

Our first few months in Kenya The West's October Update



It has been a very full and amazing two months here in Kenya and we are starting to feel more at home. It is quite different living in a relatively off-grid and very dry location with no utility supplies! Eliza and Josiah have settled really well at their new school and are getting used to the longer (45-minute) commute each day. Part of this route goes along a game reserve and so we have a wonderful opportunity to regularly spot rhino, giraffe, buffalo and zebra, not forgetting the cheeky smaller monkeys and bigger baboons on the side of the road.

We have also had to swiftly adjust to driving out here - not only navigating unorthodox driving styles but also regular animal crossings at unexpected times. Christian's first solo car drive was also rather amusing as she was met by a line of 25 unmanned camels marching down the main road towards her.

Schools Ministry

So far, we have established connections with four Kenyan schools within our local region. Invitations to visit and minister have come through links with local Christian teachers and headmasters, also linked to the local church. This has provided a valuable key person with whom to work through and there has been a mutual keenness to promote the gospel and encourage students in their faith.



Over the last few months, we have spoken to around 700 students through Christian Union meetings in secondary schools, and early morning meetings in primary schools. The warm and enthusiastic reception by both teachers and students has been really encouraging.



In the secondary schools, Tim has been able to share a gospel-centred message and facilitate a Bible study, with the use of some fantastic resources provided by Share Word Global and Bradley Willey. These have been immensely helpful in encouraging the students to read the scripture and to get to know Jesus for themselves. Giving the students time to break into smaller discipleship groups of ten, has also been a great way to encourage fellowship and group-centred discussions. Some of the questions from students have been really encouraging; showing a great hunger for the truth. To help support education, we also have some exciting plans to establish an internet connection for one school, as well as provide some training and additional equipment. We will keep you posted on the progress of this...



Bibles

Tim has also been working hard to partner with local suppliers of Bibles, New Testaments and picture Bible storybooks for the schools. The Gideons, Share Word Global and Bible Society Kenya have been really helpful. We are just about to launch a delivery of Bibles to the 13-14-year-olds in Ol-Taffeta school and so please pray that this goes well. Our vision is to not only distribute Bibles, but to also encourage the students in their faith journey - through regular training and equipping in small Bible studies at school.

Feeding program

With donations kindly given, we have established our first feeding programme for one local primary school Ol-Taffeta. Here, there are many struggling families who have been hit hard by the failed rains and rising cost of living. This breakfast porridge given at morning break, has been hugely welcomed. One teacher noted that since the start of this, there have been less absences from school. At lunchtime, the teachers had also previously been giving some of their own lunch to hungry children without. This programme is now able to provide a morning meal to the majority, as well as provide a little extra at lunch for those individuals who come to school with nothing.



Establishing this has been quite a lengthy but good learning process. Tim has liaised with other people running feeding programmes and has also had fun cooking and sampling a range of porridge meals! He has also spent time sourcing this for the best price (there has been quite some variation!). Teachers and parent committees have also been involved in meetings to establish the desire for this but to also ensure transparency. Tim also personally delivers these regular supplies of food to the school to help ensure that the full amount gets to where it should. These regular visits help maintain accountability but also provide opportunities to build deeper relationships with staff and pupils.

Special School

We were also recently invited to visit a boarding school of 20 students who have a range of severe and complex learning difficulties including cerebral palsy, combined hearing and visual impairment, spina bifida, down's syndrome and autism. While the current setup is incredibly basic and very challenging to see, it has been encouraging to meet teachers with such a dedicated and passionate heart to support these young people. The school is hoping to get formally registered to access some government funding; however, this process so far has been slow. We are therefore hoping to find and connect with some charities here in Kenya that may be able to support them further. We would really value your prayer for wisdom around this.



Adult Bible study

We have also enjoyed attending a new lunchtime Bible study led by Tim's father Roger. This has been run on a Wednesday, in the heart of Nanyuki town and has welcomed a range of local people from varying backgrounds and job roles. It has been really encouraging to personally attend and is an exciting opportunity to build links with other attendees and local Christians.

Other new challenges and opportunities!

We (Tim!) have also been embracing the opportunity to learn new skills such as woodworking - to help furnish our new home, car mechanics - for maintaining/servicing the cars, and also getting to grips with the intricacies of solar power! There is a lot to learn in many ways...

Thank you so much for praying for us. We really would love to hear how you are doing too - please do email back if/when you get the time. We will be visiting the UK at Christmas, so would love to arrange any face-to-face catch ups then too.

With love,
Tim, Christian, Eliza and Josiah

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