



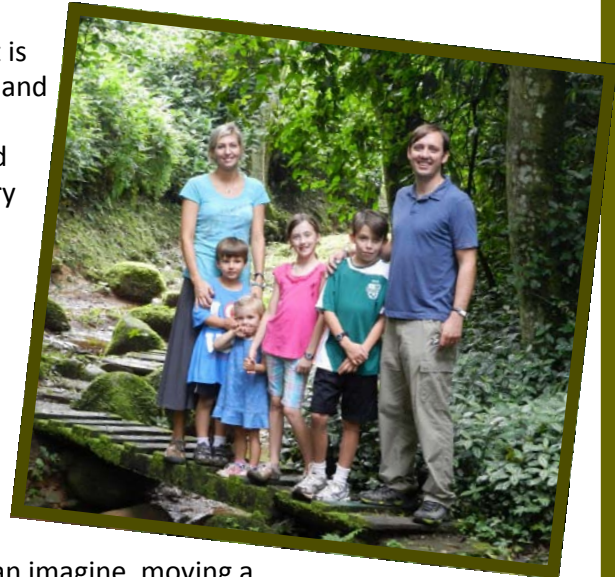
January 2012

Agape Children's Ministry

We can't wait to see all that the Lord is going to do in this bright New Year! We are very excited about it. He did so much in 2011 it is difficult to comprehend it all. We're looking forward to what He will do next. We are especially grateful to Him for the spiritual growth we see in so many of our boys and for bringing the Page and Kjeldgaard families into our Agape missionary team.

Chris Page just sent us one of his regular updates about all that is going on at Agape. It is amazing to see how the Lord has gifted and equipped Chris to take on the challenging task of leading the many aspects of Agape's ministry in Kisumu. We thank the Lord for calling Chris and Tammy and their children to join in ministry with our missionaries and our Kenyan staff. It is a joy to see them all working so well together, supporting one another, seeking God's best for the children the Lord has placed in our care. Praise the Lord!

We are delighted to report that Eric and Lisa Kjeldgaard and their children- Nick (18), Kate (16), Stephen (14), Matt (12), Chris (9), Jack (7), Charlie (5), and Gracie (3) all arrived safely in Kenya on Sunday, December 11, bringing a gigantic sigh of relief to everyone involved! God is good!



As you can imagine, moving a family of ten to Africa for a year is a massive undertaking. To begin with, in order to cut down on the transportation costs, part of the family was able to use frequent flyer miles to purchase their tickets. Eric, Kate, Stephen, Matt, Chris, and Jack traveled in one group. Their itinerary took them from San Francisco to Frankfurt, from Frankfurt to Istanbul, and from Istanbul to Nairobi. They left Friday morning and didn't arrive in Nairobi until early Sunday morning. (Talk about an endless trip!)

Meanwhile, Lisa, Nick, Charlie, and Gracie left San Francisco Friday evening for London and, after an overnight there, on to Nairobi the next day, arriving Sunday night. As might be expected, with a total of 30

checked bags, some of them didn't make it. However, the Lord worked it out so the missing bags arrived on Monday and by Tuesday when the entire family began the seven hour drive to Kisumu, they not only had everybody together, but all of their bags as well. Thank you, Lord!

The Kjeldgaards are settling in well. Special thanks to Chris and Tammy and to Steve and Dianne for making them feel so welcome and for helping them learn the ropes. The Page and Kjeldgaard kids are thoroughly enjoying having new friends to play with. It makes us very happy to think about all the Lord is going to do in the lives of the whole Kjeldgaard family during their time in Africa.

Lisa brought a smile to our faces when she shared with us that Matt has already informed her he “was made to live” in Africa.

In addition to the hope and promise the New Year brings, we know it will also bring its share of struggles and challenges. How can we better help the children the Lord has brought to us? How can we bring more children off the streets? How can we train and equip our staff to better carry out the ministry? With inflation at nearly 20 percent in Kenya and the poor economy in America, how can we meet Agape’s growing financial needs? Where will we find more missionaries to join our team? And so many, many more.

If we were trying to run Agape on our own, in our own strength, and with our all too limited knowledge and understanding, the struggles and challenges would be very daunting, even frightening. But we are so grateful Agape is the Lord’s work, not ours. He is our strength. He is our guide. He is our provider. The Book of Isaiah gives us a wonderful promise:

For I am the Lord, your God, who takes hold of your right hand and says to you, Do not fear; I will help you.” (Is 41:13 NIV)

“We are truly grateful we can rely on the Creator of the universe to reach down and take our hand and help us. That makes whatever challenges we might face in the New Year actually kind of exciting because we know we will get to see the Lord’s mighty hand at work. His power, His grace, His mercy, His love and provision are more than sufficient for whatever lies ahead.

He provided a remarkable demonstration of His faithfulness and generosity to us at Thanksgiving. At the Thanksgiving eve church service at Shelter Cove Community Church, Pastor David Seifert asked people to share what they were thankful for and how the Lord had particularly blessed them during the year. There were many wonderful testimonies of God’s grace, of His healing hand, of His loving provision.

At the close of the time of sharing, Pastor David surprised us by asking the congregation if there wasn’t someone who had a vehicle we could use during our time here. He explained that our 1991 VW was getting a little worn around the edges. To our amazement a man in the congregation raised his hand and said he had a vehicle we could use. At the close of the service Bill Stillwell came to us and told us he and his wife, Karen, had a truck they tow behind their motor home. It was ours to use for as long as we needed it.



When we arrived at the Stillwell’s home the following Saturday to pick up the truck, they insisted that instead we

were to take Karen’s beautiful PT Cruiser to use. Bill would drive the truck we thought we were going to use and Karen would drive his Prius. So, here we are, driving a practically brand new PT Cruiser Classic with all the bells and whistles. We can’t thank Bill and Karen enough for their generosity and Pastor David as well for his heart to help us out. Through them, God abundantly provided more than we ever could have imagined.

We are enjoying our time here getting caught up with family and friends. Thank you for making us feel so welcome and loved. We are grateful to all of you for your prayers, your words of encouragement, and your generous financial support. You bless us.



We pray the Lord will give you a great New Year.

We love you.

Blake and Esther Gibbs

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