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Youth perspectives

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The Odyssey of Life

Always and ever shall I consider myself blessed.

In childhood, gazing out onto the vast plains of Kenya,
I stood mesmerized at Earth's canvas before me:
Herds of gazelle, gnu, giraffe, bands of ostriches.
As they paused in their grazing to raise their eyes to mine,
We stood mutely transfixed recognizing our common bond,
Seeming to recollect that in the dim mist of the past we were kin:
Nomads, roaming freely o'er this Eden,
Each taking only what we needed.
Like a giant orchestra, playing in sweet harmony,
This stupendous Symphony of Life.

Alas! In time, Man's pride in intellect ensnared him.
He thought himself as having 'Dominion' over all creation;
O'er the fish in the water, the fowls of the air, the creatures
Of the land.

Therein lay the sentence to his holocaust,
Jarring Earth's music with dissonance
As a vain virtuoso, wielding giant cymbals,
In disdain of all other instrumentalists.
Man's discordance shattered the flow of Life's melody;
Hushing the sweet strains of many of Earth's creatures
Into eternal silence.
What chord, what melody can issue from a harp with broken strings?

Using religion to justify callousness is a two-edged sword.
Man's offspring hear not the lyrics of the winged ones,
See not the shy timidity in the soft eyes of a gazelle,
Nor the silver swirl of a school of fish;
Sense not a communion with nature.
Self-centred, blind is Man to the purpose of his Lord.
Made in the image of God!

Wherein is man's likeness to the Good Shepherd?
Has he upheld his charge as keeper of the vineyard
Against his Master's sudden return?
Man's self-conceit confounds him.
Deaf to the cries of the distressed that he pursues
On the highway to extinction.

Askance, my eyes raise upwards to the Most High,
Who composed the score of the Grand Symphony of Life,
Arranging parts for every creature:
To Him, whose Dominion is eternal, from everlasting to everlasting
— even to the end of Time —
To the great conductor!
Do thou, once more, speak unto Man thy command,
"Ephphata!" — "Be opened!"

— L. D. Anthony

A mem

Justin Anantawan

Although I was at Huruma Children's Home for only a month, it was a life-changing experience. I went there not quite sure what I was going to do and what I was going to experience. However, upon leaving Kenya I had a closer relationship with God and a better understanding of my calling in life.

The orphanage school did not have a music teacher. For their creative art hour, the kids would go to work in the fields. So, I was put into the temporary role of music teacher during my four-week stay. I taught weekly lessons to nine classes — gospel and children's songs to the younger grades and African-American music history to the older grades.

I was also able to teach the children Negro spirituals such as *Swing Low Sweet Chariot* and *I'll Fly Away*. They now sing these in church.

I saw how music affected their lives. One thing I remember well — it touched me greatly — is a rap a girl wrote about her life as a child labourer.

I also became friends with a girl named Mary Kavata. I taught her songs and she and I sang a couple of duets during the last church service I attended at Huruma. She wants to become a professional musician — it amazed me how she would make us rehearse songs twenty or thirty times until we got them right.

One Sunday a group of the children and I baked 230 cookies for everybody at the home. It took hours to do this because the oven was very small and did not have a lot of heat.

How music helped the children

I made many friends at the home and I try to keep in touch with them. The thing that affected

orable month in Kenya

me most was hearing the stories of these children and how they came to the home. Many of them had lost parents to AIDS, had been abused or abandoned. I saw how music helped them to deal with their pain, express their emotions and simply have fun.

Thus, I have decided that I want to become a missionary music teacher in Africa, or elsewhere in the world, where children do not have the opportunity to get a music education. I felt a calling from God to do this while I was in Kenya and I still feel it now despite my doubts and fears of what will

happen in the future. I am currently applying for Teachers College and I will be doing volunteer music teaching at an elementary school to prepare myself. God willing, I will return to Huruma Children's Home next year to teach again.

I thank the Spiritans for your help in funding my trip to Kenya. As you were part of my journey you were also part of the children's lives at Huruma. God blessed me with an experience that opened my heart and gave me a chance to help others in need and I thank him for people like you who made it possible. ■



Questions

The stories we once told
Our way of life ravaged
My people's faces unrecalled
Covered up by a rope of lies
Unheard by the world

We were forced to fall in line
Dishonoured by fellow man
Exposed, seared and helpless
Together we now lay

All we had was each other —
A connection that cannot be broken
We suffered together!
We cried together!
And we question what will come next

Will the world forget?
Will our stories one day be told?
Will I be forgotten?
Will we be forgotten?

— *Michael Gaa, Neil McNeil*