

I hate public restrooms. It seems as though people often treat them with disregard for the next person using the facility. Paper is left on the floor, stools are left unflushed, and vulgar graffiti is scrawled on the wall. When kids are with you, you try and get in and out as fast as possible! And yet the restrooms I've used have looked like pristine palaces compared to the photos we saw tonight.

Laura Mitchell, founder of Redeeming Africa's Hope (R.A.H.), shared her heart and vision for restoring some of Africa's most poverty-stricken areas. She showed pictures of families living in slums, children playing in dumps, and outdoor restroom and shower facilities that thirty or more people share. Some are inaccessible during a heavy rain because raw sewage floods the path leading to the shack. If you can imagine the worst port-a-potty you've ever seen – their conditions were even more terrible! The photos gave us a visual idea of what the area looks like, but we can only imagine the smells and sounds that surround the actual facility. As an American, I believe the odor would nauseate us. In addition, the lack of privacy might embarrass or infuriate us.

I've read statistics on how many children die each day due to malnutrition or preventable diseases, but Laura's photos put faces with the numbers. They are real people - not just the result of number-crunching. Because of unsanitary (and inhumane!) conditions, men, women, and children are exposed to the threat of diseases from diarrhea or worms. Why is it that they – and not I – were born into slum conditions? Nothing they did could justify the standard of living they tolerate each day. Families are stuck in squalor. Children are forced to “play” in piles of trash. They did not choose this way of life – no one would! How can I look at these situations and not be changed? How can I view the photos of suffering people and not be horrified at how they are living? God does not bring poverty – our selfishness does. It is God's desire that we see people through His eyes and be moved to do something.

We celebrate with R.A.H. as they build their first restroom facility this year in the Kawangware slums of Nairobi, Kenya! It's an astonishing achievement that God is doing as He moves in the hearts of those behind the mission of R.A.H. But God wants to work in each and every one of us that professes to be Christ-followers. He desires to use us to show Himself to the world. He specializes in taking broken people and using their brokenness to help others. As the reality of Christ's sacrifice sinks deep in our soul, we respond by serving. Some are called to go overseas, and all are asked to serve in their home, workplace, and community. As Redeeming Africa's Hope seeks to impact lives in Africa, may we work to redeem Adrian's hope, too. What that looks like is up to you!

To see the video for Redeeming Africa's Hope, click here:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VymB7PuyhXw>

**Questions to Consider:**

The Greatest Commandment is “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. And love your neighbor as yourself.” (Matthew 22:37, 39) Ask: How is God stirring my heart right now? Have I given Him my soul? Am I using my intelligence to bless Him? Am I spending time loving God? How am I loving my neighbor?

Have I asked God to soften my heart so I can see things as He does? Do I see an injustice and look for ways to change it, or do I quickly put it out of my mind?

How is God speaking to you through Dan and Laura? Is there something He’s trying to tell you? Something He wants you to do?

Is God asking you to serve overseas? There are many countries that need our time, money and prayers. Where is He giving you a heart to serve?

Luke 24:32 says, “*Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?*” Are we asking God to “burn within our heart?” Are we spending time studying the Scriptures so He can use them to change us?

Karibu Nyumbani means “Welcome Home” in Swahili. Laura would like to further the outreach of R.A.H. to extend to AIDS orphans and street children. How might you be called to bless these children so that each child has a home?

Maisha Tele means “Full Life” in Swahili. This is a ministry for single moms and widowed women. Pray that God might continue to use Laura to bless these women. How might you be called to minister to them?

Laura shared exciting news: she’s getting married! Continue to pray for her relationship with Kera and their upcoming wedding – hopefully in August.

***Additional Verses:*** Matthew 22:37-39, 1 Corinthians 11:26

***This week’s memory verse:*** “*Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?*” Luke 24:32

### **REMINDERS:**

January 30, 2011 – MOSAIC FAMILY FUN NIGHT! We will meet at Moon Walk Adventures in the Adrian Mall for a night of fun, food, friends and family. It will be open to 1MOSAIC from 5-7pm Sunday night and it is a completely FREE event. Please use this opportunity to invite some family or friends out to enjoy & connect.

February 6, 2011 – The Gathering at SHU at **5 pm!!!** This is Super Bowl Sunday night so we will bump our time up an hour earlier. We will be kicking off our marriage series that night & talking about the work of having a “Championship Marriage”. This may be a great month to invite that couple God has been pressing on your heart!

February 13, 2011 – The Gathering at SHU at 6pm. **Brad Gray** will be joining us and teaching out of Genesis about God's initial design for intentions for marriage. You will not want to miss this week!