

Stefanie and Esther

For such a time as this ... for such a time as this ... (Esther 4:14). Have you ever dwelt much on this important phrase in the Bible from the book of Esther? This is one of the many speech-stopping statements made by one wise man of God named Mordecai. Did he know the depth of that statement when he made it? Probably. Did he know we would be ruminating on that phrase hundreds of years after he made it? I truly doubt it.

As a home schooling mom in my host country, my day is typically similar to many other moms who home educate. Most definitely it is not filled with speech-stopping moments. Our family starts the morning together with breakfast and devotions followed by classes. Since my two oldest kids are independent, they work on their own while I help my younger two children. Most days we then travel to our international Christian school with which we are associated for home schooling.

The trip to Bingham Academy is where our life, familiar to us in the U.S., departs sharply. We leave the safety and familiarity of our more “western” seminary home with the beauty of its palm and eucalyptus trees, blooming geraniums, daisies, gazanias, and bougainvillea, to the starkly contrasting streets outside the gates. Suddenly, life revs up as we quickly merge into one of the multiple lanes that race the length of the seminary inside. Suk (a small business building, usually made of sheet metal) after suk blurs by as we navigate the buses and taxis pulling over for fares or quickly zooming back into vehicle lanes racing to their destinations. In between all the vehicles criss-cross the many pedestrians finding a quick space to cross the street between vehicles maneuvering their way up the hills. As we inch our way into and out of the busy roundabouts and join the “ring road” highway, we bounce back and forth between lanes dodging broken down vehicles, potholes, more pedestrians crossing, and homeless people lying along-side the busy narrow highway. While we maneuver safely through the chaos of each trip, I am reminded of something once written by a friend challenged by cancer. She referred to God as the Great Master Conductor. As I drive each day through the busy crazy traffic, I am brought to the reality of how closely God, our Master Conductor, orchestrates aspects of our lives. Many times it is brought to my mind how narrowly one vehicle misses colliding with another car in

the roundabout or how a broken down vehicle scarcely avoids a direct hit from a huge dump truck rounding the corner. As was stated about the character Britta Torvik in the *Hammer of God* by Bo Giertz, “She felt how God lived and was present everywhere, how His rule entwined itself round the most trivial things in the kitchen and the nursery ...,” so we can also conclude God is definitely active on the streets of Addis Ababa.

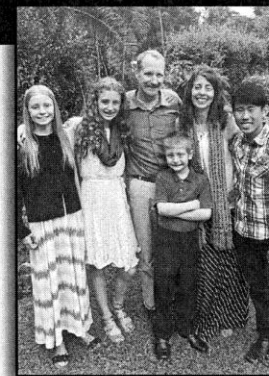
Often the Great Conductor has also been present in bringing together friends for a much needed conversation about the challenges of daily life. Sometimes it is simply conversations of motherhood, friendships, health issues, extended family, similar interests, etc., or it takes on the slant unique to missionary wives about educational challenges in a host country or raising children in a culture not their own. As I ponder these conversations between trusted missionary friends, I cannot help but be reminded of the passage in Esther 4:14, *And who knows whether you have not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?* Certainly, none of the missionary or non-missionary friends I am sharing time with are queens appointed by God to help save their people, but nonetheless, God has put us together to share one another’s burdens with those particular people He has, by His orchestration, put in our lives. Maybe we have been given this husband, these particular children, and been put at our sisters’ feet (in their lives) for such a time as this ...



STEFANIE'S BIO:

Stefanie is wife to an adventurous and loving husband, Mark, and homeschool mother of four fun-loving children/young adults ages 16, 14, 12, and 7. The University of Portland is her alma mater where she graduated with a degree in psychology and an associate degree in business administration. She is currently residing in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, where her husband has served on the faculty

as a theological educator for the past two years and theological coordinator for East and South Africa for nearly a year. Growing up in Vernonia, Oregon, her father taught her a love for the beautiful view displayed for her every day in God’s creation which she now appreciates in the countryside of Ethiopia. One of the biblical missionaries she admires greatly is Esther, who was used



as God’s tool in saving the Jewish people from mass destruction under Haman’s hand.

What dilemma have you been challenged with recently?

Act II: The Hope (Chapter 2)

Who enters the "stage" for Ruth and what does he do (vv. 1-17) and offer her (vv. 18-23)?

What is your definition of "hope"?

When you have felt hopeless, what brought you new hope?

Act III: The Risk (Chapter 3)

Naomi and Ruth were risk takers. What was Naomi's strategy for Ruth?

Ruth does what Naomi says and then offers a challenge to Boaz that includes redemption and marriage. Using your study Bible or device search for the biblical reference of redemption in Ruth's time.

Shara gives us a beautiful testimony of living her life for the Lord. Knowing that you have been redeemed by Jesus, how does that knowledge make you free to live your life today?

Act IV: The Solution (Chapter 4)

How does Boaz act to solve the dilemma?

Now comes the amazing ending for this family (vv. 13-22). What did you discover?

As God's children we are truly blessed to have the opportunity to be His witnesses. Whose life will you touch today with an act of kindness or gift of love?

+ *In closing, say a special prayer for Shara and the ministry she and her husband share and for your witness to those who surround you.*

