



February 2014

"In Him we live and move and have our being." Acts 17:28

Dear friends,

I want to wish you all a wonderful 2014. I so appreciate your faithful prayer and support, and pray God's best for you as we partner together in Ethiopia for His glory! With colleagues and in various Bible study groups we have been talking a lot this past year about what it means to "really live". As I am a connoisseur of great moments, there are a lot of things in 2013 that come to mind that have been "life giving" for me:

Praying, planning, and leaning on the Holy Spirit every morning as I start my day has probably been the most life giving of anything I have done this year. Training Ethiopian deacons, priests and monks in conflict management and research methods, and presentation skills has been hugely encouraging. As they share their stories with me, and open up about their struggles in class or over a coffee, and then them sharing about God's faithfulness in their places of service, I think to myself, "this is what life is all about!" Amazingly students seek me out more regularly for advice and a chat now that I am no longer an "official staff member" at the College.



Spiritual ministry at Mekelle Youth Centre

Who would have known that the challenge of finding a new work permit would have brought deeper relationships with College students and staff? Actually receiving my ID card and work permit just after Christmas was a huge energy and life boost. I am encouraged to press on after several months of uncertainty and feeling unsettled.

Being involved in training staff working with vulnerable children in Compassion International, Caleb Academy and with the Ethiopian Red Cross has been refreshing – I love new challenges – they are "life giving" to me. Spending time with staff at the Fistula Project, providing leadership training and seeing them work out their vision for fistula prevention in rural areas... that is "life giving". And sitting with rural women, all recovering fistula patients, and having the chance to listen to the audio Bible and making disciples among them... this is "life giving" to me.



With Allison, founder of the Mekelle fistula project

Seeing women learn and grow through spiritual formation Bible studies, so that they are experiencing freedom from ways of thinking that had them bound up... so exciting, so "life giving". Having family and friends to share Ethiopian life and ministry with is pretty "life giving" too! Thank you Andrew, Ann, Christine, Rosemary, David, Paul and Wilma for taking the time to come and stay and do life with me here – I appreciate you so much. And then there is mentoring the next generation of missionaries... for me this is "life giving". As is getting to watch them reach out and take risks for God – I am so thrilled to have the Crosslinks Gap Team of 12 who joined me from England last month for five months. Also, I continue to coordinate the spiritual ministry at the youth centre. Sharing life with Carol, Kristi, Els, Nadege, Jon, Kevin and Oliver, my ministry partners and friends, and knowing we are super missionaries in Christ who can do anything and everything in God's strength!!



Meeting Prince William and sharing a morning at Buckingham Palace with my Mum, Dad and sister Ann, then being joined by friends Christine and Susan was pretty stimulating and "life giving". All rather surreal having just left Ethiopia for a week to obtain a business visa, and then returning the evening of the palace visit – talk about clash of worlds!

All of the things we give our lives to can be "life giving" for us. But they aren't the main thing that gives life... Jesus is. All of these things can be taken from us in a single day, but we would still have life because we have our relationship with Christ. It is in Him that "we live and move and have our being". He gives us our daily breath, strength for every trial or question we face, opportunity to live beyond ourselves, and a future hope that gives us peace for today. What more could we ask for 2014?



As I look to 2014, here's what's on the horizon:

1. Crosslinks Gap Team Ethiopia (England) – January 14th – May 24th.
2. Crosslinks Gap Team Ethiopia (Ireland) – June 1st – August 6th.
3. Ballinderry Team – August 15th – 25th.
4. Travel to Ireland – September 28th for 6 months Mission Education.

Please pray that I will enter into each of these opportunities humbly and boldly dependent on the Holy Spirit at work to teach, share, listen, challenge, and encourage in each and every conversation and opportunity that God gives. I can't wait to see what He has in store for 2014!

With love in Him,

Karen

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