

“Oakley Update”

Bananas from the back yard

Hello from the Kingdom of Swaziland. We are so grateful for your support and we want to keep you up to date with what is happening in our lives here in Southern Africa, but we also love your replies to our updates that allow us to keep up with your lives. There may not be a lot of rhyme or reason to this update because I have several different things to share with you some serious and some trivial so just bear with me.

It has been way too long since I have written so I don't really know where to begin. I suppose going back to

Christmas would be a good start. The Christmas season was pretty strange in many ways. First and foremost it was hard being so far from family and friends during such a special time of the year. Second, Christmas happens here in the middle of the summer and that is really weird. Becky and I were pretty discouraged during the days leading up to Christmas, because we had not had the opportunity to do much normal shopping for the kids and we were afraid they would be disappointed, but a few days before Christmas we decided to go to Johannesburg for a couple of days and do some shopping and have some fun. The last minute shopping went great and we were very happy with the kind of Christmas experience we were able to have for Samantha and Trey. Through the miracles of modern technology we were even able to visit with most of our family on Skype. Some even had the chance to see the kids open some of their presents. We felt very blessed!!!

Speaking of Skype, it is a great tool to communicate with folks worldwide for free even. Can you believe that? If you ever want to check it out just go to www.skype.com. It is free to download the software and set up an account. Our account is simply “trumanoakley.” You can search for us and add us to your contacts then when we see each other online we can actually talk for free ... pretty cool stuff “huh.” I'll have to warn you 'though on our end sometimes the call will get dropped a few times before you finish the conversation, but if you're patient and our internet connection is in a good mood you can have a great conversation. It has been a wonderful tool for visiting with our families, but we would love to visit with some of you as well.

The majority of our time right now is taken up by studying language, culture, and homeschooling the kids. Sometimes it feels like you are not doing much ministry, but we just have to trust that the time spent now will make the ministry opportunities more fruitful. The homeschooling is a lot of fun. Becky handles most of it and she does an outstanding job!! The kids love it, but Samantha sure misses “school life” that is just her

thing. She says she wants to be a teacher and I believe she will be. Trey says she is the best teacher he has. I guess that shows where Becky and I rate.

Earlier this month Becky, Samantha, and Trey had the chance to be a part of a one day children's camp at the Thunzini Baptist Church led by two very special volunteers Miriam Selph and Adrienne Butler. We enjoyed our time with them and they really ministered to our children. They are very special young ladies.

This week we had the chance to experience some of the perks of being in Southern Africa as we travelled to Richards Bay on the South African coast and enjoyed a couple of days at the Indian Ocean.

Samantha and Trey caught some great waves as they both had the chance to "boogie board" for the first time. There was even a McDonalds there!!! What a treat!!! I'm very serious. We know we are very spoiled Americans, but when your dining options are severely limited McDonalds is a big deal. On the way there and back we also saw a wart hog, some impala, giraffe, and countless monkeys. I don't think I will ever get tired of seeing the African animals.

The getaway to Richards Bay was also important to me to gain a little perspective spiritually. Satan is alive and well and he finds all kinds of ways to attack whether it be homesickness and loneliness or culture shock and emotional overload. Our first night there I woke up between 2:00 am and 3:00 am. I had the distinct impression someone was praying for us right then and I knew I needed to pray as well. I told Becky the next morning "Somebody was praying for us last night." When we returned to Swaziland yesterday I had emails from two friends Nick who felt led of the Spirit to send some words of encouragement regarding facing the enemy that very day and Ben who was thinking about us and praying for us during the exact timeframe when the Spirit had roused me from sleep. Two guys separated by several hundred miles themselves who to my knowledge don't even know each other were both prompted by the Spirit to pray for us on the other side of the world. Isn't it great to be a part of the "Body of Christ?" It humbles me and teaches me to never ignore those subtle and not so subtle reminders to lift someone up in prayer or to send a note or say a word of encouragement.

I want you to pray for a friend I met named Muzi. He works in Nhlngano and is in a position to influence and impact a lot of lives. He has a heart for the Lord and wants to grow in his faith. He and I became friends very quickly. He even gave me a Swazi name "Ciniso" which means true. You don't say that "C" like an English "C" 'though. It is a click made by putting your tongue right behind your front teeth. I can barely do it much less describe it, but it is very special to me that he calls me by a Swazi name. Pray that Muzi

will grow in his faith and be a beacon of light and truth in a land of darkness and confusion.

Lastly, I want to tell you about a lady Becky met through our church. Her name is Elizabeth. She makes handmade shoes and Becky bought some for Samantha and her cousins Ashley and Mandi. She had given Becky the shoes for Ashley and Mandi at church but she had not finished the shoes for Samantha so she brought them by our house one morning. Sounds like a pretty normal story doesn't it? As she came in Becky sensed something was wrong and as she visited with her along with our language tutor she found out that Elizabeth was five months pregnant and had just come from the clinic where she had learned her baby's heart was no longer beating. We were devastated for her. Becky asked that we pray for her at that moment and we continue to pray for her, but to give you a little glimpse into the people and culture here I have to tell you a little more of the story. We don't know if Elizabeth walked to town or rode a bus that morning, but we do know she went to the clinic first where she received her awful news. The clinic is at least a mile from our house. This day in particular was cold and very rainy and the unpaved red clay streets of Nhlngano were very muddy. In spite of the news she had just received Elizabeth still felt it was important to walk through the cold rain down the muddy streets to deliver a pair of shoes while her heart had to be breaking. There is so much hurting here yet the people have an incredible sense of endurance.

Pray for Elizabeth and pray for the people of Swaziland.

In Christ,
Truman, Becky, Samantha, and Trey