

Greetings from Kenya!!!

This month began with me visiting some of our churches in the West Pokot Fellowship. There are around 60 churches in this fellowship, which are broken into 3 sub fellowships (I have already visited 2 of the sub-fellowships), so this trip I visited the last of the churches, 20 in just a couple of days, in the Beroya sub fellowship. Most of these churches have never had the missionary visit, they were excited to see me and I was happy to see them. A few of the churches are in very remote areas. One church in particular, Lorkonoi BBC, took some time to arrive at: start with a three and a half hour drive from Eldoret, turn off the paved road and drive for 5 km on a dirt road, turn onto a pathway and drive for another 5 km, park the vehicle, and then hike for an hour to reach the church (not an easy hike either, it is a very rough terrain with several ravines to cross). About 40 minutes into the hike, I was talking to the man leading us and asked him about animals in the area and he sort of nonchalantly said, "We have trouble with leopards in this area, especially hyena," umm...you can be sure I began praying that we would not encounter any animal! But, we arrived safely at the church and were greeted by the sweetest group of brothers and sisters you have ever met, including an older lady whom I was showing pictures to from my phone; I showed her a picture of me with my grandmother so she wanted to take a picture with me so I could show her the next time I see her.

Over the last several months we have encountered several challenges in the ministry, and at this point, we've come to expect challenges because we understand the enemy does not want to see God's work continue. In the past, responses to different situations were usually decided by the missionary, who made those decisions to help protect the ministry, but we have begun to take a different approach (not to say that the previous way was wrong, but the purposes of previous missionaries were different than ours). The Lord really impressed upon me to begin utilizing our ordained pastors to help with decisions dealing with these challenging situations. Out of our nearly 400 pastors, there are 27 that have been ordained and these men I consider to be the elders amongst our elders. We know one of our purposes is to prepare the ministry for if another missionary never follows us, so the major decisions that affect the ministry need to start being made by the national leadership. We all met this month and began discussing some of the issues that have come up and how they can be used by God to move this ministry forward in unity. Pray for these men, that they would have influence over the other pastors in our ministry and would seek the Lord in what He wants to do in His work.

The sewing ministry continued this month and Jeri was able to purchase 15 new sewing machines because of the giving of many of you. Jeri and the ladies were able to visit a few schools to distribute the kits and share the Gospel, with many girls surrendering their lives to Christ. This ministry has grown more than Jeri expected, so please pray it continues to be used for His glory!

We are now counting down the days to when Selena departs Kenya. Jeri, Selena, and Micaiah will fly out of Kenya on April 27 to return to Alabama, and I will leave on July 3. Jeri will be helping Selena get situated with a few things needed for her to live in America and we will return without her in early August. While there, both kids will get to participate in a few things over the summer with our home church, so they are both excited about it. It is easy for us to talk about now, but we all know how difficult it is going to be in August; Selena has already been told she can't see us off at the airport, we will have to say our goodbyes before. Pray as we all prepare for this.

We're still praying God would allow us to make more partnerships. If you'd like more info about the ministry in Kenya, you can contact us by email: vancefamilykenya@gmail.com.

Here are some specific items you can be praying about on our behalf:

1. Pray that God continues to grow His church in Kenya and Uganda.
2. Pray for discernment in decisions that need to be made including our ordained pastors.
3. Pray for the needs of our churches.
4. Pray for our Bible schools, teachers and students, and for the changes we are looking at making.
5. Pray for Micaiah as he continues online schooling.
6. Pray for wisdom on Selena's transition back to Alabama, Jeri and the kids depart Kenya April 27.
7. Economic hardship continues in Kenya. Pray the Lord continues to supply.
8. Pray for Kapsoya BBC and our time there.
9. Pray for Jeri and the sewing ministry.
10. Pray for a team from Decatur Baptist Church arriving April 13.

Thank you all so much for your love, prayer, and support!

