

Glen Alda Seniors

by Doug Field

A friendly, active and open group.

My daughter posted the following on her Facebook page this last weekend, and it struck a chord with Bev and myself as it applies in every way to how we attempt to live our lives. She wrote:

The plain fact is that the planet does not need more "successful" people, but it does desperately need more peacemakers, healers, restorers, storytellers, and lovers of every kind It needs people of moral courage, who will join in the fight to make the world habitable and humane, and these qualities have little or nothing to do with success as our culture has defined it. (David W. Orr)

Bev and I are not much different from the rest of you who were born and raised in this country. Where we do differ is in the fact that instead of rushing on our way to success as it was defined in the sixties, which is when we graduated, worked, met, married and embarked on this wonderful trip called life, is in the fact that we gave up two years of life in this country, and embarked on an adventure in central Africa where we taught in a remote rural area of northern Zambia. That experience changed us in more ways than we could ever have imagined at the time. What we experienced there was not the jungle adventure, or the overwhelming traumatic poverty all the advertisements from aid agencies looking for your money would have you believe. What we primarily witnessed was life as it should be. Cer-

tainly people over there did not have even the slightest understanding or knowledge of the things we took for granted back in Canada. What they did have though, was a love of life, an acceptance of who they were, what they had to do to survive, a love of music, song, dance, and the ability to find fun in the things they encountered every day. Most importantly though, they had an incredible sense of family and community.

We owned a little 65 cc Honda motorcycle as our only transportation. It got us everywhere we needed to go. Yes, it was slow, but we were close together so what may look like a bad thing to you was a kind of togetherness for us. We used this little machine to travel to town for foodstuffs when we needed things we could not grow in our garden. We used it to travel hundreds of miles to visit other Canadians in remote rural outposts in some far flung corners of the northern province of Zambia. We also used it to travel the numerous foot paths leading to the many small villages that were dotted throughout the area. We were greeted with courtesy and mutual respect by the headmen, who would invariably send for a youth who attended school and therefor spoke some English. We would then spend an hour or so exchanging stories of who we were with whom we were conversing before mounting up once more and continuing on our travels. As a couple we learned a lot about the importance of family, community, working together, and how all may survive if you each pull your own weight and help each other in times of need.

Do not get me wrong here, everything was not all roses. Certainly there were times we feared for our lives. We once had to run, jump on our bike and head for the "hills" as we were about to be attacked by an angry mob. This, by the way, was while we were on a teachers college campus. On many occasions we had guns pointed at us with intent, just for crossing a bridge or a railway track. Scary? Yes, but our overall experience was enlightening to say the least, and the overall result is that it has changed us in ways that endure to this day.

We always try to do our best whether or not there is a personal gain in it for us. We give freely of our time and effort to assist those around us. We have chosen to live in this part of the province as we enjoy the kinds of people who live here. Indeed, I have in the past turned down some very lucrative employment opportunities in more urban areas. We chose that path so that we could allow our children to grow up in an area that still values community and family. The list goes on, but the point here is that most people who are judged successful are ambitious for the monetary gain and resultant prestige



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