

HOPE

March 2008

It is certainly good to start with such an optimistic title, especially as this may be the single most difficult newsletter I will have written – I may change my mind about that statement at the close. Greetings to everyone and I do hope and pray this finds you well and with hope in your hearts.

I wrote my last newsletter on Monday 10 September 2007, not knowing at that time what would happen two days later - an event that would devastate me like no other. My Father died on Wednesday 12 September 2007; it was very sudden and completely unexpected. At 10 am Mum, Dad and I were sitting at home having coffee together. Dad was going to see his GP at 10.20 about a cough and I went with him. The GP checked his blood pressure and pulse and felt those were fine. However, she wanted him to go to the hospital for further tests and x-rays. No drama, as we set off to the hospital. On the journey he became more unwell and I decided we should stop in Casualty. We arrived there at 11.30, Dad was seen by the Doctors there, had a 'collapse', and I watched as his life ebbed away. The medical team did all they could to save him but at mid-day Dad slipped into glory, to meet His Creator, His Saviour, the One he loved so much and had served so faithfully and diligently, to the place of promises, of no more pain or sorrow.



My sister arrived in those final moments and together we held the Dad we knew and loved so much. The pain of that moment is difficult to describe: the anguish and

longing for life to be breathed back into his body. That pain became another pain as we realised that we needed to go and tell our Mum, and my brother, as well as aunts, uncles, relatives, friends, colleagues.

Those days became a blur. However, a wonderful highlight in amongst everything was to see my brother, as he lives in Australia and it was so very special to be reunited even under such sad circumstances. I had never thought anyone could describe a funeral as wonderful but Dad's was. We as a family are so hugely thankful for all the support and love and care we have received in those days and months.

I have struggled in this grief, more than I ever thought I would. I never doubted my love for my Dad but rather I imagined, having seen such death and suffering in my work and life, that I was stronger. Of course, as a Christian we always recognise that our strength is from God but I arrogantly sometimes think it's me! I thought I could control my tears - wait for a private moment to cry - but these past months I have felt so fragile and broken. It has not been easy but my title 'HOPE' is my heart's testimony. I hope to see my Dad one day in heaven; I hope to get through the difficult days; I hope to see my family heal from the pain of losing someone we loved so dearly; I hope to feel strong again; I hope to return to my beloved kids in Uganda; I hope God will use this experience for His glory.

Sometimes we find it difficult to see God's hand or providence in some painful situations but I see so clearly how God has ordained so much in these past months – not only was I in Scotland when I could have been anywhere in the UK or Africa, but I was also due to start studies at International Christian College (ICC) in Glasgow at the end of September 2007. Therefore, God had it already organised that I would be with my family for this period. I am really enjoying my time here at ICC. It has been a wonderful privilege to

have this time to study and also interact with folk from all over the world who are committed to learn more about God and to serve Him. On the difficult days it has been wonderful just to close the door on my wee student room and just have that space and privacy to mourn and rest.

So much has been happening at Dwelling Places since I last wrote: some amazing, wonderful things and some very difficult trying times. May I suggest that you read the updates from Doreen Nanyonga at www.dwellingplaces.org . Rita is in need of much prayer as she seeks to lead the ministry with integrity and honour to God. She has been falsely accused of so many terrible things but God has shown all her accusers to be liars; she recently had a message from one of them asking for her forgiveness. Despite all those challenges, the ministry is growing and developing, our children are enjoying being back at school and their health is being maintained through the able work of Timothy. I speak to the team and kids as often as I can. Sylvia has been in and out of hospital recently, so please remember her in much prayer.

As I mentioned before, my hope is to return to Uganda in September this year. I have applied to AIM for long-term status and that is being processed. There is much that I hope for on my return there but I may leave that until my next newsletter. On that note, may I apologise yet again for the long delay between my newsletters. I will endeavour to improve.

Again, my heartfelt thanks for all the love, care and support that have been so priceless to my family at this time. Thanks also for your ongoing support for myself and this time of Bible Study. Thanks for all your love and encouragement for the work of Dwelling Places as we seek to show the children love and hope instead of their despair living on the streets. Please continue to remember the millions of children who today feel as if they have no hope. Let us strive to share God's hope with all those that are hurting around us.

WITH MUCH LOVE AND IN HOPE
MARSALI

