

January 21, 2008

Greetings from Andy and Karina Smith!

In case you wondered, married life is great! We have been extremely busy with visiting churches, family, and friends, preparing for Uganda, and getting to know each other. That is our sorry excuse for not communicating. It's not good, but its the best one we've got!

This is our first joint Family and Ministry e-letter, so bear with us! We are also trying to merge our two e-mail address books, so if you got this twice, we appologize. Also, if you do not wish to be included in future mailings, please reply back to that affect. This letter was written primarily by my wonderful, beautiful bride, Karina, known as "Keeky" by our friends in Uganda.

Since returning to the States, my life has been a bit of a whirlwind. Sometimes all the "to-dos" and the coming changes seem overwhelming. Then I remember the many special times of prayer with various groups in Uganda as well as here in the States. There are so many people who have told us that they are praying for us during this time of transition in our lives and ministry. Around Thanksgiving, the Thomas family gathered. They ended our family celebration with a special time of prayer for Andy and me. As they prayed and passed on their blessings, I sensed that we were literally being lifted before the throne of grace. It was a beautiful reminder of the privilege we have as the family of God, to lift each other before the Father. Thank you all so much for doing just that for us.

After much prayer and searching, Andy and I have applied to a missionary sending agency, Global Outreach International. GOI would provide us with a legal covering, as well as an excellent support network both on the States' side and in Uganda. GOI provides many very helpful services, including channeling funds and sending tax receipts for all donations, printing and sending newsletters, and connecting us with other GOI missionaries there in Uganda. Best of all, they do this ministry at no cost to the missionaries or to their personal supporters. We are looking forward to joining this new missions family.

Andy and I are in a nice apartment in Woodland, WA, which was offered to us for two months. We will be here until February 24th, when we travel to Tupelo, MS, to attend training and orientation with Global Outreach International. Then we fly to Uganda March 10th. At this point, we plan to return to the States after our first year so we can prepare ourselves for a longer term of service in Uganda.

We are so grateful for Robert Wafula , who has assumed the leadership of Shepherd's Heart International Ministry on the islands while we have been absent. Uncle Samson, Chief and Papa O visited each of the current water project sites in November. They, along with Mama O, also took time to meet with teachers and students of Lingira Living Hope Secondary School before the end of its second year of operation. School will resume January 21. The enrollment is promising to double, but facilities and funds are still inadequate.

Papa O and Mama O (or Okoro and Olive) reached their 25th Wedding Anniversary on Jan 1st. They will be celebrating on January 26th, with much of their former wedding party. As Papa O

wrote, "Even our flower girl will walk down the aisle, although she has enlarged and become a big woman now!" Their marriage is a big testimony of God's faithfulness and will be an asset to the family ministry they envision leading. We will gladly carry back any "Happy Anniversary" cards for them.

As you can imagine, the Kenyan crisis has affected Uganda. We learned that fuel in Jinja, the nearest mainland town to the islands, was selling at \$23/ gal until it ran out. Things are now improving as transport is returning to normalcy.

We ourselves are really looking forward to returning and are rejoicing in all the Lord has done in the past few months.

Here are a few praise items:

1. We are officially and happily Man and Wife! The wedding went so well with everyone's great help. Even we enjoyed ourselves and all the guests. Our sincere apologies to those at the end of the reception line of 500 people...please don't send us the bills from your foot-doctor! J
2. We now have a sending agency, Global Outreach International (GOI) who will handle all our support and will give us a partnering network both in and out of Uganda.
3. Through the generous gifts from all of you, we have the money to build our home on the island, as well as to purchase a small solar system for Lingira Living Hope Secondary School. We will then be able to access the power for both personal and ministry use.
4. One of our island boys, Okello, was accepted and sponsored to start Bible school at GABA Bible Institute in Gaba, Uganda. He is the first island student to attend a certified Bible college!

And a few prayer items:

1. Travels: We are on the road a lot, visiting and speaking. This week we'll purchase our tickets for Mississippi and Uganda.
2. Lingira Living Hope Secondary School: This school is really a key to the islands. As such, it also seems to be a target of Satan. We need God's protection in every area: property, legal issues, relationships, staff and students. LLHSS also needs consistent funding for both teacher's salaries and further development.
3. Shepherd's Heart International Ministry property development. Our desire is to build a home for Olive and Okoro simultaneously with ours. Currently, SHIM staff are still living on the LLHSS property, but we need to get off as soon as possible. We will also need an office building soon.

And a few administrative details:

1. Our new email address: andykeeky@hotmail.com
2. Snail mail to Uganda:
Andy and Karina Smith
PO Box 295
Jinja, Uganda
3. Snail mail in States while we are here:
c/o John and Marilyn Thomas
80458 Green Point Road
Clatskanie, OR 97016

4. Official mail and donations

Checks can be made payable to:

Global Outreach International

PO Box 1

Tupelo, MS 38802

Phone: (662) 884-4615

E-Mail: go@globaloutreach.org

If you have been, or would like to begin, helping with our support, or would like to contribute to any of the various projects we are involved with in Uganda, you can send donations to the above Global Outreach address, designating the desired destination of the donation on an enclosed paper.

For personal support: "Andrew and Karina Smith" or

For ministry projects: "Shepherd's Heart International Ministry" - followed by whatever further designation may be desired (ie- General, Lake Victoria Pure Water Project, Lingira Living Hope Secondary School, etc.)

Note: 100% of the funds donated through Global Outreach International go directly to the person or project designated, and is tax deductible.

God bless you all!

Andy and Keeky