

Yes, I know!

It has been about 9 months since my last mission's update; not because there has been no news but because there has been too much news. It's hard to keep up! So I'll start with the latest and work backwards bit by bit.

We've witnessed yet another miraculous provision from the hand of God, which I believe will bless you as much as it has me. Like manna from heaven, we are seeing our Father provide every day, year after year. The orphan infant clinic and feeding program now cares for nearly 900 babies. That's right: NINE HUNDRED BABIES! Plus, we care for the care-givers and a few hundred ill siblings that tag along.

In the past, we have often been down to our last tin of baby formula. It requires one measure of faith to support a dozen kids and quite another measure of faith to support 900! But it's the testing and proving of our faith that makes it grow. There's the daily need of milk and medicine... but somehow He downloads an extra measure of love, as well. It's as if each new child makes your heart a little bit bigger to accommodate the latest new-comer.

Now, here is God's joke on me: years ago I chose to stay single and childless because I didn't have the confidence, selflessness, maternal instincts, or skills to be a good wife and mom (and I knew it). I chose a life in missions and medicine instead. At the time, it seemed more logical. But somehow my friends and I ended up with hundreds of orphaned babies (or babies who's mothers are busy dying and therefore unable to breast feed). When we passed the 500 mark, my faith began to really wobble. That's a boat load of hungry mouths to feed! But the Lord, in one way or another, provided. But as we approached the 900 mark, my heart felt as if it would explode with worry about their survival.

Last month I drove the two-day drive through Zimbabwe, into to S. Africa, "in faith" to buy more milk (once again, without the money to pay for it). I've done this many times before and somehow it always worked out, without fund raising, without a web-site or newsletters asking for money or any other thing. But this

time there was no milk and I came back bone dry. My heart was in my throat for an entire week. I could hardly speak for fear of having a major melt-down. Africa is having a shortage of milk as it is (and we use about two tons of powdered milk a month). Visions of burying hundreds of babies plagued my dreams.

Just when we had only a few bags of milk left, I received news that a milk company in S. Africa had received a supply. So J. and I drove the 2-days-on-African-roads back down to S. Africa, with enough cash now to buy one week's worth (that's 4 solid days of driving round trip for only 5 days' worth of milk. It's like trying to feed 5,000 with only 2 fishes and 5 loaves). On the way we spent the night at friends of J's, who, in the morning said they would like to help us purchase this load of milk. They asked "how much does it costs?" I was embarrassed to tell them, but said, "It's \$1,400 for a week's worth. Any help towards that would be such a help." (I was thinking they would give \$100 perhaps. The African economy is not as strong as America's). Well, the wife said, "I was thinking of \$10,700. Stop by my husband's office on the way to the milk company and pick up the check." J. and I were literally dancing out to the truck. By the time we got to the husbands office, however, the amount had grown to \$14,100! That was enough to buy NINE weeks' worth of milk! And with other cash, we were able to buy about 20 tins of formula for the kids that are lactose intolerant.

There's more. J. came with me because she has had a toothache for weeks. Our two nurses and I, myself saw the hole in her tooth. But on the morning she went to the dentist, the pain was gone. Not only that, the hole was gone! The dentist checked every tooth and took x-rays, but the tooth was entirely healed.

There is still more. Not long ago, the Lord awoke me in the night with the audible words, "Buy milk without money." Then I read Isaiah 55:1 which says, "Ho, everyone that thirsts, come to the waters, and he that hath no money; come buy and eat; yes, come buy milk without money and without price." Tell me, how do you buy anything without money? But we did just that: This S. African couple wired the money directly into the milk company's account. I just ordered the milk and picked it up without paying a cent.

“If you love me, feed my lambs: After Jesus died, Peter had his doubts. He went back to his nets and while fishing, he saw Jesus cooking breakfast on the shore. He immediately jumped boat and swam to him. Three times Jesus asked him, “Peter, do you love me?” “Yes, Lord. You know that I do.” And three times Jesus said, “Feed my lambs.” I think He’s happy about our work. For well over a decade now, multitudes of hungry “lambs” have been feed. The thirsty have drink. The naked are clothed (or diapered), the sick are healed, the strangers are invited in. Lives and souls are saved, churches are planted and growing. And the Good News is preached to the poor. I love this life!

There is still more, but that’s enough for one letter.

Feeding His lambs,

Tracy and friends

*We used powdered milk and baby formula because, when the mother is HIV positive or has died, there is no other source of milk for the infant left behind. Infants can only drink milk. No milk, no life.