

Today I Washed My Shoes



Part 1 Malawi

Nsanganiza Village

March 2019

I looked carefully at my shoes before I cleaned them. I didn't know if I was willing to wash away all of the red dust and dirt yet, but I needed to have my shoes clean.

So my shoes are clean, the dirt is gone and yet my mind, soul and heart still hold closely the red dirt, the mud, the smell and the images that have been burned into my being from this past trip to Malawi and Uganda.

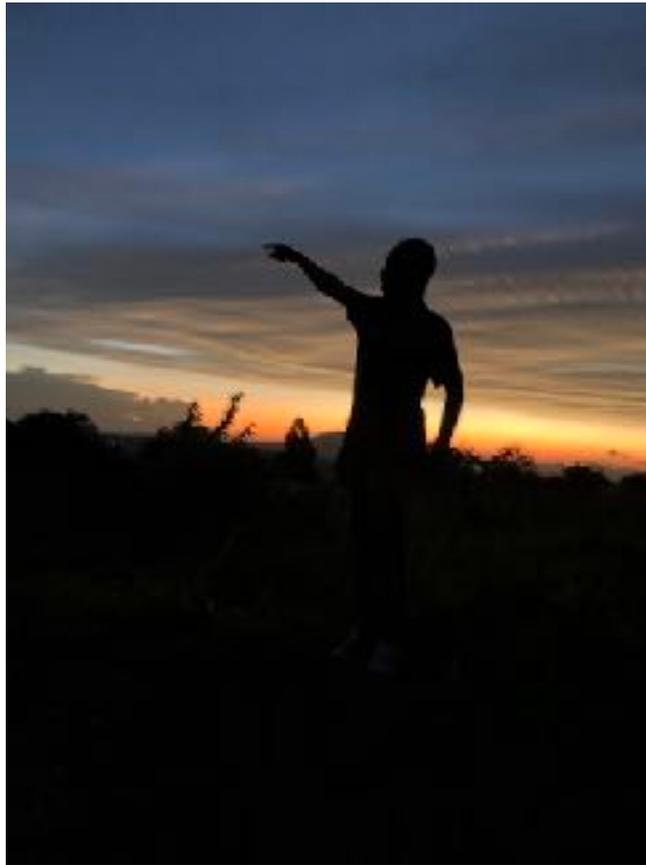
I remember my first trip to Mozambique in 2006 and how walking the sandy soil of the project there had left such a deep desire within me to want to continue walking in this direction with Children's Relief International of taking the Light of Christ to the darkest and most difficult places in our time. I am thankful that I have continued to walk this journey with CRI and with God as our lead. Almost every single decision and movement towards helping the poorest of the poor, the widows, orphans and now refugees has come with great resistance to move forward. But God..... As long as I and we at CRI continue in obedience, God has been, is and will be glorified. It is in the walking that things are accomplished and not in the standing still.



Visiting Malawi for the first time was like having a celebration dance and song for all of us, the CRI staff and for the Project at Nsanganiza. We came to observe, assess, ask questions, get stories, pictures and all that we gathered. In just a few short days it was obvious to us all that this project, their leaders, Redson and Maryam Makwinja, and programs were a sleek fit, like a brand new set of leather gloves. You know the kind, rich looking, smells good, tight and yet as you wear them, they stretch to make room for more flexibility. The Makwinjas are well educated with hearts that remain teachable and a strength to do more to help take the Light of Christ to their village and surrounding area.

Maryam shared with me that she looked back in a diary that she wrote in when she was 13 years old — now in her early 30's — scripting that she wanted to do more with her life to serve God in ministry. She wanted more than having a job, working from morning to night to provide for her family. She wanted her family to serve God so that many lives would be changed. As she shared this story and so much more, all I could do is smile and think about the faithfulness of God in all aspects of her life. The desires that God has met all along her journey through life up to this time and the direction and paths she has taken by His guide as she listened to Him. Having a few more years of ministry experience gives me insight that she does not yet understand fully and cannot celebrate in the same manner as myself. God is faithful!





Redson shared with me and others his vision for the Nsanganiza project. He has a vision that God has shown him to grow the ministry and glorify Him in all that he and his wife Maryam will do. Children being fed a meal each day, perhaps their only meal Monday through Friday; a Women's ministry with teaching skills of knitting, cooking and sewing and of course a message for growth from the scriptures; the elderly and widows being visited and prayed with; a sports program for girls and boys to gather weekly for Bible teaching, being in community, tutoring and with the help of CRI a sponsorship program to further their educations. This project, much like others that partner with CRI, ministers wholistically to communities from babies to the elderly. Redson envisions all of this, along with a church and resource center on the land, to gather the community together to strengthen each other as they grow together in faith and years.



One short story I will share is while we visited the girls sports program and Bible study, I asked what each student's desire was for her future. We heard teachers, the military, a secretary and a doctor. When the young woman said she wanted to be a doctor, there were a few snickers from some of the girls. My heart broke for her and yet I thought, "Who would ever think that a doctor could come out of this village? Most girls here never go beyond the 6th grade because school fees are beyond what the average family can afford. Who would ever think that a woman doctor could ever come out of this village? But these young women have not yet seen the faithfulness of this God that I believe in. Just by CRI being there, willing to invest in their lives is an act of God." We can go many places all over the world, but this assignment to Malawi was by God's own hand. Yes, a woman doctor can and will someday come out of this village; I believe that all things are possible with God.

It is in the walking that things are accomplished and not in the standing still.

