

Here's the latest Oakley update

Oakley Update

Well here we are!!! The Oakleys have finally made it Swaziland. The last six weeks have been a fast and furious ride to say the least. We left the states on October 16th and arrived in Swaziland on October 18th. After three nights in Swaziland we travelled to Zambia for a month of training. We left Zambia the day after Thanksgiving and after a couple of days in Johannesburg we traveled back to Swaziland on November 25th where we have been settling in for the past week.

Our experience has been good. We have met many wonderful people and seen many wonderful things. The time of training in Zambia was incredibly beneficial. The goal of the program was to learn about Africa from Africans, so daily we worked with Zambian assistants who were our guides as we experienced the culture together. God worked in marvelous ways through and sometimes in spite of the 24 missionaries gathered for the training. Becky and I had the incredible opportunity of personally seeing four Zambians come to know Christ. Their names are Gertrude, Joseph, Gift, and Grace. I had the chance to visit with Gertrude with my partner Neil and a Zambian pastor named Austin. The night before she had a dream that three men were praying for her and would come to visit her. It is so amazing how God always prepare the way before us!!!

We spent twelve days in Lusaka the capital of Zambia, then twelve days in Petauke a very rural setting about six hours east of Lusaka. We then spent a weekend with a Zambian family and finished our training with four days at a very nice place called Ibis Gardens. In Petauke, we lived in tents with no running water, electricity, etc.... It was definitely roughing it for us, but as we experienced life in the African bush we were very moved and humbled by the fact that most Africans live in much worse conditions every day of their lives. When you start thinking about how you just have to have that new car, or that new dress, or how you just can't live without those new golf clubs or those new earrings, just remember no matter what economic situation you are in, you are better off than probably 90% of the people on the planet.

Our station in Swaziland has been a blessing. The Swazi team and the logistics people in our cluster worked very hard to have a place prepared for us. You can be proud of how the IMB takes care of details for missionaries on the field!!

I have to tell you about our first night in the bush camp in Zambia. It is funny now, but not so much then. It was eventful to say the least. First of all, it was very hot. The high for the day was well over 100 degrees which helped to foster a pretty severe thunderstorm around 2:00 in the morning complete with plenty of lightning and wind. The storm was preceded, however, by a secret society of tribal dancers who were performing nearby. (The whole African secret society thing is a story for another time) Anyway ... the performance was very loud and very tribal filled with drums and lots of screaming, chanting, and yelling. In a tent in the middle of a pitch black African night it was a little disconcerting. Do you remember those Gilligan's Island episodes with the headhunters? ... well we did. When we learned the truth the following morning we felt

much more “culturally enlightened” as we wondered “WHY DIDN’T YOU TELL US THAT BEFORE WE WENT TO BED!!” Oh, but that was not all about the first night. You may have heard of the African bush baby. It is a very cute cuddly little animal with great big eyes that shrieks like a human in great pain. Those were quite enjoyable as well. In fact all African birds and insects sound about 10 times louder than their American cousins, including the rooster next door to our house in Swaziland who is bucking for a Grammy in the most annoying song of the year category. He rehearses from about 2:00am – 7:00am daily. If you feel like praying for harm to befall our fine feathered friend, please feel free.

Now to shift gears for a moment. You are our prayer supporters and we need you!! It is easy and exciting to share the good things with you. It is much harder to share the challenges because we don’t want you to worry about us and we don’t want to focus on the negatives. The challenges are very real, however, and it is in them that we need your prayers the most. We are committed to being honest with you about the challenges as well as the triumphs. We trust you as our family, friends, and supporters not to panic over difficulties but to pray for us through them. We have had and continue to have our share of struggles. The trip from the states was very exhausting as we adjusted to the seven hour time difference and the lack of sleep on the plane. That coupled with the heat of Zambia and the stress of everything in life being turned upside down has left our bodies a little weak and vulnerable. All four of us have battled stomach issues to some degree, but they have been hardest on Trey and Becky. Today in particular they are not feeling very well at all, so we ask you to pray for them especially that they would be fully healed and restored to full health, strength, and energy. God has taken us through some other physical issues. Samantha hit her leg on a concrete step in a swimming pool which resulted in a gash that needed four stitches. We were thankful that a good doctor was available and gave her very good care. Her leg has healed very nicely. Becky sprained her ankle pretty bad in Zambia and she is still getting over the soreness of that so we ask to pray for continued healing of those injuries. Don’t forget we are praying for you too ... especially you lately Debbie Beasley!!!

If you have never experienced it “Culture Shock” is a very real issue that can hit you when you least expect it and affect more deeply than you are prepared. Please pray for us as we daily, even hourly experience things that we don’t always understand. Often these issues stir your emotions very deeply as you try to stay focused on Christ while adjusting to life in a totally different culture. God is doing wonderful things among the Swazi people and we want to be useful tools in His hands, so again please pray that God will deliver us from an enemy who tries to distract and deter us from the work we were called to do.

We love you all very much and we miss you very much. Touches from home like a note in the mail, an email, and little packages mean more than we could ever describe.

Many people have asked “What can we do for you?” or “What can we send you?” We have a few little practical ideas 1) Cooking is always a challenge. Ingredients are generally available, but not all of the mixes we have in the states, so recipes from scratch would be very helpful. Any you want to send or email will be great but we would especially like recipes for oatmeal raisin cookies and for pizza crust if anyone has them.

2) Sports material to read (Yes this is Truman’s request) An occasional Dallas, Tyler, or even USA today Sports page would be like gold or a Sports Illustrated or Sporting News.

There are similar things here but they are all about Cricket, Futbol, and Rugby. Our internet connection is too slow and unreliable to do much browsing. We are just thankful when we can send and receive email. 3) There are lots of non-perishable snacks the kids like, but you better email Becky on that one before you send anything.

Our address is : PO Box 309
Nhlangano, Swaziland (There is no zip code) You
pronounce the town (Shlan gonno) Phonics are different too!!!

If you send something larger than a letter is it suggested you send it to Rebekah Oakley (for whatever reason there seems to be fewer problems when it is in a woman's name)

Just in case you are interested you can reach us by phone by dialing 011-268-207-7960. We would love to hear from you!!! Just remember we are 8 hours ahead of you!!! There are some calling cards available where you can call Swaziland for 7 and 8 cents a minute and of course you can always call with Skype. We are praying our internet options will improve soon so that we can use Skype on this end.

As we enter the Christmas season remember it is also the season for the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering. We can tell you from our experience the IMB is a top notch organization. There is no question the priority of the IMB is to be a facilitator in helping the local church take the gospel to the nations. That is why we are here. Your support for the LMCO will help us while we are here and send many others to the nations. Please give generously.

Thanks for all your love and support. We feel your prayers!!! While we have only been here a short time we have seen that it will be the faithfulness of our Heavenly Father and the prayers of His people that will see us through each day hour and moment.

Your friends in Christ,
Truman, Becky, Samantha, and Trey

Note: We have not had a chance to fully update our email list with the new contacts we got in October. So, if you receive this as a forward and you have given us your info, we will have you added very soon.