

THE JUNGLE JOURNAL

Olson Family Newsletter

A CLOSE CALL



Andrew at Bugando Hospital.
Mwanza, Tanzania

Our mission nearly lost one member this year. It's the main reason we're a bit late giving an update.



In late October, I (Andrew) was having fever, lethargy and difficulty breathing. I went to a city hospital in Mwanza, and they gave me a malaria and worms diagnosis, but even with the medicine my condition worsened. About five days later, I found myself in the Ukerewe emergency room with chest pain, body-wide numbness, difficulty breathing and the onset of shock. I was put on oxygen and rushed on the ambulance boat to Mwanza the next day. The bloodwork said my heart was under a lot of strain, and I had elevated levels of blood-bacteria.

There, I was put on some strong medicine and continued on oxygen. The doctors diagnosed me with sepsis, and the antibiotics brought me back to health. Before I could complete the full dose, I was flown via Air Ambulance to Kenya for further testing. There, I was taken off the medicine, everything test-wise checked out, and I was discharged.

Unfortunately, the next week the strange infection returned with a vengeance. I was back in the Ukerewe emergency room. This time, my doctors and organization recommended I return to the USA for further testing. I was given out-patient medicine enough to last me for the journey, and we returned on November 28th.

Less than a week later, I was in an emergency room again. Ultrasounds indicated an enlarged spleen and liver. My body was still fighting something. So many people were praying for me. I felt those prayers going to work as I was given life-saving treatment in St. Paul at the Travel and Tropical Medicine Hospital. They diagnosed me with a systemic bacterial infection, possibly typhoid fever, and prescribed further antibiotics.

The meds wiped me out---but in a good way. I was sleeping 12-13 hours a day for each of those antibiotic days and drinking a lot of fluids. Through God's help, my body was able to fight off the infection. I'm still dealing with some pain and other side-effects of the treatment, but in general---my health has been improving greatly every day.

We are continuing with tests and a care plan. Our organization and the local church would like to see me back to full health before they would consider returning us to Tanzania. For now, there's plenty of work to be done from here, and most of my immediate duties can be carried out from here.



TRI-LINGUAL BOOK

Just before leaving, Yohana and Andrew completed an anthology of Kerewe Sayings. It's the first tri-lingual book for this language, with each page displaying Kerewe, Swahili and English.

We hope it will be a great tool for literacy in the Ukerewe schools.

SPECIAL THANKSGIVING

Ukerewe Island had a 7-day power outage, just before Thanksgiving.

Our plans changed when \$200 of meat, cheese and ice cream were about to go bad. We gave food to neighbors and decided to have an early Thanksgiving celebration. Even without power, we were able to cook chicken and breadsticks in our outdoor gas oven.

It was very memorable.



WHITE CHRISTMAS

Being back for Christmas, the kids were able to see cousins, play in the snow, and open presents.

Mariah (5) and Selah (3) are enjoying school and are both learning to read. They are into horses and princesses -- as every girl their age probably should be. Eliana (9mo) has been scooting around on all-fours and smiles a lot.

PHOTOS

L: Alexis watching the soccer game with friends.

R: AFLC World Missions Director Earl, his wife Joan, and Steve Deyscher came to visit Ukerewe in November. They were received warmly by local churches.

L: The Kerewe team had a Paratext training seminar in October. This is the main program we use for translation, so it was very helpful!

L: Alexis is a great missionary. She sits with Jackie and Maggie, listens to them, and eats food with them almost every day.

R: Mariah, Selah and Israel doing laundry "the old-fashioned way". They like to try to help when they can.

L: We have a Kerewe Bible App being developed! Here, the test version was installed on the translators' phones. They were so excited to see the Bible on their own smartphone!

R: Selah being Selah. She loves carrying the chickens around and looking after them. Is she a chicken whisperer...? They seem to love her!

