

Dear Faithful Friends,

With conflicting emotions, our time has ended in Kenya. We have returned to the USA and have relocated to our new home of Greenville, SC. It has been a journey marked with bitter trials and sweet rewards, and we are eternally grateful for how you have enabled and encouraged us to walk this path. God has been faithful to us, and our experiences have shaped who we are as a family and how we view our purpose in the world. I want to share some of those experiences with you now.

- **Proclaiming The Name Of Jesus.** This past March, I traveled to Somaliland in the horn of Africa. You won't find Somaliland on your map because it is a country that has declared its independence from Somalia, but has never been recognized by the international community. Somaliland is 100% Muslim with virtually no indigenous Christians. Kijabe Hospital in Kenya sends a team of doctors there every 3-4 months. The eager anticipation of these Christians' arrival is felt throughout the country, and many people had traveled to meet us from surrounding nations—Djibouti, Ethiopia, Puntland, Somalia. I had the opportunity to teach about medicine, tell Bible stories, discuss medical ethics, and make relationships with Somalis that live on through facebook.
- **Meeting Physical Needs.** I was uniquely positioned to identify and address larger medical needs within our community. HIV-infected women are a particularly vulnerable segment of society with specific needs. They are largely dependent on husbands and fathers, and they have very little influence in relationships and financial matters. Cervical cancer is a major problem throughout Africa, and it is especially common among HIV-infected women. Cervical cancer screening is cheap and easy even in resource-limited settings. Therefore, I found many women who were diagnosed with early, treatable stages of cervical cancer who were then untreated for years because of their poverty. The inevitable outcome is progression, suffering, and death. I witnessed this many times. In response, Megan and I set up the Kijabe HIV Women's Health Fund to provide for the curative treatment of cervical cancer. Through your selfless giving, dozens of women have a healthy future and know that they are prized by God. Please contact us if you have more interest in this ministry.
- **Seeing the world.** Before Ford turned four years old, he had walked on 5 continents. We saw lions and rhinoceroses on the plains of the Maasai Mara, the skyscrapers of Dubai, and the sunrise from the top of Mount Kilimanjaro. God has created and loved vastly different peoples from all over the world. Likewise the wonders of the Earth shout of his magnificent glory. As a family, learning more about God's nature in this way has been special.
- **Encouraging Fellow Believers.** Eritrea is an East African dictatorship that is closed and hostile to the gospel. I received an email one day from a colleague

regarding some Eritrean Christian refugees who had fled to Kenya and had some medical needs. These four men were arrested for their faith and then imprisoned and tortured for eight years before they escaped captivity and were smuggled into Kenya. I have never been more blessed than to be in a position to serve persecuted brothers. We hosted them in our home, loved them the best way that we knew how, and used the resources God entrusted to us to meet some of their needs. Whatever God was able to do for them through us, God did far more in us through them. I continue to be inspired by the transforming work of the Holy Spirit in the hearts and minds of these believers; they have a joy and contentment that I aspire to. We still keep in close contact, and are privileged to be their friends.

- **Making Friends.** We arrived in Kenya not knowing anyone for thousands of miles around us. Over time we made friends from all over the world—Kenya, USA, Canada, Australia, England, Germany. Personally, I am forever linked to Kenya not by the work that I did, but by the people that I met. Kenyans are reserved, formal, and conservative people, but my Kenyan colleagues accepted me and genuinely loved me, and I love them. I was once complimented that I was not a missionary, but that I was one of them, and that is how they treated me. And if you are ever in Kenya, you might run into my namesake, Rhett Magiri.
- **Experiencing God's Provision.** God makes clear and specific promises to us in his word about his desire to provide to us everything that we need for our lives and ministries. However, in American culture, we do not often find ourselves depending on God for our basic needs. We entered this chapter in our lives not knowing exactly what we required in order to live and work within the context that God was leading us. Therefore, we decided to trust God to supply us. The magnificent result was that he used His people to pray for us, encourage us, and help us meet our financial obligations. It was awe-inspiring to watch the Spirit of God orchestrate events to fulfill his promises in our lives.

We have been changed by these God-glorifying experiences, and we are grateful to be able to share them with you. Praise God for what He has done and continues to do.

We Love You,

Rhett, Megan, Claire, Ford, and Gus Shirley