

Greetings from Alabama!!!

One thing we miss about Eldoret, and even Nairobi, is the climate. It is nearly perfect all year around, when it's raining it's a bit cooler and when it's not raining, it's a bit warmer, and for the most part, the temperature stays in the 70s year around. The reality of summer in Alabama is that it is hot and humid! I know, most of you know. We thought summer in the South was bad until we walked out of church in Kansas City on a Tuesday night and it was still in the 90s. It was probably 9:00 pm, but it felt like midday; at least in Alabama, when the sun goes down, it cools off a little; and thank the Lord for air conditioning! I usually have several questions that pop in my mind when we visit different places, curious how people go about everyday life. We found ourselves driving through Southern Nebraska on a two-lane country road, miles away from any town, and I asked out loud, "Where do these people go to the supermarket?" Even when we lived in Eldoret, in Western Kenya, we had easier access to supermarkets than the folks in rural Nebraska! It's funny though, I also used to say that I couldn't understand how people live in a place like Nairobi, then the Lord moved us there.

For the majority of July, we stayed around Decatur. We did travel to Florida to celebrate Micaiah's graduation and for his birthday. We were able to take him and a couple of his buddies to Universal Studios. These are friends from our church who he has known for nearly his whole life and he has stayed in contact with since first going to Kenya. We're thankful for the friendships he has maintained and it has encouraged our hearts to see the way his friends love him. We still have a few months before we really have to deal with the emotions of being empty nesters, but seeing the multitude of people who love on both Selena and Micaiah will help us to deal with them. It has been incredible to see those around them who have pulled them into their lives and have made them a part of their families. There was a Sunday in July when we were to be at a church in the next county over. The service started late, so we went to small group at our home church. As we were getting in the car to leave, we noticed Selena's car parked across from us and saw she had a flat tire. The dad in me wanted to fix it for her, but we needed to drive 40 minutes away from Decatur, so we decided to go ahead and go, because we knew someone would help her get it changed after church, and of course they did. There are way too many people to thank who have invested, or are investing, in our children's lives, but we praise the Lord for you all!

Over the last 2 months, we've been in 10 different churches, sharing about what the Lord is doing in our lives and in Kenya. A couple of those churches were not too far from Decatur, so it was nice not having to travel very far or sleep in a different bed. While we were around Decatur, we had the opportunity to share at our own church on a Wednesday night. One thing that we've struggled with since being back is having clarity on planting a church in Nairobi, and we finally had a conversation with our pastor about it. Pastor Joe asked us a very simple question that actually brought a lot of clarity. He just simply asked when was the last time we had clarity about ministry in Kenya, and we realized that the last clear direction we had from the Lord had to deal with the ministry in Western Kenya; we've known our purpose was to prepare that ministry for if another missionary doesn't follow us, and we saw that there is some more we can do to help the churches under that ministry. One of our goals in leaving Eldoret was to help the churches there become autonomous, without dependence on a missionary, and one of the ways we can still help them with that is through establishing a process in which they can become registered as individual churches with the government of Kenya. Churches in Kenya are allowed to operate by either being registered as an individual church with the government or by being under the umbrella of a registered religious society; around 99% of the churches we worked with fall under the second category. When we return to Kenya, we will work on developing a plan which those churches can follow to become registered and take full ownership of their properties. It will also include working with other missionaries under our registered religious society in Kenya to determine the best way for these churches to be organized so that they meet the requirements the government has set for them to become registered. There will for sure be some challenges we will face, and we will not be able to get all of the nearly 300 churches registered, but there are a few key churches that we believe if we can help them through the process it will create a template for the others to follow. The separation that we have had from Eldoret has been good, so we will continue to live and work in Nairobi. While there, we will continue to be a part of Living Faith Nairobi, the church plant we were involved with before our furlough started. We are excited for this and are looking forward to getting back there to help in whatever areas we can. It has been a joy to see the Lord move in this young congregation...that's the clarity we've gotten, and we know that once we begin accomplishing the things the Lord has made clear, He will give us the next thing. As we have confessed many times, whether that is planting a church in Nairobi or any other place in the world, we just want to be obedient to what He has asked of us.

August began with Jeri and me hitting the road, driving from Alabama, to the coast in South Carolina, through Tennessee, Indiana, Illinois, Missouri, all the way across Kansas, back through Nebraska before going half way back across Kansas, and finally back to Alabama; only around 5,000 miles in total. We took a few days to celebrate our 22nd anniversary at the beach before setting off across the country. Along the way, we spent the night with friends we met in Eldoret who now live in SC, the Sneeds, then the day we were leaving the beach we met other friends who are missionaries to the Philippines, Eddie and Sarah Ziss; we knew they were coming to the States for furlough, but had no idea when. We posted something about leaving the beach and Sarah sent a message saying they were just down the road, so we met for coffee. It's been a few years since we've seen them and it was nice to meet in person and catch up a bit. We experienced so much on this trip, and I won't bore you with all the details, but we got to see family, visit several new churches, eat Kansas City bbq, drive for miles and miles through prairies and farmland, visit 2 States we'd never been (Nebraska and Oklahoma), go to the Wizard of Oz museum in the middle of nowhere, eat sushi, catch up with old friends, make new friends, spend a couple of days with Shosh (Phyllis Stirewalt), and share our hearts about what the Lord has been doing in His ministry in Kenya.

The upcoming month is full with three missions conferences in three different states and I will be preaching at a new church in Prattville, AL, just before Montgomery. Our time of furlough seems like it is flying by, we're already 4 months into our planned 8 months and it seems like January will be here in just a couple of weeks. Please continue to pray for us to make new connections.

We need to continue making a schedule for furlough. It has been nearly three years since we were approved as BBFI missionaries, and there are some costs involved which we have not raised support for, like for health insurance, and the cost of living in Nairobi is a bit higher than in Eldoret. The Lord has always proved Himself faithful during our time in Kenya, and we know He will continue doing so, but we will need to use that furlough time to raise more support. Being a part of BBFI gives us a great network of churches to reach out to, so please pray we are able to make the connections the Lord wants us to, not just within BBFI but with like minded churches/individuals elsewhere. If you would like for us to come and report to your church, present the ministry, or are willing to recommend us to a church, please let us know. We have a couple of opportunities for the month of October, but pray we are able to fill our schedule.

We love you!
Shaun, Jeri, Selena, Micaiah

PRAISE:

Micaiah is now working and has started college classes, and the Lord has worked out his long term living arrangements!

1. Pray that God continues to grow His church in Kenya and Uganda.
2. Pray for changes that have been made and for our national leadership to continue trusting the Lord.
3. Pray for the needs of our churches as they navigate without the missionary there.
4. Pray for our Bible schools, teachers, students, and churches as they have taken on full ownership of the schools.
5. Pray as national leadership comes together to discuss moving forward.
6. Pray as we continue to seek the Lord for His plan for us in Kenya and our involvement with Living Faith Nairobi.
7. Pray as we continue to plan our 2026 furlough, new churches to be partnered with.
8. Pray for opportunities for us to share the Gospel.
9. Pray for Micaiah as he adjusts to life in America, for him and Selena as they juggle school, work, church, and life.
10. Pray as we begin a plan for churches to become autonomous.
11. Pray for our travels over the month of September.

