

The Kellers' Prayer Letter

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And He Shall Reign Forever and Ever

“For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.” Isaiah 9:6



I don't know if there has ever been a season in which this verse has been more significant to me. We learned so much this year about God's sovereignty, His grace, and His provision. With great joy we welcomed our own newborn son into the family a few months ago. Ian Albert Keller was born on Sunday, July 26th. After a stressful pregnancy (throughout which there were some serious concerns for Ian's wellbeing) delivering a whole, healthy baby boy was a deeply joyful experience. Because of the possibility that he might have a very serious abdominal deformity, we decided to travel to Johannesburg, South Africa for the birth. This was 1,200 miles and 4 days of traveling (each way!), but the care and competence (compared to Olivia's birth in Zambia three years ago) was amazing. God both blessed and challenged us in so many ways. A friend of ours traveled down to South Africa with us to help with the kids, we found a maternity hospital that was very affordable, God provided the perfect housing situation for a great deal (no small feat in Johannesburg!), and we had a beautiful birth experience. However, delivering a baby so far from family and having to travel so far from home during such a time was definitely a wild adventure!! Little did we know that our journey of faith and endurance with Ian had only just begun.....

On the Road Again!

One of the greatest practical blessings a missionary in Africa can enjoy is good, reliable transport. Reliable anything is good, especially when it comes to something as critical as a vehicle! Last year we realized our field truck needed to be replaced. It was breaking down too often, which was a big risk on trips out to rural villages in the bush (since I actually want to come home eventually). Vehicles in Africa are unbelievably costly because they are all imported from other countries and taxed heavily. We expected to wait a long time... years possibly... to replace it. That would have been devastating for the work we are doing in remote areas. But God had an amazing surprise for us- within a very short time some friends in several churches raised enough money to purchase both a vehicle and the 4x4 kit needed to make it off-road ready! Seeing God's shower of blessings come with such torrential force was truly incredible and humbling. We are very grateful to everyone who participated in making this essential provision a reality.



Many of the villages that we reach with the Gospel, discipleship and practical help are far from good roads and infrastructure. Having rugged, reliable transport is absolutely vital for this work to be possible.

Extra Hands

Throughout this year we have had quite a few volunteers come to help us. We are grateful for God's provision, as there is always work to do here! In June we had two elementary teachers with us. They first



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spent time getting to know the culture and the challenges facing teachers in Africa. Once they adjusted to that, they jumped in with both feet. Their most valuable contribution was the hands-on instruction with locally-available math manipulatives and reading comprehension methods (key for in-classroom discipleship!) The training they gave the Zambian teachers will be the tools these teachers use to completely reshape their classrooms for Christ.

Shortly after Ian's birth, Ashley's parents Glenn and Penny joined us for a couple of months. They helped a lot with every day tasks, ministry, home schooling, building projects, and keeping up with all the kids. They impacted so many people in such a short time- I am not sure who was the most sad to see them go!



Failure to Thrive. And a miracle.

Ian was a content, happy little baby from Day 1. He adored his big brother and sisters (most of the time), loved basking in Africa's winter sunshine, and generally woo'd everyone he saw with his easy smile.



However in the months following our return, we realized something was wrong. Ian wasn't growing. He ate, slept, and coo'd... but he didn't gain weight. At all. At 3 months of age he weighed in at barely 7lbs- only one pound above his birth weight. I had to go to South Africa anyway to sort out some things with the new field vehicle so we decided to take everyone and have Ian looked at while we were there. While concerned, we expected to hear that he had some kind of allergy or needed a special formula. We were utterly unprepared for the pediatrician's grave reaction and the tense weeks of testing and waiting that followed. In provision that can only come from God we have the most amazing pediatricians and dietician helping us do everything possible to determine the problem and work out a solution. But hearing the phrases "failure to thrive" and "physically wasted" were some of the hardest moments of my life.

So many people from around the world have come together to pray for our baby. In a season that I can only describe as terrifying we feel covered in God's love and grace. About a week into the testing process one of the pediatricians decided to put in a nasal feeding tube to see what would happen. Incredibly, unbelievably... impossibly... Ian picked up weight. Our life at the moment is a roller coaster ride of emotion as we watch every gram he puts on and pray he will continue to grow. We are back in Zambia and regularly in touch with the doctors as we continue to pray for progress.

The doctors have no explanation for Ian's turnaround. God's grace and His mercy are the only real answers for Ian's continued growth and development. Our baby, again feared to be facing life-threatening circumstances was, once again, saved by the love of Jesus through the prayers of His people. For your prayers we offer our most sincere thanks. Please praise the Lord with us for this miracle of life. You can visit our blog for updates on Ian.

Pro Rege,

Handwritten signature of Timothy, Ashley, Monica, Frederick, Olivia, & Ian Keller.

Timothy, Ashley, Monica,
Frederick, Olivia, & Ian Keller

Please pray for...

- * Continued growth and health for Ian
- * God to prepare the hearts of the people who will be reached through the provision of our new Field Vehicle
- * The lives touched this year through our ministry

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To receive a tax receipt, cheques should be made out to "ITMI" and designated to "The Kellers"