

April Prayer Points 1

Dear Friends:

Having updated everyone on our various ministries in Nampula, it is time to report on the family.



Andrew, Grace, Charles, Julie, Sarah, and Benaiah

Kent and Anna

Our son Kent is finishing his senior year as a history and education major at Covenant College near Chattanooga, Tennessee. He is engaged to be married this summer to Anna Carlson, a young teacher in the Washington, D.C. area who he knew all through college and who graduated last year. Everything we hear from Kent about Anna is wonderful, but the testimony of a young man so much in love is hardly reliable! For the hard truth, we turn to our daughter Sarah, who was a close friend and prayer partner of Anna while the latter was still in college. Sarah says Kent hit the jackpot when he won Anna's heart, so with that confirmation we rest delighted. The testimony of the college is only academic, but they graduated her *summa cum laude*, thus there is objective evidence that with Anna, the family stock has risen appreciably! Now we must all act respectable! Truly we are thankful for God's kindness in granting us this precious addition that we will only get to meet in person the week of the wedding!

Anna's father is the minister of a Reformed Presbyterian congregation, so **Anna is familiar with the travails and blessings of a pastor's family. Should God continue to lead Kent into pastoral ministry, he will have a true veteran as his helpmeet on the home front!**



The wedding will take place in late July. Meantime, Kent and Anna are praying for God's direction as they decide whether Kent should stay at Covenant to complete

the fifth year of their education program, advance to seminary, or begin working as a teacher.

Sarah

Sarah is a Junior at Covenant College, majoring in their psychology program. She and our younger daughter Grace are both oriented toward a career in the home as a wife and mother, but **Sarah decided that if she were to pursue a marketable career it would be in social work, and psychology was the major offered at Covenant that was most helpful for obtaining a job in that area.**



We were delighted to have Sarah home for the summer last year. Believers Fellowship of Fort Worth paid her airfare to come help with preparations for the Fiel Conference.

This summer Sarah will be gaining experience in Christian social services as an intern at the Denver Christian Rescue Mission.

Andrew

Andrew is a freshman at Union University in Jackson, Tennessee. We had given up on his going to college at all this year because the schools he applied to were unable to provide enough financial aid to make it affordable. But two days before classes began, Union University added even more financial help than we imagined possible. My sister and brother-in-law, who is on the faculty at Union, said Andrew could live with them free of charge, saving several thousand more dollars each year, so suddenly Andrew was packing his bags, bidding farewell to his friends, and within 24 hours was flying across the ocean to the States! Andrew has thrived in college, and we are grateful for the generosity all around that made this experience possible.



Like our other children, Andrew has to work to defray college expenses. Since he ended up registering only two days before classes started, we expected all the best school jobs would have been taken already. But **Andrew somehow got a plum assignment working with the television studio owned by the university. He operates cameras at athletic events and delivers news reports that are aired on a local TV station. Not surprisingly, Andrew has become interested in broadcast journalism as a career, but he is looking at other possibilities as well.**

Grace

Grace is a home school senior and will be attending Covenant College next fall. Her love for people has resulted in almost complete integration into Mozambique culture. She sings in several African church choirs and is at home with the distinctive harmony and dance steps that invariably accompany African singing. When she sings in dialect, the Africans are convinced she knows their

language, though she only speaks the official language, Portuguese. When she turned 18 Grace requested and was granted Mozambican citizenship.

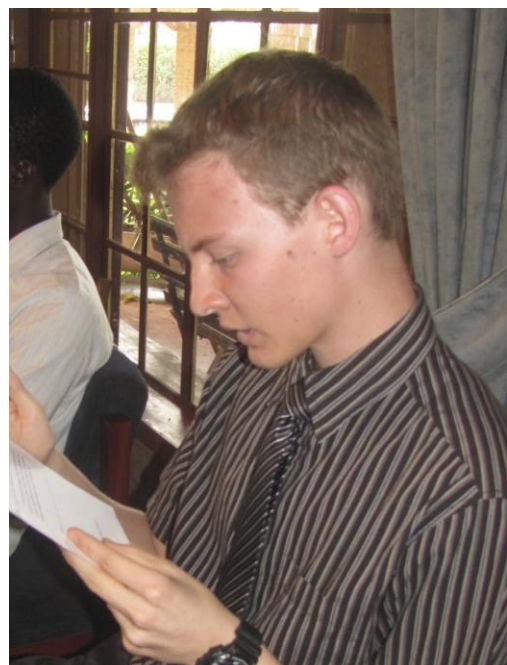


Best friends, Grace and Ismaela – ten years ago and at Isma's recent wedding (Grace caught the bouquet)

Along with involvement in many social activities, over the past year, Grace has fallen in love with the children of Evanjafrica (www.evanjafrica.com), a nearby orphanage founded by a remarkable and godly Mozambican Christian man we have known from his childhood. Most of the children at the orphanage range from 12 to 18 years in age, though there are younger ones too, and Grace dotes on them all. Months ago the founder of the orphanage asked Grace to lead a Bible study series on the virtuous woman for all the teenage girls, and now Grace and the orphans are almost inseparable. Grace invites the girls to the mission for sleep-overs, Bible studies, and movie nights, which are a great treat for them, and they invite her to all their outings and special events. God has blessed these young people with a keen sensitivity to spiritual things and with kind, caring hearts. It is impressive to see how they love and look after one another. We are grateful Grace has brought them into our lives and wish we had a way to keep the relationship going even after Grace departs for college.

Benaiah

Benaiah is in the tenth grade and is most at home with the ever-enlarging multi-national missionary youth group here in Nampula. His bosom pals come from such diverse places as Portugal, Holland, Germany, Brazil, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Canada, and the U.S. Benaiah is not as integrated into Mozambique culture as Grace is, but he is growing more and more involved with the boys at the orphanage who are envious of all the good times the girls have with Grace. Soccer is a popular sport for Benaiah and any Mozambican male, so the mission's soccer field with official goals and nets is a lure that naturally draws young men onto the property. Ping Pong and especially the swimming pool



Mike Stolk put in for us also make the mission compound a popular place for all Benaiah's friends.

Special visitors

In the past year we enjoyed **special visitors Grace Boto from Community Bible Church in Nashville, Tennessee, and my mother, Lila Woodrow.** Grace was helpful on many fronts: as a traveling companion for my mother on the long flights to and from Africa; with her honed graphic design skills which gave the Fiel Conference professional grade publicity material; training me to make much better use of my new Mac computer and smart phone; handling a lot of the computer work related to the conference; and even taking my old PC apart and replacing the fan, giving it a new lease on life! The visit from my mother was the first time anyone in the family has trekked all the way to Nampula – quite a feat for an octogenarian! We loved having her and Grace on hand for five weeks leading up to the Fiel Conference.

Julie

I am so thankful to have a wife like Julie. With each passing year, it becomes more apparent how meticulous God was in selecting and preparing her for the ministry she has had alongside me in Mozambique. Anyone who sets foot in our house, human or animal, immediately becomes the object of her solicitous nurturing, and that is something everyone loves.

In the early years of our existence here, when Mozambique was the primitive frontier of Africa and life was hard, Julie made everything pleasant through her consummate homemaking skills. Even today, many missionaries have a difficult time enduring the trials and stresses of living in this culture, and many do



Julie after baking 1100 cookies and 40 cakes for the Fiel Conference

not stay. For our family, life in Mozambique has always been sweet, whether it was during the first ten years when we grew to seven people and two German Shepherds living in a one bedroom flat with no running water and frequently no electricity, or later when we lived out of doors on the property in two steel shipping containers, or now living in a veritable mansion surrounded by material blessings we never expected to have even in the U.S. Of course the joy and satisfaction God Himself puts in the heart has a lot to do with that contentment, but one cannot overstate the importance of Julie's role as the great shock absorber between the buffeting of the outside world and us.

Julie wrote her own wedding vows in which she promised always to make our home a refuge of joy, comfort, and peace for her husband and children. She took those vows seriously, I left her free to pursue her mission undistracted by a lot of other responsibilities, and the result has been great pleasure for our family as well as all those who come under our roof.

For us, Julie has affirmed the vital role women were intended to have in the home and which modern families more and more sacrifice, thinking greater satisfaction will accrue from a better income or from experiences and relationships acquired in the workplace.

Because of Julie's nurturing, lavished on anyone who comes our way, she has become second mother to many of the young people in our congregation.

Most of them were in her Sunday School class back before it was handed over to Mozambicans who had themselves grown up under her instruction. Our church uses a ten-lesson, one-on-one discipleship program for all new members that we borrowed and translated from a church in South Africa.



Part of Julie's nurturing ministry in the past year has been guiding two young women through that program. Another facet of it was polished when a young couple in the church asked Julie and me to be their godparents in marriage. The bride was one of Julie's former Sunday school students, later her disciple in the church membership process, and always the daughter of my fellow servant and faithful colleague in church and medical ministry, Arnaldo Aquiles.

Next installment – Godparents, African Style!

**Gifts to this ministry can be sent to: Grace Missions, c/o Faith Community Church,
723 South D. Street, Oxnard, CA 93030**