

April Prayer Points 3

Those who do not have time to read the stories may still get the main points in less than three minutes by scanning the red print and looking at the photos.

Hello dear supporters,

Dad has asked me to share with you some of the beautiful opportunities God has given me here in Nampula.

But first, I would like to give you some background information on Victor Carlos and his orphanage Evanjafrica. Victor is the son of one of the first Mozambican families my parents came to know when they arrived in Nampula. Because of his outstanding Christian character, Victor has received high recognition and numerous opportunities through



Evanjafrica with the expatriate Christian youth group

life, including several years spent in the United States. Although he could probably have gone anywhere he wanted and succeeded at anything he undertook, Victor's heart was always in Mozambique, and his dream was to start an orphanage.

Our church and family have had the joy of watching God work through Victor to establish and expand Evanjafrica (www.evanjafrica.com), a private Christian orphanage only five minutes from where we live. But it was not until last year that I got personally involved with and emotionally attached to this ministry.

It all began with an answer to prayer – as so many wonderful things do. I said that last year was the first time I got involved with Evanjafrica, but it was not the first time I had a desire to be part of God's work there. Last summer my sister Sarah and I discussed starting a craft ministry where the girls would make jewelry that Sarah would then sell in the States. Sarah and I prayed much, but nothing came of that plan.

There are three young guys in our church (who we affectionately call the three musketeers) who often attended the Sunday evening service at Evanjafrica, and one day I joined them.

I was chatting with the girls before worship, when one of them said to me: “Mana Graca, you should invite us to your house.” I could not believe it! Not only had God opened a door, but He also practically shoved me through it!

“Yes, yes!” I told her. That very evening, I spoke with Victor and his wife, Christina, and they told me they were 100% behind anything I could do with the girls. This was not only an answer to my prayer but to theirs also. The girls who had come to the orphanage as little children were now growing into young ladies and had scarcely anyone to help them as they made that transition.

We quickly formed a plan for the girls to spend the night at my house, and thus began a wonderful journey together!



Our first sleep over

There are 10 girls in our group now, ages 12-18. After a few weeks I mentioned to the girls that we should come up with a name and discovered they already had one. Our first devotional was on Proverbs 31 – the Virtuous Woman, and ever since then that is what they had called our meeting: Mulheres Virtuosas, or Virtuous Women. I pray that is who we will become!



Not only have the Mulheres Virtuosas been a huge blessing to me, but through it I have also gotten to be a part of Evanjafrica in a whole new way.

I wish you all could meet these children. I wish you could feel the love they have for each other. I wish you could see the way they serve, the way they laugh, and the way they care

for one another. Because when you have seen this, you have seen the tender hand of God.

Evanjafrica recently took in a family of four siblings. The youngest, Ipoldo, is around 4 years of age. He is deaf, this little boy, and that is not an easy state to be in when there are barely any resources here to help him. There are no speech therapists, no special schools, no ear doctors, and no hearing aids. But this doesn't stop Ipoldo from smiling and communicating with everyone! This little boy has stolen my heart. Oh, how I wish you could meet him. I wish you could see the look



Ipoldo delighted with Benaiah's old legos

in his eyes as he runs up to greet you. I wish you could feel your heart melt when he puts his little hand in yours.

A month after I started meeting with the girls, the orphanage received a gift to go to a beach resort for two nights, and the money even included special meals! Victor and Christina invited me to go with them, and I am so glad I did. I can honestly say those



A brand new experience – relaxing at the beach!

were two of the most blessed days of my life. For 90% of the children it was their first time to even see the ocean, let alone be in it! It was so fun to see how excited they were. But what was even more special to see was how the older children voluntarily took turns giving the little ones piggy-back rides into the deeper section of the waters. Or the way deaf little Ipoldo still had his hands folded and eyes tightly shut long after we had finished praying. Or the way some of the kids spent hours making shell necklaces, then gave most of them away as gifts to my family.

The last few months have been busy with many other activities as well. I mentioned earlier the “three musketeers” in our church. A couple of years ago they and another young man formed a group called UIFEC (which translated stands for Brothers of the Faith, United in Christ), for the purpose of evangelism and worship through music. We organized a few evangelistic “crusades”, but recently we have focused more on music. It has been great fun for me to learn the *Makua* tribal language songs and their African harmonies. My “teachers” are incredibly patient when it comes to teaching the *mukunha* (white girl) the right dance steps and proper pronunciation. I think they enjoy it almost as much as I do!



UIFEC is now in the process of making a C.D, which has taken much longer than we expected because of problems at the studio. The studio is the living room of a young man's house, with a very old computer, and one headphone-microphone set we all take turns singing into. We are often interrupted by power outages, loud motorcycles, and the computer shutting down on us (which results in the producer giving it a number of good whacks on the side). This slow pace is not only tiresome for us, but also causes great frustration to the producer. But he seems to have many clients as he is the go-to music man for most of the local churches here.

Two of the founders of UIFEC (who are also members of our church) have quite a gift for song writing. They have written many songs, with excellent words and good music, and we're hoping that this music will spread.



One of the very good UJC choirs

For the past two years, our choir group has been involved with a larger organization (UJC) of church choirs from all over town that meet weekly. Hearing the kind of music that is sung in many of the churches is often discouraging. There is a lot of spirit and joy, which is beautiful to see, but so very little content and truth that one wonders what the source of the joy is.

Another difficulty for these church choirs is that music is not taught here in Nampula. No one learns music theory or how to read notes, and instruments are hard to come by. I am often approached by young people asking me to teach them guitar or piano. I am sure that one day someone will start a fulfilling music ministry here!

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There is a young Mozambican couple who have come up from the capital (Maputo) who have been such a blessing to our church. The husband has started a reading club with different men from several churches participating, and his wife has started one for the ladies in our church. To read books, let alone sound doctrinal books, and study them in a group is practically unheard of here. **We ladies have been going through R.C. Sproul's books on crucial questions, which have been translated into Portuguese. It is still a relatively new project, but we are hopeful that God will use this to stretch our minds, give us a fuller understanding of His Word, and ultimately help us know Him more.**

The expatriate youth group is also a major part of my life here. It is quite a multi-cultural group, consisting of youth from the U.S., Brazil, Portugal, Holland, Germany, Zimbabwe, and South Africa. In December we decided to raise money for Evanjafrica to help with their Christmas celebration. It was such a fun bonding experience for us as we put our heads together to plan and carry out fund-raising projects!



The international Christian youth group celebrates Christmas

A baked goods stand is always successful with the expatriates. Many people crave foods that are commonly available in the United States but unheard of here, something I learned when I started a baked goods business two years ago. Bagels, donuts, fritter balls, and tortillas are high on the "most wanted" list.

There were many other activities that the youth ended up doing, such as laying brick, painting, house-cleaning, hosting a kids-night, and other random events. The whole missionary community pitched in and made it a success. We far exceeded the amount we had in mind to raise, and it was a huge joy to share that gift and a day of fun with the orphanage!

Another project that my sister started a few years ago is a Safari Salon Social, which is basically a free spa-and-spoil day for the missionary ladies, with lots of goodies and lots of fellowship. This year one of the missionary women, formerly a professional beautician, offered to cut and style hair for free, which was a huge hit with the ladies.



A recent opportunity that has come up for me is a weekly babysitting job with one of the missionary families. Many of the families do homeschooling. That is hard work all by itself, but when added to the other jobs and time-consuming problems that so often arise on the mission field, the stress can become too great. **I am thankful I can help this woman a little, even if it is only by giving her an afternoon to recover her strength, and it has been fun for me to have time with her kids.**

As my days draw to a close here in Mozambique, I am seeing more and more opportunities and needs that I had not noticed before. Because of the urgency to complete high school and begin college this fall, I have had to prioritize my activities and that has been a struggle! There are so many needs to meet, so much service to render, so many people to love, and so little time to do it all.

My heart has grown in so many ways these past few months, and it is difficult to think of leaving this life behind.

Many people imagine with dis-



A day of fun with the younger children from Evanjafrica

taste the hardships and sacrifices that a missionary or a “missionary kid” must experience when serving the Lord on a foreign field. They see mission work as giving up opportunities and personal comforts. And although I do not wish to minimize the sacrifices of great missionaries who have truly suffered in their service to the Lord, it is my first-hand experience that growing up on the mission field is not as much sacrifice as it is gain.

Serving the Lord, whether on the mission field or in our home country, is not something we “have” to do, but something we get to do.

I realize that, with or without me, God will do a special work here. And that, with or without me, His name will be proclaimed and His power will be displayed!

But God has given me this huge blessing, this huge opportunity, to experience it first hand. God is saying: “I am working. I am making something beautiful. And you can be a part of it!”

And to shut my heart to that would be giving up one of the greatest joys in this world.

Thank you all for the faithful love, support and prayers throughout the years that has made it possible for our family to serve as missionaries in this land. It means more to us than you can know.

We thank our God in all our remembrance of you!

Gracie a.

Gifts to this ministry can be sent to: Grace Missions, c/o Faith Community Church,

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