Cruel or Kind? continued from p. 1

when Lot is reluctant to flee from Sodom, God goes to the merciful extreme of yanking him out by the hand (19:16); Here is the heart of the OT God on full display. He is eager to save and reluctant to execute judgment, but He is forced to intervene with judgment when the freewill actions of humans create irreparable situations of evil and suffering.

On every page of Scripture we witness God in anguish as His heart of infinite love bleeds forth both justice and mercy for an abusive and abused race of rebels. The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah is a prime example of God’s true heart when responding to evil.

The short answer is, He’s not. A thoughtful reading of the whole Bible reveals no difference in character between the God of the OT and the God of the NT. In fact, the God interacting with people in the OT was none other than Christ Himself, the very One whom we meet in the flesh in the NT (John 8:58; Christ Himself, the very One whom we meet in the flesh in the NT (John 8:58; Revelation 16-20). Clearly, the God we encounter in the NT is the same as the God we encounter in the OT. When content is taken into account, it becomes evident that there is no instance of divine cruelty anywhere in the Bible. There are, however, instances in which God necessarily responds to the human sin problem with justice. In each case He is doing what is best in order to preserve righteousness and save as many people as possible. He always does what is right for all involved, even when acts of judgment are necessary (Deuteronomy 32:4). All of God’s actions are performed as the perfect application of justice and mercy as each case warrants.

Looking ahead to the future, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah is a prime example of God’s true heart when responding to evil.

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KIBIDUL A FARM INSTITUTE

By James Rafferty

Kibidula Farm Institute, in Tanzania, Africa, is a self-supporting ministry that works very closely with the church to reach the world with the gospel. They don’t get a lot of visitors due to the 10-hour car ride from the nearest international airport in Dar es Salaam, so they were excited about my recent visit for a series of meetings there.

Kibidula is staffed by a group of wonderful, dedicated people, mostly from Europe. They operate a number of projects including a grade school, a training school for high school age young people, a lay evangelism program, a literature work, farming and, more recently, raising sheep. I was there three last November for 10 days (not including the 6 days of travel there and back). The time was divided between three groups: the staff, the lay evangelists and the high school age students.

Every 6 months the lay evangelists travel from their respective areas of Tanzania to Kibidula to receive their pay and pick up more literature. This last year, Light Bearers Ministry (LBM) shipped two containers of literature filled with the Discover Guides and another set of Bible studies originally developed at Kibidula. The lay evangelists are eager to take this material back to their home territory to utilize in evangelism. My visit was well timed so that I could spend a few days with these evangelists. We moved through students in their early teens. They occupy three “farms,” 1 for girls and the other 2 for boys. The students are taught to grow their own food. Many of them are Adventists, but even those who are not are eager to gain the spiritual, physical and mental education offered to them free of charge at Kibidula. We studied the three angels’ messages of Revelation 14 with a special emphasis on the judgment in the context of the gospel.

The rest of my time there was spent with the staff of Kibidula. It consists mostly of expatriates from Europe, with one American family, as well as Jason Fournier from Canada with his wife Antwinette from Tanzania to Kibidula to receive their pay and pick up more literature. This last year, Light Bearers Ministry (LBM) shipped two containers of literature filled with the Discover Guides and another set of Bible studies originally developed at Kibidula. The lay evangelists are eager to take this material back to their home territory to utilize in evangelism. My visit was well timed so that I could spend a few days with these evangelists. We moved through students in their early teens. They occupy three “farms,” 1 for girls and the other 2 for boys. The students are taught to grow their own food. Many of them are Adventists, but even those who are not are eager to gain the spiritual, physical and mental education offered to them free of charge at Kibidula. We studied the three angels’ messages of Revelation 14 with a special emphasis on the judgment in the context of the gospel.

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