

**JOURNALS** POSTED ON JUNE 6, 2019

## Connections



CANDIA DORSAINWU

God has an interesting way of making connections happen and then watching the process unfold.

May 30 – June 2, 2019, I found myself fully immersed in Karen culture, way of life, language, sounds and love at Tonto Rim Christian Camp. I lived hospitality and community like none other. My soul was nourished.

I had been invited by two church leaders from the Arizona Karen Baptist Church (AKBC) to lead their annual retreat at Tonto Rim Christian Camp. We had picked the Bible passage (John 4: 4- 26) to undergird the 2019 retreat, shirts had been designed by a teenager, and the schedule had been prayed over.

What we did not realize is that the “God connections” had started to be made in 2017, as one church leader registered her team of mental health counselors/co-workers with the Short-Term Mission (STM) office and participated in pre-trip orientation sessions. The team had been lifted up in prayer, as they were about to serve at a refugee camp in Asia during sensitive times. In 2019, some members of the original team went back to serve at the same refugee camp with a couple church leaders from the AKBC. The team registered with STM as short-term volunteers. The connections continued to be nurtured, as I facilitated the post-trip de-briefings once they had returned to Arizona. God was not yet finished with “God connections.” As a result of the de-briefings, the 2019 team became my co-disciples for the special initiative STM started a few months back, where we intentionally walk alongside a few volunteers after short-term missions have ended. We walk together as co-learners, as God’s ambassadors and witness God weaving through our lives.

The “God connections” became stronger at the retreat at Tonto Rim Christian Camp this past May, where I had the humble privilege to lead Bible studies for four days, lead prayers, participate in evening devotions with a group of 15 young men and baptize two young adults who decided to accept Jesus as their Lord and Savior.

What a site we were; Pastor Tha Hser, Rev. Mary Wood and I, walking hand in hand into the creek on Sunday June 2nd in the morning with the baptismal candidates! We held on to each other’s hands as we prayed for the baptismal candidates.



We rejoiced with the sounds of water gushing around us. We welcomed the six young adults into God’s family with music and cheers. We affirmed community.



The woman at the well in John 4 touched the hearts of many during our Bible studies at Tonto Rim Christian Camp. We gathered as a people of God to receive and be blessed by God's grace and find living water together. My walk has been made better because I remained open to God's connections with and through all present.