

My Little Mtungi

(Mtungi is Swahili for "clay pot.")

By Matthew Kauffman

Our water pure from filter flows;
It's freed from dirt, bacteria, foes
That quickly cause our bowels to churn
Or e'en with fever cause to burn.

You see, in Afric's burning sun,
Our water sources, every one
Are priceless, vital, treasured gifts;
If river, cistern, e'en sand pits.

But during the filter's vital cleanse,
Our drinking water always tends
To lose the cool, refreshing temps;
For heat our tin-roofed shelter lends.

We learned a special means to use;
Regains the coolness that we lose:
An old clay pot, filled, covered, left,
In record time the need is met.

But lately, as we drew to drink,
Unwanted tastes, they made me think
Our li'l mtungi, once so clean,
Now seemed to add its earthen strain.

It wasn't long, till rendered thus,
That water's flavor hindered us
From drinking freely for our health;
That earthen taste robbed all its wealth.

First pushed aside, I proved that pot,
From filter straight that taste was not.
I dumped remaining water clean;
Just couldn't bear to drink again.

The pot got scrubbed and bleached again,
And rubbed inside with my own hand.
Each part was checked and polished true—
The taste of clay must not come through!

Said pot was rinsed, returned to fill
Clear water flowed, then cooled until
I drew again. What did I find?
I tasted bleach, but didn't mind.

You see, compared, this taste was fresh!
No ancient, moldy, earthy trace.
Just hours later as I prayed,
My Lord His finger on me lay.

My li'l mtungi, son, you are,
Your life, my living water pure
Must bear, prepare; so fresh and cool,
To quench men's thirst, and cleanse their souls.

You asked me, son, to make you pure,
By life, by death, or both and more.
You said like Me you want to be;
That process, son, is what you see.

You see, my son, the taste of you,
You wouldn't want still coming through,
To turn the hearts of men away
To quench soul thirst some other way.

So let Me gently add some bleach
To strip away, but then I'll reach
Inside your life with My Own hand
Take all away but what I planned.

And yes, my son, though for awhile
Your life may "taste" still of this trial,
True gold is bettered by the fire!
That "scar" won't spoil, but take you higher.

Your life is short, you know, and soon
You'll be my golden vessel, son!
And when an age is but a day,
You'll still recall this pot of clay.

As face to face you worship Me.
You'll thank Me for eternity
For every little test I brought
That stripped and shaped, prepared, and taught.

Your greatest joy, my son, will be
To worship, praise, and honor Me!
But, next to that, to turn and view
Those souls who drank of Me ... from you!

Here gathered round My throne they'll throng,
And join the everlasting song.
They'll praise Me for that water clean
My li'l mtungi offered them.

Matthew and Melissa Kauffman are currently back in Africa for a short time to help his parents and siblings learn Swahili and African life. In a few months, Matthew and Melissa plan to return to Living Hope Christian Fellowship at Martindale, PA for a time.