

January-February 2015

For a couple of months Colin and I pondered, prayed, and consulted others about whether to accept the appointment to lead the region. Aquila and Priscilla agreed to lead the team from August to December; other personal leaders and counselors unanimously urged us to accept the responsibility; AIM agreed to let us take a six-month home assignment. When the first pieces fell into place, we called our international director and accepted the appointment. It was a hard adjustment for the team. We could understand their difficulty in accepting the changes, and the regret they felt. We felt frustrated by the adjustments ourselves. Nevertheless, we were grateful to see how well the team adapted and how capable they were of surviving and thriving in life and ministry in the village. And what a gift to have such competent and loving people as Aquila and Priscilla to take over for us.

We determined to completely focus on the ministry in Cana until the very week we finally left, making the most of every opportunity. Weekly Colin and I met with neighbors to reach and discuss Scripture, and those people who happened to be there whenever we stopped in often asked us to come to their homes, too. We continued meeting regularly with the team, and individually with the team members. We purposely spent very little time thinking about our next assignment, and tried to be “fully present and responsible” locally in order to finish well.

Teaching in the public school began as a challenge, but as our teammates persevered in the task, they began to love their students and enjoy teaching their classes. The school moved from 89th place to 14th in the district; the quest-guests left a donation with which the school was able to buy supplies for their science lab; and some of the other teachers who were believers began joining us on Sundays for worship. On February 4 leaders from the Africa Inland Church came for the public presentation of several boxes of textbooks, which had been bought with funds raised by the school and matched by the church. It was an opportunity for the community leaders to be publicly introduced to our partner organization. The school principal and the AIC representative made long speeches. In time, we hoped, there would be AIC churches planted in Cana and other villages in the area.

Our team was completing the phase of intensive learning, and was entering a phase of productivity. While still reading books and writing papers, we were investing time and energy in our community service teaching projects. And in addition to teaching, we were meeting in small groups to craft and translate the Bible story set we'd chosen. AIM had a Scripture engagement consultant living in Kenya. He checked and commented on the translations and recordings we sent him, and helped the team identify things that needed improvement. If only the internet connection were not so slow!

Late in February a conference was held in Kenya for those who worked among Muslim peoples. As a team we discussed whether to go. Finally, half of us stayed in the village and kept teaching school, while the other half went to the conference and

took notes to share what they learned with us. They were deeply impacted by the messages from John 15 on taking time to abide in Christ in order to bear fruit. As a result of that conference, our team members began spending more time with the Lord in prayer and meditation on His Word. We also began spending time during our team meetings praying through the items on our business agenda before discussing them. We noticed this cut down on the time needed for discussion, and resulted in less disagreement and quicker consensus when making decisions. We wished we had implemented these practices earlier.

As February came to a close we began discussing how to celebrate Easter. Should we hold another large party, like the one at Christmas? Or would there be a more effective way to use the occasion to reach unsaved neighbors and friends with the gospel?

