

## Ailsa'a Prayer Letter

January 2007

*'If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast.'*

*Psalm 139:9-10*

Dear Friends,

It is with great joy that I write to you from high up in the hills of Kisumu, Kenya. I am so excited to be able to serve God here. My initial impressions of the country are that it has a beautiful and varied landscape, very friendly and welcoming people, and it is full of colour and sound. Going to sleep to the buzz of insects and waking up to the sound of a cockerel is quite different from the noise of traffic in Britain. I have enjoyed watching women walking along the side of the dusty roads balancing large baskets of fruit or containers of water on their heads, and traffic being stopped to allow a herd of goats to pass is certainly a new experience. It is quite overwhelming to have crowds of children flocking around us shouting 'mzungu', which means white person, and practising their English by calling out 'How are you?'

Some aspects of life in Kisumu have taken a bit of getting used to, but Jo and I are gradually adapting to the 32/33 degree heat, and although the abundance of mosquitos and other insects bothered us at first, we are quickly becoming adept at spider squashing and bug bashing. We also share our living quarters with a gecko, who we've fondly named Gerald. Highlights of my first three weeks here have been getting to know the local children, and the times of fun and laughter we have had with them, chasing two runaway cows in the pouring rain and mud, and watching the amazing sky at night. It is a great encouragement to me that the same God who put the stars in place is watching over me, and guiding me in His purpose for me.

The Odoyo family, who we are staying with, have really welcomed me and Jo as part of their family. We get on really well with their four children, and Vitalis and Susanne are taking very good care of us. Our original ministry was to be involved in the nursery school connected to the church Vitalis is pastor of. However, God has an even more exciting plan for us. There is a constant crowd of local children in the Odoyo's home, who do not have the opportunity to attend school. The existing nursery is 30-40 minutes drive away, and many parents cannot afford to send their children there. Vitalis had a vision to build an entire new nursery school a few minutes walk from their home. His purpose is not only to provide a Christ-centred education that would not otherwise be available to the children, but through them to reach their parents with the message of the gospel. God has really blessed this nursery. Building began in September, and is now in the final stages. Jo and I have been given the task of painting the building, and we have planned and started work on colourful posters, an illustrated alphabet and

number line to run round the walls, and a mural telling a bible story for each of the three classrooms. The nursery has a breath-taking view to the mountains, and it's motto is Psalm 121:1-2: 'I lift up my eyes to the hills – where does my help come from? My help comes from the Lord, the maker of heaven and earth'. This is a real source of inspiration as we face the task of completing the nursery, and preparing for it to open on 19<sup>th</sup> February. The greatest excitement and fear is that Jo and I will be the only teachers of the 24 and counting children. None of them speak English or have an previous education, and they range in age from 2 and a half to 8. I am very much looking forward to the challenge of starting up an entire nursery school, and looking to God for strength, as I myself feel very inadequate. I have been reading a lot recently about glorifying God in everything that we do, and I pray that all my work with these very needy children and their parents would bring glory to Him.

#### Praise points

Please thank God for the Odoyo family, and how I have been welcomed.  
Thank Him that Jo and I are getting on really well.  
Thank Him for the great relationships that we are building up with the local children, and pray for this to continue.  
Thank God for the vision of the new nursery school, and all that it hopes to achieve.

#### Prayer points

Please pray about the language barrier. Although I speak a very little Swahili, the children speak only the local dialect, which is Luo. Pray for understanding, and for us to be able to communicate effectively.  
Please pray for all aspects of teaching, as I have no real experience. In particular, pray for the opening on 19<sup>th</sup> February to go smoothly.  
Pray that we will be able to reach the children and their parents with the gospel.  
Please pray for us to continue to do everything in God's strength, and not our own.

Thank you all so very much for your prayers, and for your interest and encouragement.

Ailsa