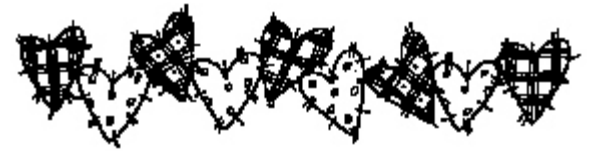


HeartBeats



Service From the Heart Since 1984

We're home - and we have LOTS to tell you about our trip to Zambia! There's SO much to share - the easiest thing to do will be to let you read some of Sharon and Stephanie's travel journal entries -

Thursday, May 30

Stephanie: Well we're off! I'm still feeling a little nervous, not knowing what is to come. This trip is different than Russia since I don't know anyone personally that's been there. Once again, I'm trusting God to take care of everything! The plane ride wasn't so bad. We didn't have anyone sitting next to us, so we were pretty comfortable. I'M GOING TO AFRICA!!!

Friday, May 31

Sharon: We arrived in London ahead of schedule, and breezed through Customs.

Stephanie: Our hotel is beautiful! It's just what I had imagined. Picture perfect, there's even moss growing on the roof and a pond with swans and ducks in it! I love hearing the people talk.

Sharon: Kathy (a friend who lives in Luton) arrived at the hotel at about 1:00 - we had a nice visit over lunch at the hotel before striking out on our own to see what we could of London in a few hours!

Stephanie: Everything was so amazing!! We saw so much. Poor Sharon, I had her running around like crazy! First, the Tower Fortress, then the Parliament Building, Big Ben, Westminster Abbey, St. James Park, Buckingham Palace, Covent Garden, etc. We didn't get back to the hotel until 11:15, and dropped into bed!

Saturday, June 1

Sharon: We were up EARLY - 5:00am! We had to be at the airport at 7:30 - and it was CRAZY! They were SO disorganized and understaffed that it's a wonder we ever left London!

Stephanie: We're off to Zambia!! Yikes, this is the real thing! All I can think about are mosquitoes!! I know I shouldn't be frightened, but I am. God is so good though, He allowed me to meet some people that have been missionaries in Africa for 25 years! They gave me some comfort.



Zamcom Hostel with Friends

Sharon: It's LATE when we arrive in Kitwe - we're way behind schedule! Fortunately, Edward hadn't given up hope, and was there with a welcoming party. We arrived at the Zamcom Hostel around 10:00pm (after getting lost for an hour!). We were tired - and HUNGRY - and not a McDonalds in sight! So - we opened a package of McVitties Digestives (some cookies I got from Kathy in London), and had them for dinner!

Sunday, June 2

Stephanie: We woke to get ready and found that there was no hot water for showers, so I didn't even take one! I have to wear the same clothes as yesterday anyway. I'm enjoying Edward's company - he is so encouraging and uplifting. The bus ride was VERY long - and the bus was PACKED! (They don't leave until the bus is full - so it left behind schedule!) We stopped only once to take a toilet break. That was an experience in itself. Thank God for tissue and antibacterial gel! Everyone was happy to see us when we FINALLY arrived in Kitwe!

Silent Voices believes that God is the Author of life, that all human life is valuable - born and preborn - and that abortion is never the answer to an unplanned, "crisis" pregnancy. We are dedicated to giving compassionate, practical assistance to women experiencing unplanned pregnancies, providing accurate information about the realities and possible consequences of abortion, and offering help, hope and healing through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ to women already struggling with the trauma of abortion.

Sharon: What a blessing it is to see Barbra - and to meet Isaac, their new baby! After spending hours in prayer for his safe delivery, it's wonderful to be here holding this precious miracle! He was all smiles and giggles - such a sweet baby! Their oldest boy, Alpha, is quiet and shy. We talked for hours - and it was good. I needed to "clear the air" and apologize to them for what happened after Barbra returned to Zambia from the US four years ago. (Another missionary got involved in what Barbra was trying to do in Kitwe, and tried very hard to break off her relationship with us so that Barbra would work for her - under her authority.) Barbra and Edward shared how hard that time had been for them - and how confused they had been about what happened. They spent many hours in prayer - and often cried themselves to sleep. I praise God that they didn't give up - that they continued to follow Jesus as they struggled to "birth" Silent Voices in Kitwe. I really felt that a burden had been lifted after we talked. As we got ready for bed I realized that I already had two mosquito bites - and they itch! Edward tried to encourage me by saying that "all mosquitos don't have malaria" - I wondered how he can tell the difference between those that do and those that don't!?



Barbra with Isaac - at home

Monday, June 3

Stephanie: Sharon's parents called at 6:30 am and woke everyone up. We both couldn't go back to sleep so we just laid there a while until we could muster up enough energy to get up. There is no hot water and no shower. We will have to heat water on the stove and sponge bath! This will be like a long camping trip! At least they have a toilet that flushes!! Wow! Nothing like washing your hair in cold water to wake you up in the morning! After eating breakfast we opened up our suitcases with all the stuff that we brought for them. They were so excited, it was like Christmas! They were very thankful. I'm so convicted, to hear and see how little they have and how they try to get the stuff they need. My trash is their treasure! Lord forgive me.

Sharon: We went in to the Center and met the volunteers and staff - they were SO eager to meet us in person! There are wonderful ladies with BIG hearts!



Sharon and Stephanie at entrance to Center Compound

Stephanie: This was supposed to be our rest day, but we did a lot. First, we went to the center. I was very impressed by what I saw. They have done so much with so little time/resources. They all seem to love what they do. They are well organized and have great plans. I see how God has worked and is continuing to work. We also went to the bank, the grocery store and the internet café to email home. I am missing everyone so much. I wanted to cry, but I held myself together. After dinner, Edward and a man from their church hung mosquito nets over our beds so we wouldn't be so paranoid about mosquitos at night.

Sharon: After the mosquito nets went up, we sat and talked about how Edward and Barbra met (they've known each other since primary school), and Zambian customs and traditions. Edward told us that if a woman dies during childbirth, it means that the husband had an affair. The woman's family can get so mad that they can kill the husband - and it's only been recently that the government has done anything about it! On the other hand, if a woman has a breech birth, it means that she had the affair, and most often she is left to die rather than delivering by c-section! Edward also shared that Zambians prefer to have girls, because that means that they will be wealthy when the girls get married, as each daughter usually brings six cows!

Tuesday, June 4

Stephanie: Today we went to an interdenominational prayer meeting and I shared my testimony. WOW, is all I have to say! I sort of felt like I was on a TV evangelist show! The women were shouting, singing, and praising the Lord. It was like nothing I've ever seen! They do this for hours! (We got there at 9:00am, and left at 3:00pm, and some of the women were still there!) Many of the women were weeping as we spoke of abortion and what it does. I have a feeling that the center is going to see a lot of these women in the near future.

Sharon: At dinner (we took them to a Chinese restaurant), Edward and Barbra shared that they don't agree with everything that goes on at the prayer meeting we attended today - but they feel the need to be present and visible, since so many women in Kitwe attend this meeting every week.

Wednesday, June 5

Stephanie: We spent the day at the Center seeing clients - we saw nine women! I won't go into everyone's story, but I do want to share one. Rebecca was so depressed that she tried to kill herself a month ago! (She had an abortion in 1985, and has been depressed ever since.) We shared the Gospel with her and she received Jesus! It's just for these times that I keep on going! Another appointment didn't turn out as well - it was really sad. We spoke with a girl who was 18, had just graduated from High School, and was 4 months pregnant. She has tried twice to abort this baby, but has been unsuccessful! She didn't come to hear about how to keep the baby, she told us she has already made up her mind - she will have an abortion! It's so hard when you try to share all you can and people still don't want to listen. But, God is in control and we have to trust His plan.

Sharon: Isaac woke up crying, with a fever - he doesn't look like his normal, cheerful self. As the day progressed it became obvious that he was sick, so Barbra took him for a malaria test - and it was positive! They didn't want to leave him at the hospital (it's expensive, and she's breast feeding), so they picked up the medication and brought him home. They had planned to take him to a friend's house who's a nurse for the injections he would need through the night - but both Stephanie and I have medical training, and we gave the injections instead.

Stephanie: Despite the busy-ness of the day and Isaac being sick, we still went to the mid week Bible Study! We were a little late, but Eddie said that they would be very disappointed if we didn't go. After the Study many wanted to talk to us, sadly it was mostly to ask for money or materials so that they could minister more effectively. It was hard to tell them "no" - but we already feel that we should be doing more for Silent Voices, and we can't because we don't have more money to give them. They have to be our first priority.

Thursday, June 6

Sharon: We both found bugs in our beds this morning! I had a BIG dead spider in mine, and Stephanie had a cockroach by her pillow. YUCK! We're going to spend the day at the Center again today.

Stephanie: I have a new appreciation for Sharon, Kaye and Linda. I don't think I could do this every day. It takes a lot out of you! I guess that's where you know that certain people are definitely called by God. There is always someone to see, someone who needs help or needs something. I'm exhausted! Tonight we helped with dinner. We also did the dishes - I washed, and Sharon dried. They asked us why we were boiling water to do the dishes! They never knew that using cold water wasn't sufficient!



At the Market

Sharon: We went to the market after leaving the office. Everywhere we go we see young boys who are obviously living on the streets, trying to earn money by selling all sorts of things. One man we've met has expressed concern that in the future these young boys might resort to violence to get what they want - and I can see why he's concerned. After dinner we played "Go Fish" with Edward and Alpha - it was fun!

Friday, June 7

Stephanie: We started the day by visiting the Trans-Africa Theological College, where Edward and Barbra went to school. It was quite a distance from town and I couldn't believe that they used to have to walk to and from town! Even with a car it was difficult because of the terrible condition of the roads! Along the way we got to see some "compounds" - this is where the people are living in clay houses with tin or grass roofs or grass huts. There is no running water and no electricity. They have to buy their water from a water kiosk. You begin to understand why their life span is so short. Life here is difficult.



A typical compound

Sharon: This afternoon we met with a group of students from a private middle school who have formed an "Abstinence Club" - there are about 40 members. We were told by a pastor at the College that 80% of the girls at this school already have AIDS! Edward talked about abortion, and led them in a discussion about it - he's a gifted teacher!

(continued) The girls were very interested in the topic because one of their friends from school just died from an abortion last week. (We were told that every day there are news reports of babies being left after an abortion - discarded like trash - and of women who have died from an abortion.) When we got home we found out that Lawrence - Barbra's brother - was home sick with malaria. He assured us that it was "normal - nothing to worry about - everyone gets it." No one takes prophylactic medication - and if my experience with it is any indication of the side effects, I can kind of understand why! I've been SO sick! But - there's NO way I'm going to stop taking them - it's obvious that the mosquitos in this neighborhood DO carry malaria!



Abstinence Club

Saturday, June 8

Sharon: Another early morning - today we were up at 5:00am for Silent Voices' Prayer Breakfast! While we were told it started at 7:00am, most who came arrived at 8:00-8:30 - Zambian time runs about an hour later than "real" time. They had hoped for 50, and 70 actually came! Edward introduced me as "Silent Voices' International Director" and asked me to share how the ministry started - what an honor! (I had a hard time with this title - and asked Edward to stop introducing me this way. He told me that "the TRUTH is that Silent Voices IS an international ministry, and that YOU ARE the International Director. You didn't seek this title or position - it was given to you by God - so accept it!") After the breakfast we went to the official dedication of the building Silent Voices occupies - and owns! A pastor prayed while we surrounded the building and laid hands on it. I unveiled a plaque and cut the ribbon to the front door, and then everyone came in and saw what God had done! Someone started singing and everyone joined in - it was AWESOME!

Sunday, June 9

Stephanie: We went to Edward's church today. Church was great! We went home to rest and wait for the women who work at the Center to come over for dinner - they arrived on Zambian time. I will miss them - they're special ladies!



L to R: Juliet, Glenda, Emelda and Edward at Center

Sharon: It was such a blessing to share a meal with these special people! Edward said "You could have sent us a million dollars, and it wouldn't have done for us what your coming has done." Since we'd prayed SO hard about whether or not we should come, it was good to hear that we'd made the right decision, and that they were blessed because we came.



Plaque placed on Center wall at dedication

Monday, June 10

Stephanie: OH MY GOODNESS!!! That's all I have to say about today! This is a day I'll never forget - but wish that I could!! It started at 4:00am when we left to catch the bus to Lusaka. We got to the bus stop at 6:00am, only to find that they were not leaving until 7:00am. So we waited. The bus wasn't full until 9:30 - which is when we left! If the beginning of the morning wasn't bad enough, boy we sure couldn't have predicted what was to come! We missed the big touring bus in Lusaka because we arrived too late, so we had to take a MUCH smaller bus - and every seat had to be filled before we could leave for Livingstone. It was much smaller, the seats weren't as comfortable and they had no place to put the luggage except under the seats or in the aisles. Even in the aisles they had seats that folded down so that no space was unused. And when I say, "No space is unused" I mean NO space is unused! This bus was packed as full as it could get. Little did I know that the next 8-9 hours would be almost more than I could bear!

Sharon: Talk about a bad attitude! I was NOT a happy camper - and having a really hard time not telling everyone how miserable this was! We now refer to this leg of our journey as "the bus trip from hell" - it was horrible! BUT - God used those 8-9 hours to do a MAJOR work in my heart - and I was actually able to find comfort in the fact that I was ON this bus - and NOT WALKING! (There are SO many details about this trip that I could share - but won't 'cause we're running out of space!) I can laugh about this now - but not then! We finally arrived in Livingstone at 11:45pm, and didn't have anywhere to stay - we couldn't afford the "reasonable hotel" (\$145/night) - but they were nice enough to recommend a hostel in town that turned out to be nice (and only \$12.50/night!). The only bummer was that they had no running water at that time of night - and we were FILTHY!



Victoria Falls, Livingstone, Zambia

Tuesday, June 11

Stephanie: There was water this morning - not hot water - but there was water! We're going to see the animals and Victoria Falls!! We decided to see Victoria Falls without a tour guide - it was amazing!!! Words cannot describe the beauty. The spray from the waterfall came down so hard in some places it was like being in the rain forest! We went on a "safari" in the afternoon. It was very cool! Right after we entered the game park, we saw elephants playing in the mud! They were right off the side of the road, not far away at all. It was awesome - we saw everything! There were impala, giraffes, monkeys, rhino, buffalo, zebras, warthogs, crocodiles, various birds, and even a monitor lizard! All of it was fascinating and we had a great time.



Elephants!

Sharon: After dinner we said our goodbyes - Barbra and Edward would be leaving very early in the morning, and we would be leaving later in the afternoon. We were all pretty emotional. Barbra and Edward were so grateful for the opportunity to come to Livingstone with us - they would never have been able to afford to see it - and they've never had a vacation. Edward was amazed at the beauty in his own country - beauty he had never known existed. Edward said again that our time with them was worth more than a million dollars. We prayed together, hugged, cried and said goodnight. I am SO glad we've had this time with them - they are VERY special people - our brother and sister in Christ, and a co-laborer in ministry. Any concerns I've had over the years about their character and integrity have vanished - they are above reproach in every way.

Wednesday, June 12

Stephanie: We're going home!! Thank God because I'm really missing my family and it's starting to feel like I've been gone a long time. This morning WE HAD HOT WATER!!! I was sooo happy - this was like a kiss from God! I was singing and saying how great it was and Sharon said I sounded like an Herbal Essence commercial!

Sharon: Today was another day I'd like to be able to forget! (Again, there's SO much to tell - but space won't allow!) Now that Barbra and Edward aren't with us, everyone is trying their HARDEST to take advantage of the "rich, white Americans." There were times today that I wondered if we would EVER get to leave! I had to hassle with the airlines about excess luggage and my lost (or stolen?) return tickets. Then, after we finally got all checked in and went through immigration control, we were told that we'd "stayed too long." Apparently, when we arrived in Zambia, we weren't given a visa that covered the entire trip - even though we had filled out our paperwork CLEARLY stating what day we were going to leave. We had assumed that the visa would cover us until the day we left - but we were wrong - and the man from immigration was talking about hundreds of dollars of fines he could charge us - it was ridiculous! Fortunately, Stephanie was able to keep her cool, and was eventually able to talk him into just letting us GO HOME! I was never so glad to get on a plane as I was that night!

Thursday, June 13

Sharon: The flights home were LONG - we spent 24 hours on planes or in airport terminals - and we were TIRED! But - we were going HOME!

Stephanie: On the plane to San Diego I didn't have a window seat because the plane was packed! I was so anxious to be home that it was difficult to sleep. By now we have been traveling for hours and hours - I'm tired, emotional, my stomach feels yucky, I feel dirty, and I stink - I just want to be home! Do I have a bad attitude or what?! Sharon and I passed the time by playing cards. We're FINALLY home!! I'd kiss the ground if people wouldn't think I was crazy!



Address Service Requested

Non-Profit
US
Postage
PAID
San Diego, CA
Permit #2843

Epilogue

Stephanie: Over the last few days I've felt a little depressed. I'm humbled and broken. I feel like a failure as a Christian. I want so much to do so many things but I can't even get up! My greater desire is to lie in bed and weep. I think of so many things - how can I be so foolish, so trivial, materialistic, selfish. I think I don't fear God at all and certainly don't pray like I should. What do I think I'm doing with my life? Is it my life? Why do I make the choices that I make? I feel like Paul when he says, "I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do." Will I change? I must, I pray that God will help me. My mind is trying to process all it has seen and heard. If only I could love like they love, pray like they pray, worship like they worship, be grateful like they are grateful, be friends like they are friends, be bold but humble, step out in faith but have discernment, and be committed to doing God's will even though I have no resources. That is what visiting Africa has left me with. I pray that God continues to show me what He wants. I'm thankful that He is in control and I pray He continually reminds me of these things. I wish that the pictures I took accurately expressed everything that I saw and experienced, but they just don't.

Sharon: Stephanie has expressed what I've been feeling, too. I know I will never be the same - and that's a GOOD thing! I've been SO privileged to spend time with our "co-laborers" in Zambia - I'm SO glad God changed my heart and made me WANT to go to Africa!

E-mail: svoices@pacbell.net
www.silentvoices.org

Prayer Requests

We met several women in Zambia who have a heart for this ministry - and for the hurting women in their country. We also met women from neighboring countries - Malawee, Zimbabwe, and the Congo - who see the need for Silent Voices where they live. Barbra is frequently asked - as are our Directors in Russia - if she can train them and get them started. The only thing holding us back is the funds that would be needed to support these ministries, when we don't feel that we're providing sufficient support to the centers we already have. Sometimes we feel overwhelmed by the needs that are expressed to us - and we have to remind ourselves that GOD is NEVER overwhelmed - and that HE will NEVER run out of resources. Would you pray with us that we would continue to remember that - and that God would provide all that is needed for those centers that HE wants to see opened? THANKS!

We hope that Barbra will be able to come to San Diego in October when she is in the United States for a Director's conference (another US ministry is paying her way to the conference). Once we have her itinerary, we'll let you know when she'll be here, and we'll plan an open house for those of you who would like to meet her.



Barbra, Edward and Isaac at the Center