

Well, it has been a *long* time since we have sent a newsletter, which some of you have so graciously reminded me as of late ☺

Let me give you an update on what is happening with us.

It has been a really long process of settling into a different culture. Some days, I still feel like such a foreigner. I knew it wouldn't be easy, but I think I was a bit naïve as to just how difficult the transition would be. Over the course of this first year, there have been many tears, lots of "I miss Uganda," even an occasional "why did God have to call us away from there?"

It's all part of the process, and though our hearts have had to struggle through the necessary pains of adjustment, we have at the same time continued to see the grace and goodness of God in it all.

In the summer, we began meeting with just a few other people in our living room, praying together and talking together about the vision for a new church in Cleveland Heights.

Sometimes we wondered if that is all it would ever be, but bit by bit the Lord has begun to bring key people and to shape a community of people who really love each other and are growing together into a sense of mission.

There is a LOT to be done, but we feel like we are right at the place we would have hoped and expected to be at this point in time.

We have anywhere from 20-30 people who are meeting in our house each Sunday, worshipping together, praying together, and hearing from God's word together.

We also have a number of smaller groups that meet during the week, having committed to one another to read entire books of Scripture each week, confessing sins to one another, and praying for one another, specifically praying for those in one another's lives who don't yet know Christ.

As 2009 approaches, we are looking to find a place to rent, as we are outgrowing the space that our house can provide. We are hoping that we may be able to share space with a little African Methodist Episcopal church which is literally around the corner from our house.

I am trying to learn the culture of the Heights, specifically the very unique Coventry village area which is just up the street from us. It is a long process, with a lot of hard soil to break up before the seeds of the gospel will really make sense.

I am spending most of my time with people, some who are part of our church, some who aren't. Sometimes it is counseling, sometimes it is ministry envisioning, sometimes it is just deepening relationships so that we can be more effective at walking together with Christ in what He wants to do through us here.

In it all, our goal is not to build a big church for ourselves, but simply to make disciples of Christ. Not church members, but men, women, and children who will become wholehearted followers of Jesus, impacting lives where they work, where they live, wherever they happen to encounter people.

And together we want to have an impact on the city of Cleveland Heights, loving the community and serving the community in real and tangible ways. Whether or not those people become part of our church is not the issue. The issue for us is to make ourselves available as a body for God to build HIS kingdom through us...He will decide who sticks with us as a part of our local expression of the body of Christ.

We are finally getting to a place where we have enough critical mass to at least begin to take some more tangible steps in some of the vision He has given us, so we are really excited about what the Lord has in store for 2009.

I have also been in contact with some friends who run ministries in Uganda, as we still feel there is still ministry the Lord wants us to engage in. Of course, our base would be here in Cleveland. My goal would be to go to Uganda once or twice a year. I hope to go there in early 2009 to do some investigating and planning for the ongoing ministry there.

Please pray for us as we continue to walk with Him. I will keep you more regularly updated...I promise ☺

SPECIFIC ITEMS:

PRAYER

- * Pray that we can find a suitable place for meeting soon
- * Pray that the Lord will keep bringing us the right people at the foundation (especially those who can become leaders)
- * Pray that the Lord will work in the hearts of people in the Heights area, opening their hearts to be ready to hear the gospel
- * Pray that the Lord will continue to provide the necessary finances for not only our mission here, but for the new ministry ventures in Uganda

As always, we love you all and appreciate your partnership with us as we walk with Jesus in His work both here and in Uganda. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to call or email us.

Here is our current contact information:

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Have a Wonderful Christmas in Him!

Dave, Jen, Hannah, Elizabeth, Joshua, and Sarah

