

## HOWe THINGS ARE... November 2016

### The Amazing Story

In not so amazing news... My kidney doctor has recommended I start the process of being evaluated for a kidney transplant. My native kidneys could still last a very long time (and we're praying for that and for God to restore them to good working order). However, no one but God knows how long they might last and so the doctor recommends that I have the evaluation lined up for when/in case they fail.

An unanticipated financial hitch has occurred. It ended with my having three options, except two are scary so really only one option. The option I picked over self pay (pay the \$250,000 cost out of pocket) or wait until my kidneys actually fail, go on dialysis and significantly reduce the chances of a successful transplant is switch to new, and of course, more expensive health insurance. I'm grateful insurance is available for me and I so understand why health insurance is so costly. My new insurance company can't deny me coverage even though I'm going to cost them more than I'll pay them in premiums. I feel bad for my new insurance company and also thank you new insurance company. Everything costs more though: higher premium, higher deductible, and higher maximum out of pocket cost... all, of course, still way cheaper than self paying for a transplant.

My finances are set up so that the amount I receive in support pays for my living costs, which up until now, haven't included these new healthcare costs. It all means, starting in January, the monthly support needed for me increases \$504 per month (\$6,048 per year) That would be a prayer request.

I would prefer for my kidneys to be healed between now and January so if you're only picking one prayer request, pick that one. Plus, kidneys miraculously healed: that would be an amazing story. Meanwhile, I will need to reach out to people I know to see whether God might be inviting them to partner financially in the ministry of Bible translation. I'm quite confident that while unexpected to me, God was not taken by surprise nor unable to provide... or to heal.

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Last week I was eating lunch in the dining room at work with several other IT people. An elementary school group was also in the dining room having lunch. One of the teachers approached our table and asked us if after we finished eating we might share "some of our amazing stories" with her class.

That was pressure. Right? The premise behind the question is, as a missionary, you clearly have ready to share with elementary school children an amazing story of God. It's not just a story: it's an amazing story. What if my story isn't amazing enough? Maybe I think it's amazing but it may not have its intended effect on your class.

This single question asked, well intentioned, and I'm doubting my ability to be ready at all times with an answer for my faith and whether I'm actually living out my faith because I have no amazing faith story readily available. Has God miraculously provided for all my needs? Absolutely. Is that an amazing, edge-of-your-seat story? Well, yes, if you're looking at it through a lens of God's provision. Maybe not, if you're looking for some excitement and peril in the story. Right? It's quite a mundane story about day by day, year by year, God providing all I need when I need it. And while mundane in that God isn't swooping in dramatically rescuing me from the jaws of starvation or poverty or physical danger, it's amazing anyway. (I didn't talk to the elementary school crowd by the way).

I know what I'd tell them though. I'd tell them about Paul from Cameroon. Paul is one of the 1.5 billion speakers of a language without a Bible. Can you imagine that? Not having a Bible in a language you can read? Paul is a pastor in the capital of Cameroon, Yaounde (Yow-un-day). He speaks many languages including English, French and Iyasa. He grew up in a part of Cameroon near the Atlantic Ocean. Almost everyone (80% of the people) where he comes from regularly attend church, religiously attend church actually. But very few of them understand the gospel message that Jesus came, became a man, and died so that we might have life. They can't understand because church happens in French and the people don't read or understand French. Some people can understand a little. This pastor Paul, he asked one of those people after a church service, "did you understand the passage the pastor read and preached?" That man responded, "well, no, if they wanted us to understand, they wouldn't have written it in French, would they?" How could he or any of the people who speak a language without God's Word understand if it's written in French? Every day, God's given me the opportunity to bring His message, the Good News, to people who don't yet have it in their own language. Isn't that amazing? God chose just regular people and gave them the important job of translating His precious word so everyone can hear.

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- Praise God for Bible translation work among the Iyasa language in Cameroon. The Book of Ruth has been translated as well as a book of hymns. The team plans to begin translating the Gospel of John in 2017. Pray for that man who said if they wanted us to understand they wouldn't write it in French. Pray that he would be able to one day soon read and hear God's Word in Iyasa. Pray for Paul's nine siblings who attend church religiously, but who are not believers because they haven't heard.
- Praise God for the amazing progress in Bible translation (October 2016 statistics came out). The number of languages with some Scripture is over 3,000! More languages with God's Word than ever before in history (and we can keep saying that as more translations are completed).
- Praise God that there is an option for health insurance for me: pre-existing condition doesn't make me ineligible and insurance is, in the grand scheme of things, affordable. Praise too for the very helpful finance people at the transplant center. I was mostly a mess when I found out and my new friend, transplant financial coordinator Katie, was super compassionate and helpful. Praise that the new insurance covers all of my current doctors. The only change is my transplant evaluation (and eventual transplant) will be at a transplant center two hours away rather than the one in Charlotte where Katie works.
- Pray for languages without God's Word. Pray especially for the politically unstable situation in Ethiopia, that Bible translation work could continue while restrictions are in place on internet access and that peace would prevail.
- Pray for healing for kidneys and for God's provision of laborers and the resources to support those laborers. Fields ripe; laborers few. Pray to the Lord of the Harvest. (Matt. 9:38)

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