

September-October 2014

As a team we continued to choose Bible stories to craft, translate and record. Then we used them as the basis for conversation wherever we went. One woman, Ann, who lived a short way down the road, opened a little roadside restaurant with her friend Sharon. We chatted. They loved the Bible stories, and Ann was quite good at repeating them back to me. Six of Sharon's children had died except one boy, Seth, who was about ten. "I am so worried about him. He has had a severe headache for a week." I prayed for his healing in the name of Jesus, then gave him a glass of water and an aspirin. The next day she brought him by my house. "Look, he is well! Jesus healed him!" After that I began going to Sharon's house once a week to read Scripture with her and with her mother-in-law, who was so infirm she could hardly get out of bed. "I want to go to heaven," the mother-in-law said, after we sang a song about heaven. She put her faith in Christ and eagerly looked forward to our weekly meetings. Sharon shared with her husband Robert some of what she was learning about Jesus. He began asking for literature to read while he was keeping watch over his crops, protecting them day and night from monkeys and wild pigs. To my surprise, whatever he read, he could remember, and wanted to talk about.

Another of our neighbors, an old diabetic man named Greg, lived with his wife up the path from us. Several times Colin brought back medicine for his diabetes and high blood pressure. His daughter Lydia and his wife Abigail began frequently stopping by our house to chat and have a drink on their way home from their farm. Lydia was not married, but she had a darling baby girl. We regularly shared the gospel with them and Lydia received Christ. Colin began going to visit their home once a week to read the Scriptures and visit with Greg. Abigail turned out to have a fantastic memory, and could also compose songs. It was a joy to us that they eagerly welcomed anything we shared about the Lord. We learned that at night they would read the Bible story book by flashlight.

Our team received the official word from the local government officials that they wanted us to provide some team members to teach in the high school starting in January. Naomi would teach biology. Ruth would teach English. Martha would teach physics and chemistry. Peter would teach Christian Religious Education. And Joseph would teach math. Colin would help as needed. Esther and Deborah would continue teaching preschool at their respective houses, and contribute in that way. A project to raise funds for textbooks to be matched by a grant from AIC was also approved. The high school principal came to visit with Colin. He was ecstatic at the thought of adding our team members to his handful of Tanzanian teachers. The previous year Cana High School had placed 89th among 90 district schools.

Every week when our team met we heard each other's stories of opportunities to talk to friends and neighbors about the Bible. We could see that the opportunities would be endless, and that people would be interested to hear new stories as quickly as we could translate and record them. Early in October we traveled to Dar es Salaam and spent another week in training, learning how to craft the stories

better, and choosing fifteen stories that would be our first “creation to Christ” set. After that week, we spent another week with our colleagues at our annual conference. Then our “quest-guests” arrived. Part of our students’ curriculum included designing and implementing a month-long course for overseas applicants who wanted to come test our program and see if they would like to return for the complete course. Our students had spent time planning a short orientation, organizing homestays, writing short language-learning lessons, and choosing books and papers for our guests to read and write about while they stayed with us in Cana. One couple, a single woman, and a single man arrived at the end of October, ready for their adventure.

Peter and Deborah had a disappointment while we were in the city. They visited the AIC office and talked with Colin to the leaders about leaving the team early in order to move to Fred’s village and start a church. Their leaders were very clear that it was important to them that we not move forward too quickly. Colin and I had planned to go later to help Peter and Deborah with church planting. Now we understood we should not. Instead, we received a surprise. While at the annual conference, AIM’s international director approached us and asked if Colin would be willing to become the Kenya and Tanzania’s AIM Regional Executive Officer. The current leader was returning to the USA to care for elderly parents who were ill. We agreed to pray about it. It would mean leaving Tanzania and moving to Kenya, out of a village and into the city. How could we bear to leave these dear people?

