. We know there is no such thing as a "perfect family." But we felt strongly that a loving family – even an imperfect one – is better for a child than never experiencing family life at all.

So, it was with great anticipation and curiosity that we recently visited one of the TOA children – Shadrak – in the home where he now lives. After two full years in his foster family's home, would he seem happy and healthy? Would we be able to ascertain his comfort level in the family? That is what we were determined to discover.

We drove out to the village of Uchira, a 25-minute drive outside the city of Moshi. When we pulled up to the humble family home, we were greeted by two smiling boys. Seven-year-old Shadrak and his six-year-old foster brother, Givenlight, had run at top speed out of the house upon hearing the car drive up.

It was quickly evident that the sparkle in Shadrak's eyes had not dimmed, and the mischievous smile for which he was well-known, had not been dampened while living with his foster family.

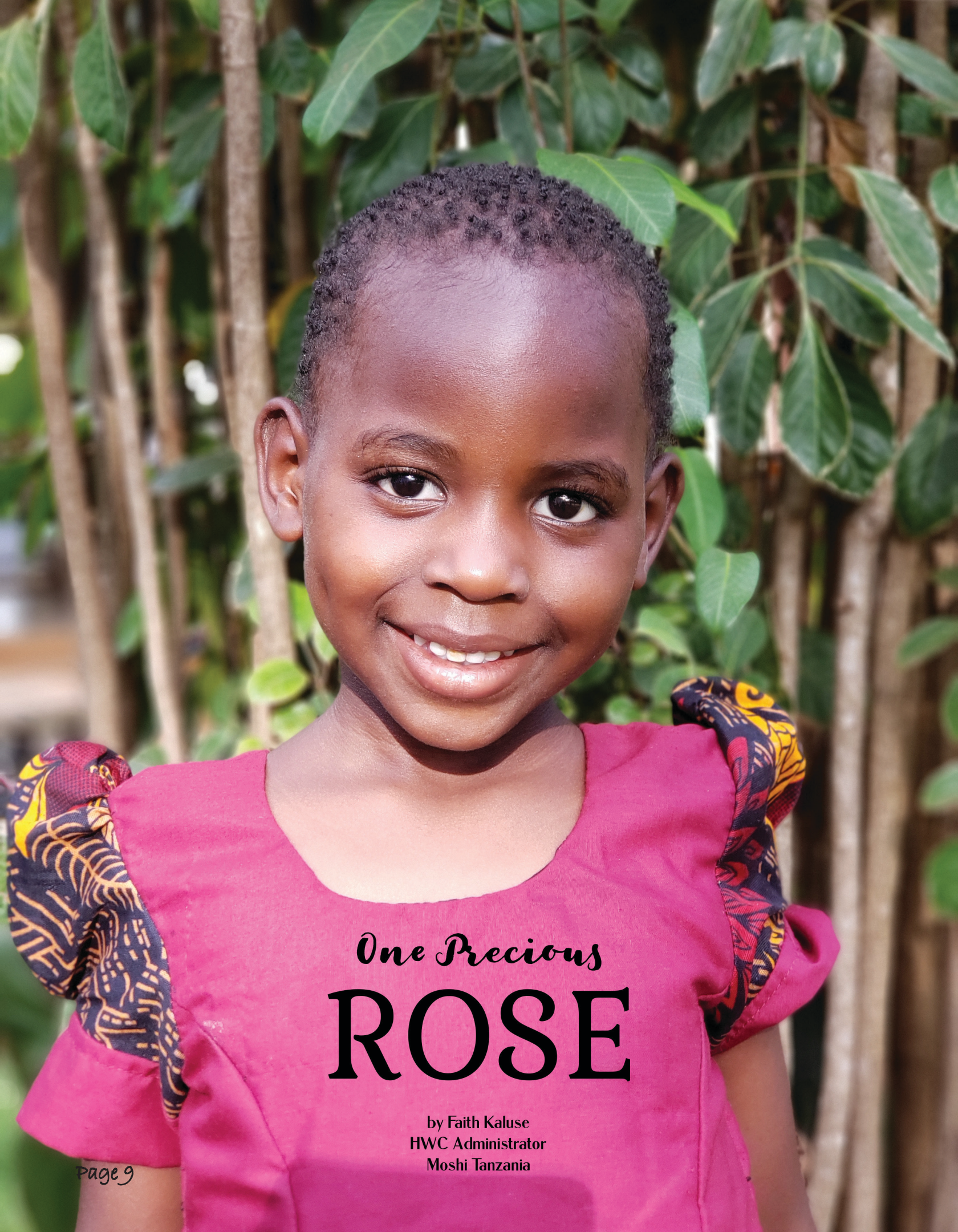
His "mom" is Elizabeth, a former caregiver at Treasures of Africa Children's Home. Upon hearing that the TOA staff could become foster parents for the orphanage kids, she had quickly stepped up to offer her home to Shadrak. Her husband, Gerni, a kind man with a ready smile, had no problem adding another boy to the family mix, as he knew that their son, Givenlight, was close in age to Shadrak. They were certain that the boys would become great playmates, and time has proven that to be the case.

Above: *Shadrak with his Foster family*
Left: *Dr. Fidelis Owenya and Pastor Geoffrey Kioko help carry in groceries to Shadrak's family*

A member of our Tanzanian Board of Trustees, Dr. Owenya, and our Kenyan colleague Pastor Kioko, both accompanied me on this home visit. These two men were founding members of Hidden with Christ Ministries in Tanzania and they too wanted confirmation of the success of the foster parent program for the TOA kids. We had carried a large gift of food staples for the family, which had been paid for by Shadrak's education sponsors. They had read that food prices in Tanzania had risen dramatically and thought some extras would help the young family. Shadrak's foster parents rejoiced to receive this unexpected gift.

While we sat and talked with the family, Pastor Kioko took the opportunity to walk outside to speak privately with Shadrak. He questioned Shadrak about how he felt living with his foster family. Shadrak responded enthusiastically and expressed his happiness about living there. Then Pastor Kioko asked, "Are you sure you don't want us to take you back to Moshi?" "NO!!!!" Shadrak replied with wide eyes, "I want to stay here!!!" Pastor Kioko smiled and reassured him that he could relax - this was now his forever family.

As we drove back to Moshi in silence, a wave of relief washed over me. Our dream was to see the "treasures" feeling loved and secure in a family they could call their own. As far as Shadrak is concerned, that dream has come true.



One Precious ROSE

by Faith Kaluse
HWC Administrator
Moshi Tanzania

In a small town in Tanzania that borders its northern neighbor, Kenya, a tiny baby was born. The little girl was premature, and the mother was ill. She died of a heart attack shortly after giving birth. The baby stayed in the hospital for two months, gaining strength. But the man believed to be her father was a drunkard, and unfit to care for a premature infant, who had no mother to nurse her.

When the hospital had done all they could do, and no one came to claim the motherless child, the government Welfare officials were contacted. The only orphanage in the area was filled to capacity, and they refused to take another baby. So, the Welfare officers looked further south. Treasures of Africa Children's Home, in the town of Moshi, was suggested to them.

At the time, Treasures of Africa had one more spot available for a baby. When little Rose was brought to Treasures of Africa on August 18th, 2017, she was two months old, yet she was smaller than a two-week-old infant we had at the time! With lots of loving care and good nutrition, baby Rose grew and gained strength.

FAST FORWARD – TO 2023....

Rose with her foster sister Jenister at school

Rose is now five years old. She will turn six in June. She attends kindergarten at an excellent private school, Kibo Shanty Primary Academy. Her school progress keeps improving. Her teacher is very proud of her. When I went to visit her at school to inquire about her academic progress, Rose's teacher told me that Rose is a great leader, and her classmates love her so much. She has been guiding and managing her peers in following the rules and procedures of the classroom. She makes sure no one is making noise in the class.

In 2021, when the Treasures of Africa staff were offered the chance to become foster parents for the TOA children, a longtime caregiver, named Juliana, stepped forward. She had worked faithfully for more than ten years at TOA. She and her husband were willing to take in Rose, who was close in age to their daughter.

Rose now lives in a village called Mailisita with her foster family. Juliana and her husband, Yona, have accepted Rose as a member of the family. They have a daughter whose name is Jenister, and she attends the same school with Rose. Jenister and Rose are not only good friends, but they have embraced each other as sisters. Rose's teacher told me that the foster family has been meeting with her to follow Rose's school progress frequently.

Rose loves her foster family and is happy to be a part of this family. I was so happy and impressed with the loving bond that Rose has built with her new family over the past (almost) two years.

The foster family program has given the former Treasures of Africa residents the chance to live in a normal family setting instead of the orphanage. This shift has brought a positive impact to the children's lives as it has given them a chance to experience a home environment with a loving family where they have father, mother, brothers and sisters and other extended family members.

We are so grateful to all the supporters of the TOA KIDZ program who help us pay the education expenses for the former TOA residents and the children of their foster families, like Jenister. None of these children would be able to attend these good schools without the help of the TOA KIDZ supporters!

You can DONATE to the TOA KIDZ Project online at www.treasuresofafrica.org or by scanning this QR code to the right:

Scan to Give!

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The Sin of Innocent Bloodshed

by Dr. Marcia Chang Vogl

I am a diminutive person, less than five feet tall and under a hundred pounds dripping wet. My mother told me that when I was a toddler, all the other kids my age were about twice my size. When they pushed me around, as children will, I fought back by biting their arms. I had a fierce spirit and a loud voice, so I would fend for myself by being the boss.

Years later, in a graduate class of about twenty students, the students were asked to introduce themselves, giving their name, hometown, and why they were in this course. I had no fear of speaking in public, but, when my turn came, I was suddenly tongue-tied. I could not remember my name, hometown, nor why I was there. After gentle prompting by the instructor, I managed to blurt out something that might have made sense. That evening, as I was doing the homework, I became puzzled over that scene. It did not make any sense to me, as I was an experienced speaker. I had taught at the college level and had even conducted a 150-person chorus and orchestra.

"Holy Spirit," I prayed, "what was that all about in class? What kept me from just giving my name, city, and why I was there?"

"The spirit of intimidation lurks."

The Holy Spirit revealed that the spirit of intimidation had attached itself to me, and it would do its paralyzing work when I least expected it. To get free of this attachment, I needed to repent and forgive.

First, I forgave all the people who had intimidated me in the past. I forgave grandparents and teachers, dates and bosses, even waiters in restaurants.

I then repented of all the times I had intimidated others, including my cousins, my children, students, and even service personnel in my home.

Then I repented of holding resentment in my heart when intimidated by others. By repenting and forgiving, I removed any sin that gave the spirit of intimidation any right to operate in my life. I was set free from even perceiving that I was being intimidated. I received new confidence.

To this day, when intimidation tries to grip me, I can ward off the attack. Intimidation is a form of innocent bloodshed that causes you, in turn, to intimidate others.

Prayer Exercise:

Repent: Make a list of those whom you abused at any time in your life. Include behaviors in which you bullied anyone (for example, making your sister cry); when you used rage to control others; if you called others names to their faces or behind their backs; when you played pranks that put others to shame; or if you used obscenities against anyone. You may have thought that you were just expressing your frustration, when in fact, you were opening doors for innocent bloodshed in the form of intimidation.

Pray this: "Lord, I repent of my sin of innocent bloodshed especially...(read your list). As I repent and forgive, you are merciful and just to forgive me. Thank you for closing the door of the sin of innocent bloodshed in my life."

Forgive: Make a list of people who have abused you in any way. Forgive anyone or anything that abused you, or that you perceive abused you, at any time in your life. Include teachers, coaches, parents, grandparents, relatives, neighbors, other students, bosses, and anybody who harmed or offended you. Remember, you live by perception, so if you believe someone abused you, add them to your list. This is not the time to analyze whether or not they abused you.

Intimidation is a form of innocent bloodshed that causes you, in turn, to intimidate others.

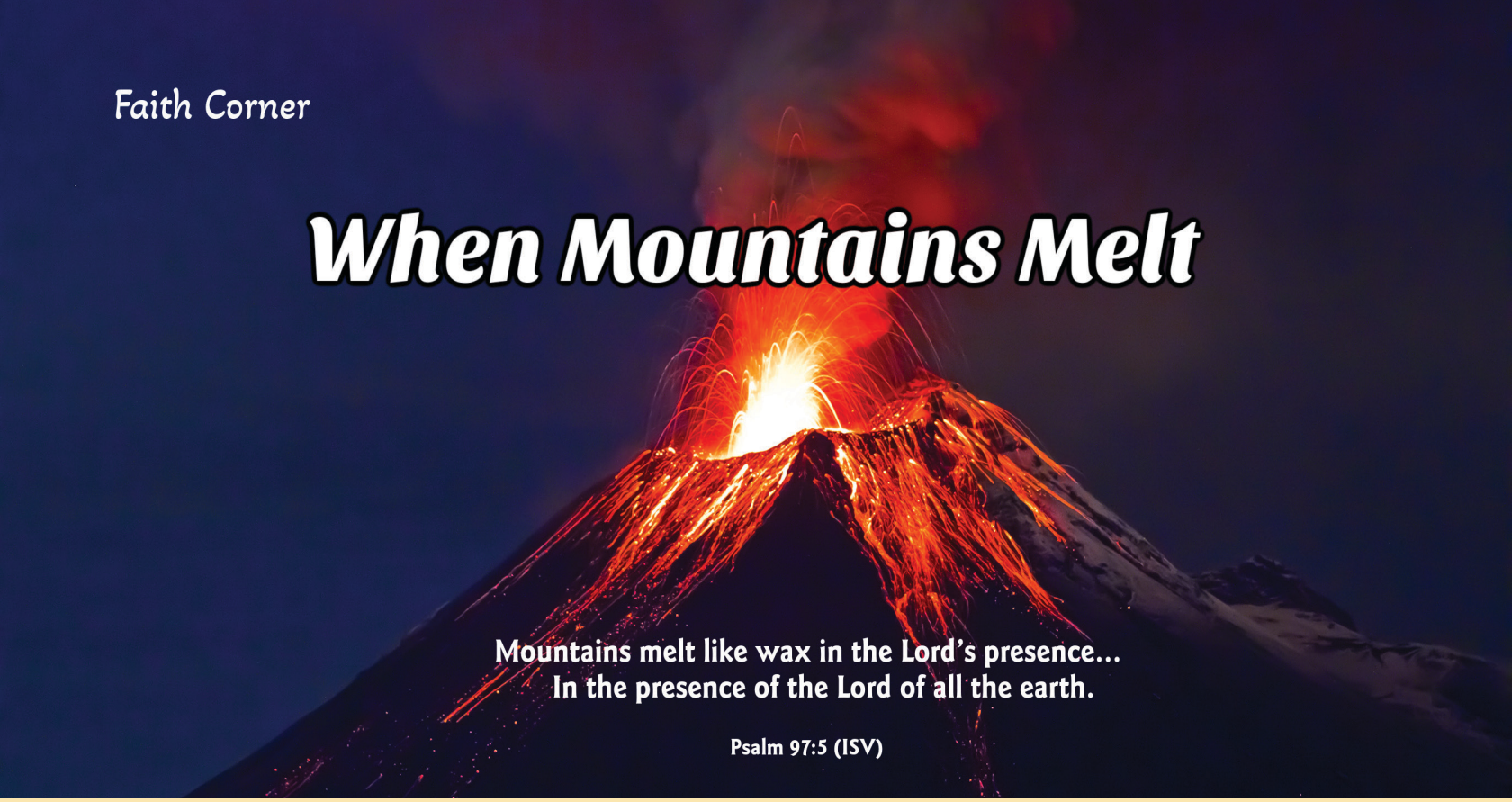
Pray this: "Lord I forgive .... (read your list) for abusing me in the past. They owe me nothing: no restitution, no apology, no reasons, no explanation, and no excuses. I release them 100%."

You may think this did not affect you if you have not suffered any major consequences. On the other hand, you do not know what blessings you missed, or were blocked from you.

Be vigilant. Keep repenting and forgiving until you are set free. If you continue to be abused, get yourself out of harm's way as best you can. Keep your heart clean so the Lord can supernaturally move on your behalf.

Excerpt from ***Dancing With God, The Christian Journey to Live Supernaturally***, by Marcia Chang Vogl. Copyright©2021. Dr. Vogl has many years of experience in prayer counseling through her ministry – Bethany Projects. She conducts appointments by Skype or Zoom and does not charge for her services. If you need spiritual help, you can contact her by email at marcia.prayer@gmail.com. Her books are available on www.amazon.com.

When Mountains Melt



Have you ever faced a mountain in your life that appeared impossible to overcome? I believe everyone on the earth has faced such an obstacle. But the Lord has not left us without help or hope in dealing with the mountains we all face.

The writer of Psalm 97 – believed by Bible scholars to be King David – described the power that is demonstrated when God's presence comes on the scene.

Fire goes out from his presence to consume his enemies on every side.
His lightning bolts light the world; the earth sees and shakes.
Mountains melt like wax in the Lord's presence —
In the presence of the Lord of all the earth.
Psalm 97:3-5

I always applied this verse LITERALLY – thinking that if God came and walked on this fallen earth again – the conditions described in Psalm 97 would surely be demonstrated before our very eyes.

But one day while meditating on those words *"Mountains melt like wax at the presence of the Lord"…* this illumination from the Holy Spirit came into my spirit – what about the mountains I am facing…would they be able to stand if brought into God's presence? The answer seemed obvious - CERTAINLY NOT! They would have to melt like wax in the presence of the Lord – the Lord of the whole earth!

Consider the following real-life example from the Old Testament.

Hezekiah, the King of Judah, was being threatened by the King of Assyria who announced he was about to invade Jerusalem. He had his army camped right outside the city gates. He then sent messengers with a threatening letter warning King Hezekiah NOT TO TRUST THE LORD to rescue the Israelites from his hand. After reading the message, King Hezekiah brought the mountain he was facing into the presence of the Lord.

14 After Hezekiah received the letter from the messengers and read it, he went up to the Lord's Temple and spread it out before the Lord. 15 And Hezekiah prayed this prayer before the Lord: "O Lord, God of Israel, you are enthroned between the mighty cherubim! You alone are God of all the kingdoms of the earth. You alone created the heavens and the earth. 16 Bend down, O Lord, and listen! Open your eyes, O Lord, and see! Listen to Sennacherib's words of defiance against the living God. 19 Now, O Lord our God, rescue us from his power; then all the kingdoms of the earth will know that you alone, O Lord, are God."
(2 Kings 19:14-16;19 NLT)

King Hezekiah brought the mountain he was facing into God's presence when he spread that letter out before the Lord. Because he did so, God responded with a miraculous deliverance which we find described in 2 Kings 19:35-36 -

35 That night the angel of the Lord went out to the Assyrian camp and killed 185,000 Assyrian soldiers. When the surviving Assyrians woke up the next morning, they found corpses everywhere. 36 Then King Sennacherib of Assyria broke camp and returned to his own land. He went home to his capital of Nineveh and stayed there.

We can also observe an example of the Lord "melting a mountain" in the New Testament. Jesus had been preaching to a large crowd all day and his disciples came to him and presented the mountain they were facing.

When evening came, the disciples came to Him and said, "This is a desolate place, and the hour is already late. Dismiss the crowds so they can go to the villages and buy themselves some food."

"They do not need to go away," Jesus replied. "You give them something to eat." "We have here only five loaves of bread and two fish," they answered.

"Bring them here to Me," Jesus said. And He directed the crowds to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, He spoke a blessing. Then He broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the people.

They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over. About five thousand men were fed, in addition to women and children. (Matthew 14:15-21)

The disciples brought the mountain to the Lord and He melted it until it was no more.

Take this principle from Psalm 97 and apply it to the mountains you are facing in your life. BRING THE MOUNTAIN INTO GOD'S PRESENCE IN PRAYER. Sit before the Lord like King Hezekiah did. Lay the problem before Him. His presence will begin to melt the mountain on your behalf. Wisdom will be given to you and supernatural intervention will begin to remove the mountain.

But there is one more important step to follow. DO NOT PICK UP THE MOUNTAIN and carry it with you out of God's presence. Leave it there…and allow the Lord to "melt it" on your behalf!

Watch this message by Rita Langeland on YouTube! Scan the code or visit: www.youtube.com/@hwcm

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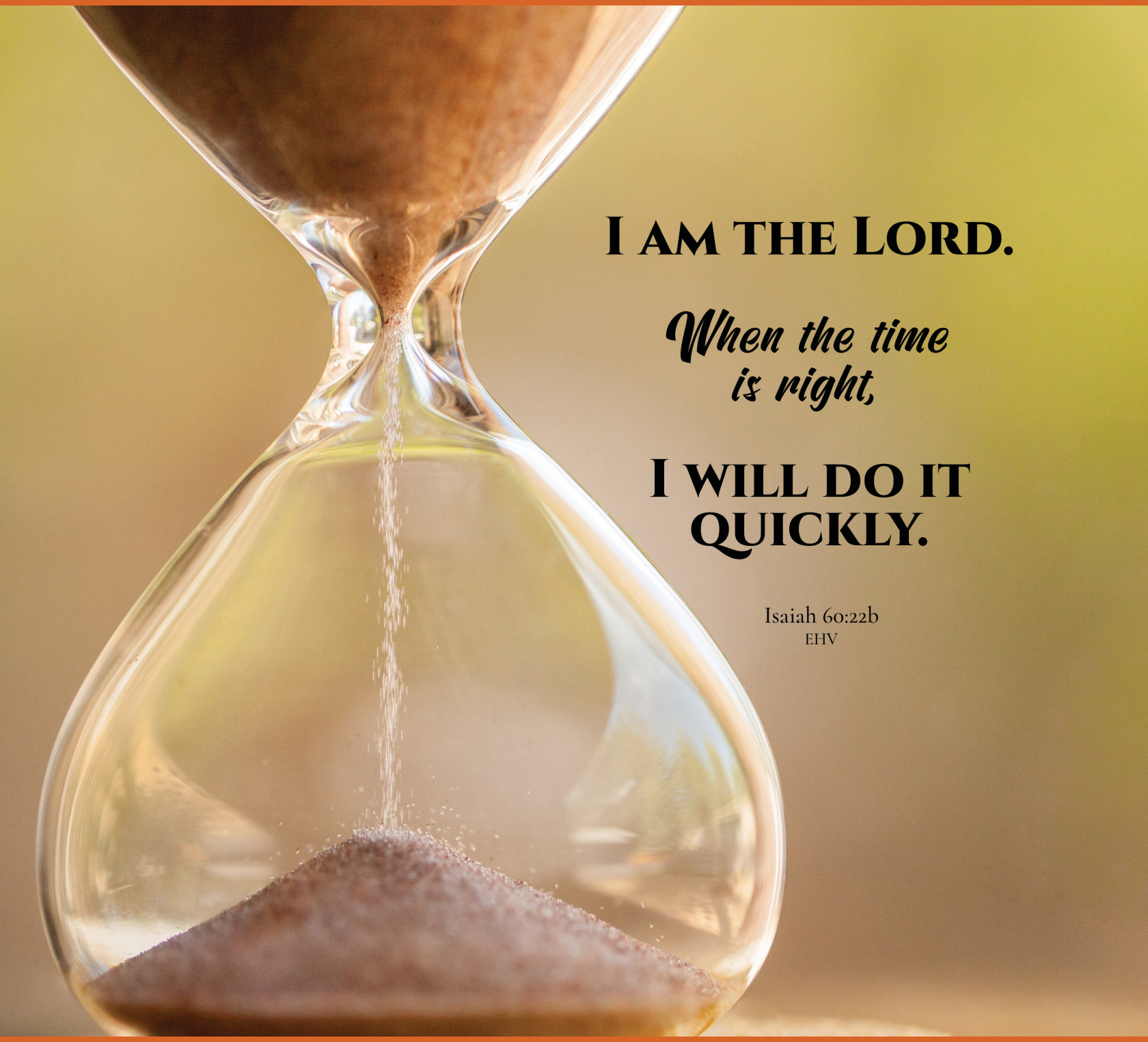
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