

UPDATE FROM DEBBIE BLANE – NTC, MALAKAL

Dear Friends,

Lenten greetings from Malakal! I will be here in Malakal town for another week and will leave mid-week next week for Juba where I must apply for a multi-entry visa to South Sudan in order to return to the country in April.

The Office of Immigration no longer issues visas upon return to the country at the airport. I look forward on April 1 to flying to Cape Town in South Africa and joining my fellow Mission Co-Workers from around Africa for a time of renewal and training. Thank goodness I found out *before* I left the country that I would need to get the multi entry visa in order to return!!

The little town of Malakal still does not have electricity or running water; although I did hear a rumor that possibly some parts of the town are occasionally getting power at night again. The situation at the Nile Theological College remains challenging. The printers at the college are not working and, as always, there are no text books for the students. This semester I have begun teaching the Juniors for the first time. They will soon be Seniors as the current Senior class will graduate on May 18, 2013! I have had to explain that I will teach in ways that will not be dependent on things that we do not have readily available, like books and printed handouts. Once again I suspect that the situation here in Malakal is similar to what many of my colleagues in China encountered in the rural areas of that country. I was in developed Nanjing and had many resources at my beck and call. I am now developing a much better understanding of what people live with, deal with and come up with coping strategies for every day in countries that are not in the “first world”.

It has been a wonderful thing over the last three years with the current Seniors to watch their growth and to know that God has allowed me to have small part in nurturing that growth, both spiritually and intellectually. There are some feelings very similar to parenting that I am experiencing as their graduation approaches. They will be moving on to new places in their lives, both physically and also in their relationships with God, themselves and with other people. I am in the process of grieving and letting go, just as I did with my own biological children a little more than ten years ago.

Oh the mighty things that our mighty God allows us to participate in as a part of the family of Jesus Christ! I am seeing and doing things that I never could have imagined or anticipated happening in my life. And as God blesses me I pray that I am able to bless others in living out my call and my vocation.

Please continue to pray with me for the Seniors and their imminent departure from the Nile Theological College and Malakal, and for the Juniors as they finish their second year of college and move into their final two years. And also for the in=coming class of Juniors who we will see and come to know beginning in September of this year.

As always, thank-you for your prayers and for your support, financial and otherwise. I am blessed by your presence in my life.

God's blessings to you,
Debbie