



News from Nairobi, Kenya

October 2016

If you were in Nairobi this month, you would be amazed to see the way the Jacaranda trees are blooming. They have an amazing blue, purple colour quite wonderful for the eyes to behold. Even their smell fills the air with a beautiful scent. In our area of the city the Jacarandas make everything look so beautiful for the eyes and the mind!



However, in mid- October when the African rains begin to pound the blossoms disappear until the next year. This cycle goes on and on. This reminds me of Solomon's observations of life in general. ***For everything there is a season.*** He talks about a time to be born and a time to die, a time to cry and a time to laugh, a time to grieve and a time to dance among other things.

This month is special in many ways. Our friend, our former elder and pastor Shafkat at New City Fellowship of Nairobi was promoted to glory on Tuesday. Shafkat was special in many ways and his life had blossomed so much and touched so many lives. He had touched mine. He came from a Punjabi Muslim background but Jesus changed the course of his life. When he shared how this happened with me some 17 years ago my lower lips literally dropped. He amazed many whenever they heard how his life in Jesus began. Through an accident that left Shafkat waist down paralyzed and unable to have his Quran in the hospital someone gave him a Bible to pass the time. That Bible changed Shafkat at the age of about 19 forever! Jesus spoke to him there and even though he left the hospital at the time paralyzed, he was a new man. The doctor who treated him did not give him a chance to live past a year! Alas, Shafkat had been in a wheelchair for 36 years this month when he left us.

This was the season that God decided to take our brother from us! Again Solomon's words, there is a time for everything under the sun. This is a time for us to cry and grieve for our dear brother.

We have no words to fully describe our feelings of the suddenness with which everything happened.

We buried our brother Shafkat the same day on Tuesday. Since he came from a Muslim background and since everyone in his side of family is Muslim they wanted him buried same day. They first wanted a Muslim burial and the same day. The reason: he was born a Muslim and must be buried a Muslim. After long discussions and with his wife Sabia who is a believer standing her ground, she told the relatives that Shafkat had wished for a Christian burial. The problem: only men can make such decisions and not women. We encouraged our sister to stand her ground again so that he is given a Christian burial as that was his wish. Finally, Jesus gave us the victory and we gave our brother a Christian burial but we compromised with them that he can be buried the same day! Many in the Church only found out later that we had already buried our brother.

We are now planning to have memorial service for our brother Shafkat on the Sunday of 16th October. We know there will some people from the States coming who knew of our brother and other places.

We need your prayers for this day. We have invited all of Shafkat's Muslim relatives to attend our Church service that day. We hope God will speak and compel upon many to give their lives to the same Jesus Shafkat walked with for 36 years!

We will not shy from preaching the Gospel, as Paul puts it, "it is the power of God at work, saving everyone who believes..."

Pastor Joe

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