



Dowell Home

October 2013

This was not our plan!

God tends to do some mighty work when you attempt to put limits on His plans.



When Jonathan and I started our life together, we did not have a single discussion or conversation about becoming missionaries. We were not against the idea; simply, it just was never a consideration. As a newly married couple in 2009, we started seeking out short-term opportunities to volunteer overseas. We viewed this as an adventure; a one year commitment to do something different. We wanted to focus on loving each other, loving God, and loving people in a whole new part of the world. In 2012, we moved to Kenya for our year of adventure. One single year, only. But, we all know how that turned out, right? God tends to do some mighty work when you attempt to put limits on His plans.



Throughout our time in Kenya in 2012, God slowly changed our hearts and clearly called us to missions. Beyond the many examples of God's miraculous timing and leading, we found an intense passion and joy for this work, a fulfillment we never knew was possible. We feel uniquely equipped to meet some of the needs at Agape. We know this is where we are being led, and though it is sometimes terrifying and difficult, we know that joining Agape and moving our family to Kisumu indefinitely is exactly where we need and want to be.

So, now we are in a place we truly never envisioned. We are missionaries, in the midst of raising support and preparing to return to Kenya. It is an exciting time, getting a chance to tell our story to anyone who will listen. But, it is also a time that consistently tests our faith and provides an opportunity to demonstrate patience. Don't you just love those opportunities? We know that God is calling us to this work and we know that because He wants us there, He will provide. It's just, we would appreciate it if He did that on our time line, right? It would be so much easier if plans went the way we envisioned. However, we must have faith that God knows what is best. There are some days when we are at peace with this whole process, knowing God will provide. There are other days when we are full of doubt and questions. Are things going to fall into place? How are we going to do this? What happens if...? It was during one of these low moments recently that God provided in a powerful way.



We held a fundraising garage sale in August to earn some money for onetime expenses. We asked people to consider either shopping our sale or donating items. The response was overwhelming. The garage was quickly filled to capacity with donated goods. People came by before the sale to drop off more items. Neighbors and friends volunteered to help prepare and work the sale. Carload after carload showed up to support us by shopping. We felt loved, encouraged and supported. God used each individual, those who shopped and those who donated, to encourage us despite our doubts. We more than doubled our initial goal for the garage sale. It was incredible. Not only that, but we got a chance to share our story with countless neighbors and strangers who wanted to

know about Agape Children's Ministry. We shared and connected with people in the community we wouldn't have otherwise gotten a chance to interact with. And it was through this sharing that God provided for us in the most amazing way.

My dad struck up a conversation with a man browsing through some items that Jonathan's dad donated. He began asking questions about Agape, about their mission and vision. I was walking by at that moment and began answering his questions about Agape. Our conversation lasted quite a while, and I was excited about another chance to share. He asked about our financial support. I said it was a step out in faith for us, that it was incredibly humbling and a lesson in patience. He listened attentively and was quiet for some time. And then, he smiled. He smiled at me and said that, from this moment on, his family would commit to supporting us every single month. I was stunned. This man was a stranger to us. He'd never met us or anyone in our family. Before that day, he'd never heard of Agape. He was just driving along and saw signs for our garage sale in the neighborhood and came to check it out. This was not in our plan, but it was in God's. God used this individual and his family to remind us that He can and will provide, even in our times of doubt. We are so thankful.

We shouldn't need these miraculous circumstances to remind us that God is in control, but sometimes we do. This whole process of raising support and preparing to leave is one that stretches us daily in our faith. We make plans and we set deadlines, but when our plans fail, doubt creeps in. We lose sight of the fact that God prepared us for this and He will continue to provide. Our faith is shaken. But God, in His grace, continues to provide even in our weakness. So, though we still have more to go, we can look at how God has fulfilled our needs again and again and be at peace.

In love,

Jonathan and Andrea

Project Highlights

- **Aquaponics** – Agape is evaluating the use of aquaponics, which is a combination of fish farming and hydroponics, to produce food for the children in our programs. We recently visited two aquaponics locations in the Oregon/Washington area and learned about construction techniques and ways to manage a fish farm; gathered many ideas which can be put to use when we return to Kenya.
- **Community Health Evangelism (CHE) Training** – We spent a week down in Phoenix, AZ, at a seminar learning how to train other trainers to teach communities about healthy living. CHE is a true best practices model for integrating evangelism and discipleship with community-based development. This community training program is becoming a cornerstone of our community outreach program and one of the ways we are preparing families to improve the standard of living in their homes.



Bringing hope to children at risk

Agape Children's Ministry
PO Box 5062 Modesto, CA 95352
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Toll Free: 888.572.4273
www.AgapeChildren.org
agapekids@agapechildren.org

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