

MEMORIAL SERVICE FOR FLORENCE (FLO) GEHMAN: This coronavirus is wreaking havoc in many areas. Our family finally got together one month after Flo passed away on April 19. We have decided to hold the Memorial Service for my dear late wife, Flo, on Sunday afternoon, July 19, at 3:30 p.m. at New Life Church (18237 East Apshawa Road, Minneola, Florida), just five minutes away from my residence at the AIM Retirement Center. A ten minute narrated pictorial story of Flo's life will be shown prior to the service, beginning around 3:15 p.m.



Memorial for Flo: If the Lord should lead you, we are requesting that in lieu of flowers and in honor of Flo you contribute to a mission's project dear to Flo's heart and dear to her friend's heart, Damaris Nthale, the Regional Coordinator of The Mailbox Club for East Africa.



Flo's Memorial is to reach the children of Eritrea for Christ through The Mailbox Club. Flo's memorial will provide

funding for the translation and publishing of eight books for children, ages 4-14, into the Tigrigna language used in Eritrea. Eritrea (in northeast Africa next to the Arabian Peninsula) is a poor, unreached nation with 6,000,000 people of whom 38% are below the age of 14. Amazingly, 74% of the people in 2015 were literate. In order to reach the children of Eritrea The Mailbox Club plans to train 50 church leaders and Sunday School teachers to use these books with follow up. The amount needed for translation and publishing the eight books is \$3,600. (In addition, the transport of 50 teachers from Eritrea to the Ethiopian border and their accommodation is \$3,750, plus \$1,500 for transport of the TMC team to Eritrea by air and bus with accommodations within Eritrea.)



Please read the following story of Damaris and her close bonding with Flo and the remarkable way in which God has used Damaris.

In North America make checks payable to:

The Mailbox Club

(On the Check Memo Line put the following: #1144. (This is the allocation number for the office to know that it is for the Mailbox Club Eritrea Projects.)

Mail the check to: The Mailbox Club, 404 Eager Road, Valdosta, GA 31602-1399

For bank transfers for this project:

Regions Bank, 2611 N Patterson Street, Valdosta, GA 31602

Account Holder Name: The Mailbox Club Inc.

Account Number: 6967036124

Routing Number: 062005690

Swift Code: UPNBUS44

In Kenya contributions to the Memorial Fund, make deposits or transfers to the following bank:

Name: Damaris Kamene Abednego Nthale

Kenya Currency Account: 1274564786

Bank: Kenya Commercial Bank; P. O Box 30 Code 90100; Machakos-Kenya; D C Road

Swift Code – KCBLKENX; Bank Code – 01194

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DAMARIS WITH HER RELATIONSHIP WITH FLO AND THE MAILBOX CLUB MISSION TO ERITREA

Damaris was born July 13, 1964, in the Machakos District of Kenya. After one month her mother came down with cerebral malaria. She lost her mind and after mutilating Damaris and trying to kill her, she ran off and abandoned her. In God's providence her Christian grandmother heard her crying and found Damaris half dead. She carried Damaris on her back 40 kilometers to the hospital where she recovered after one month. Her mother never returned home until fourteen years later and Damaris was afraid of seeing her for fear she would kill her.

But her grandparents took her in as one of their own children. Her grandfather was a Christian pastor, active in ministry. He had a special love and interest in Damaris and took her wherever he went. Wherever he walked in ministry and found children playing, he would stop, sing a song for them, take out his Bible and teach them a memory verse, then leave them playing. Damaris learned to love children and learned the importance of teaching children God's Word, quoting Deuteronomy 4:7 and Proverbs 22:6. That is where God began to call Damaris into ministry with children.

Although Damaris had made many decisions to accept Christ, she never understood the Gospel until she attended a youth camp at the age of 18 when she understood that salvation is by grace through faith in Jesus Christ and apart from works. On April 13, 1984, when she gave her life to Christ, God took away all hatred of her mother and all fear of teaching. God gave her a love for ministering to children and she began to teach Sunday School.

The next six years brought many challenges to Damaris. Her grandfather died, her mother never came back for her, her father married another women but they did not care for Damaris. God comforted her with Scripture: "For my father and my mother have forsaken me, but the Lord will take me in" (Ps 27:10). (Throughout the 22 page autobiography which Damaris sent me, it is evident that she has memorized dozens of Scriptures which God used to guide and help her through life).

One day in June, 1989, she was alone in her grandmother's house making lunch when Damaris heard a voice calling her three times, "Damaris, Damaris, Damaris, go to Bible School." When her grandmother returned home from the garden, Damaris shared this with her. "God is calling you to Bible School," her grandmother replied. Later in Nairobi she saw a magazine for sale, "Today in Africa," and she bought it. In it she found an advertisement for Moffat College of the Bible in Kijabe. This stirred her mind. In a series of providential events she was accepted as a student at Moffat and given enough money by her drunken uncle to pay \$30.00 towards the \$300.00 fees needed. But where would she get the remainder?

For one month she prayed daily for fees and quoted Philippians 4:6 daily. In her own words she wrote, "One day Mom Flo, who was teaching us Christian Education, came to our class and before we began the lesson, she told us to take a piece of paper and write your immediate need and open your Bible to Psalm

118 and put the paper there and trust God. I wrote, ‘God, provide for my college fees.’” A few days later God answered that prayer through a special scholarship.

Again in her own words, “The same week Mom Flo asked me if I could help her in the house after classes and on Saturdays. That’s how God provided for my basic needs at Moffat. She was so good and she trained me how to cook, to wash clothes in the wash machine and cook food for Dad Dick when she was away, and how to cooperate with Nathan and Joy and also she prayed for me many times. She supported me with many things which she wanted to give away. I worked for them for three years when they were at Kijabe and then they moved to Scott Theological College in Machakos.”

She went on to explain how “Mom Flo” impacted her life. Flo taught her Christian Education including children’s ministry. This increased her knowledge and ability to practice teaching children in various churches. She was sent down into the valley with other Moffat students to begin evangelizing among the Gikuyu, Maasai and Turkana. They began with two adults and five children whom Damaris taught, meeting under a tree. She applied what she learned from Mom Flo and taught the children diligently. That church has now grown to 200 members and they have planted seven other daughter churches. One of those first five children she taught under a tree attended Narok Bible College and is now ordained and the pastor in charge of those churches.



Back at Kijabe Damaris started a Bible Club for the children of Moffat Bible College staff. In her words, “Mom Flo used to support me with teaching aids which helped me to teach the children. Through Mom Flo’s interest in children’s ministry, Moffat invited Child Evangelism Fellowship to speak on Missions Day.” In Damaris’s fourth year of studies, just prior to graduation, she felt led to apply to Child Evangelism Fellowship. They invited her to attend a 15 week CEF training course in Nairobi which she found so helpful.

After the course the CEF officials asked her to start a children’s ministry in Machakos, Kenya. But she declined, feeling unable to do so. “I don’t know how to speak and I have never been in leadership,” she said. They reminded her of Moses and how God helped him, and said they witnessed in her a calling for children’s ministry. Finally, she agreed.

After organizing a CEF committee in Machakos she began the CEF children’s ministry in many churches and schools and trained hundreds of students to be teachers. In one year of her leadership in Machakos, CEF was reaching 20,000 children in over 20 Bible Clubs and 30 schools. More than 5,000 children made professions of faith. She started a street ministry in Kenyatta Stadium in Machakos, started a ministry at the annual Machakos Fair, reaching thousands of children in two days. Feeling a need for more discipling materials, Damaris started the Mailbox Club ministry in Machakos and introduced this ministry into CEF. She started a ministry of raising funds to help the Child Evangelism Fellowship, involving the children and their parents. CEF fund raising in Machakos became a model for the other eight CEF regions in Kenya.

The CEF President and the American Board visited Machakos to confirm whether her reports were true. She took them around where there were children’s ministries. They shed tears when hearing the many testimonies. The President said, “We have seen enough.”

Child Evangelism Fellowship asked her to move to Nairobi and become the Kenyan National Director of Education. Finally, in 2014 her work with both Mailbox Club and Child Evangelism Fellowship became too much, so she requested The Mailbox Club ministry to accept her as a full time worker. In 2016 CEF released her and she became the Director of the Mailbox Club for Kenya while still volunteering for CEF. For one year she worked alongside of expatriate missionaries, Paul and Anita. When they returned home in 2017 she was appointed the East African Coordinator for The Mailbox Club.

During the following year she started The Mailbox Club in Tanzania, Rwanda and Burundi, and South Sudan, as well as assisted the new coordinators for Uganda and Ethiopia, and appointed a new Coordinator of TMC in Kenya. This year, 2020, the goal of Mailbox Club for Eastern Africa is to establish the ministry for children in Eritrea.

Damaris concludes: “I give God all the glory and honor for using me to do the above. Mom Flo didn’t know God was using her to equip me to do what she could not do. God bless you, Mom. I am who I am because you came in when I needed help. God bless you,



Dick, and your family, for thinking about me and children. When Mom Flo and the family moved to Machakos and I also moved there to start the CEF ministry, I used to visit her and admire how she used to invite the house helpers on the station to her home for Bible study. She shared with me how to do it and gave me some books. In my church I joined one of the prayer groups and started a Bible Study. These ladies could not pray, read a verse or teach, but the Bible Study helped them to be able to pray and preach. Blessed is the death of his saints and their works will follow them!

Amen.

Damaris is married to Abednego who is an evangelist and they have one daughter who is now 21.

The Mission Project our family has chosen as a Memorial for Flo is to assist Damaris in evangelizing and discipling the children of Eritrea by translating and publishing eight Bible Study books for children in Tigrigna (the language of Eritrea) through The Mailbox Club as they partner with the churches in Eritrea and train their church leaders and Sunday School teachers to use the materials. Any gifts beyond what is needed for translation and printing will be used for the other needs of the project mentioned above.