

August 2018

Knowledge:Facts :: Wisdom:Critical Thinking by Joy (Neet) Sasser

(Joy and two of her sons, their grandfather (me) and Rod Johns journeyed to Tanzania this past July —Following is Joy’s assessment and readout —- Tim Neet)

Knowledge is to Facts as Wisdom is to Critical Thinking. This analogy helps link biblical truths with educational methodologies. Our goal as the July Family Team was to come alongside the nationally mandated, memorization - “chalk talk” - curriculum and supplement it with enriching engagement through literature, LEGO, and critical thinking games. We coordinated this effort with the teaching team before us and the science team after us and then blended it with the amazing assets of the teachers and administration at the Siha Leadership Academy. We worked to meet the needs that they identified and asked for. All of this, along with the incredible personal experience we had with the students, teachers, and staff gives me great hope for the long-term impact of our short-term trip.

Proverbs 14:15 “The simple believes everything but the prudent gives thought to his steps.”

Three generation traveling to Tanzania and serving together was an incredible experience for me and one that I have long waited for. I have heard about TZ from all of my family who have gone before me, and especially the role that my dad (Tim Neet) has had at PUNCHWMI from the beginning. The Lords timing for me and two of my boys was now. I have prayed for and supported Project Child since the start, but oh what a joy to go and love on and be loved on by these beautiful people. To know and hear about the depth of respect and love they have for my father is beyond words. Serving as a family (plus “Uncle” Rod Johns) together in both the planning and in the teaching together was a great experience I think for each of us as we learned how to try new things and build upon different strengths. As a parent, I loved watching my boys’ step well out of their comfort zones. They had to problem solve quickly on their own as they were teaching and leading critical thinking skills through games. For all of us, this was both terrifying and rewarding! Oliver, 12yrs old, describes his experience well, “Working with the kids enlightened me in many ways. It helped me understand how to teach and improvise on the spot. I found it fascinating that nothing went exactly as planned. This wasn’t much of a hindrance since it showed me what I could do and also what didn’t make sense. Finally, my favorite thing was probably just hanging out with the kids.” (Cont’d pg 2)



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Too Good to Miss by Rod Johns



As the week began I was really out of my comfort zone - surrounded by a throng of kids, trying to lead them in a bunch of active games. But by the end of the week, I had let go of some of my plans and just relaxed. We progressed, but it was still like herding cats. Nevertheless, I had grown to really love them and amazingly, they really loved on me. Finally, I met the two kids that June and I sponsor. I think I have really missed out all of these years of just sending in checks. There is a whole different dimension of relationship to be experienced for them and for us when we begin investing personally. One of the girls invited me back for her graduation. I think I’m ready to go.

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Critical Thinking (cont'd)

I love experiencing worship in other cultures and Africa was no exception. To me it is a window into heaven and hearing the many tribes and tongues that will worship together. Henry best describes worship at the church and at school chapel. "One of the most impacting things I experienced while in Tanzania was the worship. In the Sunday service, the people of Karansi sang with so much energy and excitement that the whole room was up and dancing. On the Wednesday chapel service at PUNCHMI, the kids worshiped their hearts out. Every kid in the room both sang and danced with pure joy. I will never forget that service, and it will forever live in my heart as my favorite worship service ever."

Outside of the family dynamic, my favorite and most impacting part of the trip was sharing with the amazing teachers of Siha Leadership Academy. I feel like I went through the same problem solving and critical thinking steps in preparing for the week as they did in going through the lessons. I LOVED watching the teachers A-HA moments!! They moved from struggling through Tic Tac Math or Balance Benders, to working together to reach the "A-HA" of figuring it out



or reading a book and together walking through the elements of a story to the "A-HA" of the climax and how it all ties together or to something in a lesson. Each aspect of the learning process brought about the challenges and the joys of discovery through critical thinking that they will now pass on to their own students. I am confident that these great minds are preparing the leaders of tomorrow's Tanzania and will have a mighty impact for the Kingdom of God.



A final privilege we had was to visit Godfrey. He is a 15-year-old boy we have supported at the school since he was in preschool. He is now in secondary school, which is a boarding school 2 hours away. We brought him a much-coveted soccer ball as well as a few books and other items. He loves science and the last few times we skyped he shared some new facts about the periodic table. So, we brought a really cool book on the periodic table which he seemed to love. We also had the joy of picking out and meeting a new preschooler to sponsor. His name is Hancelm. He is incredibly cute, and the boys have dubbed him "Hans Solo". We are looking forward to getting to know and love him, the same as we do Godfrey.

A Change in Plans by Tim Neet

As our small family team began planning the trip, we hoped that other families would join us, and fortunately we did secure the help of Rod Johns. Then, only a few weeks from our departure date we found that one of the Medical Teams slated for August was needing to arrive a week early, overlapping our team, and that they could use our help performing clinical exams to 2000 public school kids (more on that from Courtney Hester in the next issue of the TZJournal). Part of me was reluctant to have my family team get sidetracked into a totally different ministry. You see, we had been planning our Family Trip for a long time. God knew best however and we agreed that we could help out most mornings. What an unplanned blessing getting to know this team and the experience of serving alongside them in mornings was to our team. Wow. The contrast of health, cleanliness, clothes, outlook and class size (75 PreK students to one teacher vs 30-1 at Siha) of the government school kids compared to our Project Child kids was amazing – and disturbing at the same time. As my daughter said "I had to remind myself that our kids too were the "poorest of the poor" and only after two meals a day, regular health checks, uniforms, clothing, small class sizes and devoted teachers were they now scoring in the top 10% in the nation on their test scores." Where the government school kids shivered, seeking to keep warm and desiring food, ours were hungry to go deeper in their education with a positive and hopeful outlook for the day. I am so glad that we were able to blend our teams as the experience was remarkable for my grandkids and us all.

Announcements

Mail Call— There is a possibility that we will be having a November Graduation and Library Team as a container full of thousands of books will begin the Journey to Tanzania this week. Specific Mail Call dates and determination of whether packages can be sent will be made before the next

TZjournal is issued. We will at least be sending over letters.

Video Calls—Although we do occasionally have internet problems, overall the video calls to TZ have worked amazingly well. Many sponsors have reported how much it has meant to them seeing their child face to face. Our next week of video calls will

likely be the second week in September. Let me know of your interest

Christmas Gifts— We again will be providing a Christmas Gift of clothes to all of our Project Child Students through Form 4. Details of this gift and how you can fund the purchase for your child will be included in the Sept TZJournal.

For more information about Project Child—contact Tim Neet at timneet@att.net

Visit our Web site at www.projectchildtz.com and like us on Facebook