

# Annet Ttendo Miller and Damien Miller

Prayer letter, August 2016  
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Dear friends, rather unexpectedly I am writing to you from Annet's family home in the suburb of Kirinya, Kampala, Uganda where we will be staying for the next few months. Thunder cracks as heavy thunderclouds roll in from Lake Victoria, which is clearly visible from our hillside abode. It is a good time to stay in and pen this update to you, as rain creates slippery roads, queuing traffic and crazy driving the likes of which I have never witnessed in Mozambique.

Some of you already know the story that has brought us here, but many may not and so I will fill you in on the details since our last prayer letter, early this year.

## **The God who gives life**

On 21 January, I turned 36 years old. Not usually a significant birthday but one that I had feared for some time. You see, this was the age my mother was when her life was prematurely ended by cancer, and ever since I struggled with the belief that I too would not live past this age. Yet just two days after my birthday Annet and I sat together in our bathroom staring in astonishment at two tiny blue lines that will change our lives forever. "Annet....you're pregnant!". Of course, this news took some time to process. Once the dust had settled we realised what our God had done. My fear of death had been transformed into hope and a celebration of new life. Those of you who are familiar with Annet's story will also know how much it means to her to have a child in a safe and loving marriage. We give thanks to the God who transforms past suffering into a hopeful future.

## **Crabs in the maternity ward**

Of course, our lives have changed dramatically following the positive pregnancy test. I have been ardently reading pregnancy and baby related books, guides and articles. We also attended a local clinic for Annet's ante natal appointments. This involved waiting for some hours on the clinic veranda alongside capulana-clad women before being invited into the nurse's office for a monthly check up. I was the only man in attendance and the gathered women couldn't help themselves from openly staring. Yet our first appointment was with a cheerful nurse who

told us how pleased she was that a husband was accompanying his wife.

Eventually we secured an appointment with one of Beira's handful of obstetricians via a friend who is a trainee doctor. Our friend guided us to the maternity ward of the central hospital where we waited as she regaled us with stories from her own experiences. With a smile she told of her previous shift when staff had been surprised to find a large crab scuttling between rooms on the ward! When our time came we entered a very basic room with a gel-encrusted ultrasound machine. However, we will not forget the kindness and professionalism of the obstetrician, whose demeanour put us both at ease. We knew that all was well with the pregnancy before our return to the UK.

## **No room at the inn**

The day after the UK held its EU referendum we arrived at Heathrow airport. We never could have anticipated what happened next. Annet was detained for five hours and questioned vigorously by Heathrow border force. She was eventually released and given weeks to leave the UK. The border force wrongly suspected that Annet would abuse public NHS funds and so they cancelled Annet's five year visitor's visa to the UK. We instructed a solicitor and appealed but unfortunately we were not successful. As a result, we had to board a flight to Annet's native Uganda and arrived here on 1st August with only eight weeks to go before our baby is born.

We feel very disappointed with the way Annet was treated by the Home Office in the UK, yet we have seen God's provision in abundance during this difficult time. The response by our friends and partner churches has been incredible. We have received so much prayer, helpful conversation, encouragement and support and we can think of many individuals who have blessed us so memorably during our short stay in the UK. Such people have made Annet feel very welcome in the UK. Yet this time has also reminded us of another story, long ago, of a soon-to-be mother who found that there was no room for her. The Son of God was born in basic surroundings and laid in a manger used to feed animals. Despite struggling with feelings of rejection, we do not have to endure circumstances such as those

into which Jesus entered this world. Therefore, we know that God will be with us as this baby is born in Uganda and he will bless our family no matter where we are.

### **The Mozambican Association of Christian Lawyers in the first half of 2016**

The Mozambican Association of Christian Lawyers has continued to grow in the last six months. In our last letter to you I mentioned three young law students from the University of Zambezia, who had volunteered their time to assist in AMAC activities in Beira. One of those students, Armenio da Roda, has now joined AMAC as a full time member of staff, leading community legal education in Beira. In particular, Armenio has been implementing seminars and discussions in local secondary schools as part of AMAC's project against Gender Based Violence. In this work he is assisted by Felizarda Chimunto, a local secondary school teacher who also works for AMAC part time. AMAC's Maputo office is also growing, with lawyer Marie José having recently joined.

Annet has continued her work with Constância Madiquida and together they have held several seminars with women groups in the Baptist Churches, speaking on the law regarding marriage and inheritance issues. I have been working closely with the Christian NGO Oasis Mozambique, conducting two week long training sessions on the legal system and on the law regarding marriage. AMAC and Oasis are currently collaborating to create publications that will help local women to realise their rights. We were

also thankful to receive Andrew Caplen, the former president of the Law Society of England and Wales, as a visitor in April 2016. His visit was an encouragement and helped to increase the profile of AMAC in the area.

### **In closing**

Annet and I have found a doctor and a hospital in Kampala and we welcome your prayers for us as we prepare for the new arrival to our family. We are comfortable in Annet's family home but the property needs some improvements. Annet's father was living in the house until May of this year, when sadly he passed away. Annet was not able to attend his funeral as she was awaiting the same visa that the Home Office decided to cancel upon her arrival to the UK. Please remember Annet as she settles in to her family home without her absent father.

### **Please thank God for**

- The blessing of new life and our growing family.
- The continued growth and ministry of the Mozambican Association of Christian Lawyers.
- The support and encouragement we have received from friends, family and supporters.

### **Please pray for**

- The safe delivery of baby Miller on or around 23rd September and continued good health for Annet.
- God's guidance and provision as we adjust to living in Uganda for the next few months.

**Annet and Damien**

If you would like to support Annet and Damien by prayer and committed regular giving, visit [bmsworldmission.org/partners](http://bmsworldmission.org/partners) or call 01235 517617 for a 24:7 Partners leaflet.



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