

Hazels in Africa

Hope with gentleness and respect. 1 Peter 3:15



Greetings from the coast of Kenya. We were told by various people that the first six months of being new parents, you are just trying to survive. We affirm that statement. Along with being new parents, we have entered a new culture and learning a new language. Please forgive us because it has been almost six months since our last newsletter.

Anastasia is growing into a beautiful little girl with a cheerful smile. It is amazing to watch her explore the world through looking, tasting, and touching right now. She is our sunshine each morning even on a cloudy day.

The rains have come early this year according to the locals. These are the long rains which is the main growing season of the year. No one was prepared for them to come a month early. We have plans of setting up a demonstration plot using the Farming God's Way method. Our neighbor/yard helper has shown interest in what we are doing. He has agreed to help us. We have divided the planting area in half. One half will be planted in the Farming God's Way method and our neighbor will plant the other half the local Digo way. There should be a clear difference between the two ways of farming. The following pray is one that we are praying in relation to Farming God's Way.



"As the rains come to this dry and thirsty land. May the message of God's love penetrate the heart of farmers through the methods and teaching of Farming God's Way. When the bountiful harvest comes, may they acknowledge God and God alone is the Master Farmer and Giver of everything. Amen."

We also have connected with a small church our village of Vuga. It was started in the 90's by missionaries in the area at the time. There are no Digo who attend the church due to the pressures of Islam. The members of the church are all from other local tribes of people who have come to the area to farm. The church has a heart to reach out to their Digo neighbors. They are also interested in Farming God's Way. If time allows, we are going to try to setup a demonstration plot on church property.

Jeremy and a teammate are working on an Oral Bible Storying project for the Digo. Their goal is to address the two religious thoughts that exist here of Islam and Animism with the Truth of the Bible. The first two stories are completed. These stories have already opened the doors to talk about the difference between the Bible and the teaching of Islam. Jeremy had a chance to lay out the gospel message to his language helper one day as they talked about one of the stories. The next few stories are the fall of man and Abraham and his two sons. Islam has these stories but they have several twists. Please pray with us for these stories.



"As your Word God is translated into orally reproducible stories, may these stories bring light to a very dark and oppressed land. Your Word will not return void and may the Holy Spirit convict those listening hearts to the truth. Let those who hear your Word seek answers. Amen."

Relationship Building

We both have new language helpers that are able to work around our schedule with Anastasia. Language lessons are Claudia's main time outside the house during the week. She has a great teacher who is teaching her Swahili and local culture. The Digo still believe that trees have evil spirits and they go to witchdoctors for healings along with believing that Allah is god. Claudia's vocabulary words like mbuyu for baobab tree and mganga for witchdoctor have opened the door to share how Jesus freed people from evil spirits and how Jesus healed people. Please pray for Claudia's language helper **P** as she hears about Jesus the Son of God.

Jeremy has been building a relationship with our neighbor **S**. Together they have built a chicken and rabbit house. It was a long process to build but relationships in the community have been strengthen. We currently have 4 hens and 2 rabbits. Hopefully, fresh eggs are coming soon!!!

Reality of the Mission Field

We want to be open and honest with you our supporters. The mission field is a struggle. Recently our Regional Executive Officer (REO) shared with us that 90% of our time on the mission field is spent just trying to survive and 10% is the ministry stuff we put in our newsletters. This is true from trying to get water, to trying to get home on washed out dirt roads, to trying to dry clothes on a rainy day, to trying not to get sick, to trying to figure out what this weird fungus or rash is on your skin, to trying to just go grocery shopping. It all can be a huge struggle to survive. Our REO encouragement us through Philippines 1:27-30. Verse 27 talks about "let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ." He encouraged us to allow everyday things to be done in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Verse 29 says "for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him but also suffer for his sake." Our REO wanted to let us know he understands how hard it is to "suffer for his sake." He shared a personal story of not being able to go home for his mother's funeral.

We have left everything to come live among the unreached of this world. And it is suffering but that one conversation with a neighbor about Jesus makes it worth it. A seed is planted or watered. It is the Holy Spirit who brings a person to know, understand and accept Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. We have the privilege to walk beside people as they make this decision.



We write you all this to say we have been struggling to survive here in Digoland. This past year and a half has brought us more life changes than most people would experience in a decade. It has been overwhelming. It has especially been hard on Claudia. At the beginning of March, we travelled to Nairobi for medical help for her. AIM has a counselling center called Tumaini. In Swahili, tumaini means hope. Claudia was diagnosed being moderately depressed and has been put on medication. It was difficult to face the fact that Claudia needed help. She spent two weeks seeing a counselor to talk about what had pushed her to this point of needing help. We have returned to the village of Vuga but we are trying to find a healthy way forward. We are trusting God to show us the correct path to take. We share this to ask for your prayers. The reality of the mission field is it is super hard and we desperately need prayers to support us here. We have said it many times over the past years, thank you for holding the rope for us through prayer. Please continue....

Prayer needs:

- ❖ Healthy way forward for us as a family.
- ❖ For Claudia as she adjusts to being on medication for depression.
- ❖ Our current home that we are renting is not safe for a future toddler. We need wisdom of what to do or where to go.
- ❖ Our everyday struggles of being here in Digoland.
- ❖ For our neighbors to come to know the truth about the One True God especially *P, S, J, M, Mama, and Wawa*.
- ❖ For the farmers here to see that God has provided everything needed to have an abundant life.
- ❖ Team unity, vision, and strategy.



Africa Inland Mission

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