

# Annet Ttendo Miller and Damien Miller

Prayer letter, January 2016



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January provides us with an opportunity to look back at the passing year and yet look forward at the same time, combining lessons learned with hopeful expectation. Standing at the threshold of 2016 and glancing back, Annet and I see that 2015 was a defining year in our lives.

## Three weddings, two operations and a dissertation

In April 2015, Annet Ttendo and I were married in Kampala, Uganda. On Saturday 25th April we exchanged our vows and wedding bands and celebrated our registered marriage. However, the narrative of this wedding story has more than one chapter. The previous day we had celebrated the Kwanjula, or Introduction, being the traditional marriage ceremony of the Baganda people, to which Annet belongs. It is the day when the bride-to-be introduces her future husband, accompanied by his entourage of relatives and friends, to her family. The Introduction serves as a customary marriage, but since Western-style white weddings have gained in popularity the Introduction is frequently performed as a formal engagement ceremony. This latter function was the one that Annet and I celebrated.

Having experienced the exhaustion and exhilaration of two marriage ceremonies in two days in Uganda, a third celebration seemed a distant thought. However, once the dust had settled, we longed to celebrate once more with UK based family and friends and so a third chapter



was added to our wedding narrative on 22nd August in Eastbourne, East Sussex. This English celebration was made possible thanks to our home church, Victoria Baptist, who generously provided for this special day.

With our triple marriage blessing behind us, Annet and I faced a double challenge in September. Medical examinations in the UK recommended surgical procedures for both of us. Having contacted separate consultants we were surprisingly given the same day for our operations. The date, 15th September, was also the day after my Master's degree dissertation was due. And so, less than 24 hours after experiencing the combined stress and relief of submitting the final edit of my dissertation, Annet and I were almost simultaneously being wheeled into operating theatres in different hospitals. The following days were testing, as we bickered over whose turn it was to hobble to the kitchen and make the next cup of tea. However, we were again blessed by the generosity and kindness of our pastor and friends from Victoria Baptist Church, who helped us through this period of incapacitation.

## Your friend that never fails

Our first Home Assignment wasn't all wedding, surgery and study. Annet and I visited nine churches during our three months in the UK to speak on the work God is doing through AMAC in Mozambique and to thank those who are praying for and supporting us. It was very encouraging to personally meet many of you who have been following our journey and getting involved in justice ministry. Yet despite all the activity, Annet and I still managed to find enough time to worry and become anxious about the future. Driving back from Birmingham on the M40 one afternoon, we were both feeling particularly anxious and pressured about the future and the tone of conversation wasn't helping. It was then that a large white lorry manoeuvred in front of our car. "Annet, there's an image of Jesus on the back of this truck" I observed, "and some writing, what does it say?". "It's in Portuguese!" Annet exclaimed "It says 'Jesus, o seu amigo que nunca falha'. Jesus, your friend that never fails. This reassurance from our God was timely, but not only that. By delivering it in Portuguese whilst we were in England, we felt encouraged that God was with us wherever we are, UK or Mozambique.

## The Mozambican Association of Christian Lawyers at the end of 2015

Annet and I have often been away from Mozambique during 2015, having spent one month in Uganda and three months in the UK. Yet the activity and output of the Mozambican Association of Christian Lawyers has grown during 2015. AMAC has attended more needy clients and reached more people through legal education seminars than in 2014 and the work continues. However, it has not been without setbacks. Thieves broke into the AMAC office last August, pilfering AMAC equipment, computers and spitefully making off with our only fan. Thankfully a new fan has been bought and we have now replaced the other missing items, thanks to the generosity of our friends and supporters. As we continue our desk-bound labours we can now enjoy some respite from the elevated temperature.

As we returned to Mozambique in October we prayed for opportunities to extend the work of AMAC and to bring about meetings with people who share the same vision. These prayers have been emphatically answered. Annet is now working with Constância Madiquida, a respected lady from our church who has a passion for helping and empowering other women. Together they attended Beira Central Prison with the church women's group in order to preach and give practical gifts to the female prisoners at Christmas. In her April 2015 prayer letter Annet asked you all to pray for God to open prison doors and enable AMAC access to prisoners. We thank God and all of you for this answered prayer.

We have also been working with three young volunteers, law students from the University of Zambezia, who have freely given their assistance in a variety of ways, including teaching the law during legal education seminars. AMAC has also entered a partnership with Oasis Mozambique a Christian NGO who are very enthusiastic to bring knowledge of women's rights to the communities they work in. Finally, AMAC was able to conduct a legal education seminar for local church

leaders in Beira in November. This seminar reinforced the message of BMS World Mission's Dignity campaign, focussing on the law and Biblical material regarding marriage, divorce and domestic violence. It was well received, with participants expressing a desire to learn more. We are thankful to God for all the progress made in 2015.

### What will 2016 bring?

Looking ahead, there is much to pray for:

- Annet and Constância as they extend their work to include speaking to women's groups within the Baptist churches about the law and their rights and responsibilities.
- The work of AMAC is growing, as is awareness of AMAC within the community. Please pray for the resources and people AMAC needs to be able to do the work. At present, a lot of responsibility rests on only a handful of individuals.
- A legal awareness project with women in the community of Manga Laforte, conducted in partnership with Oasis Mozambique. It will include six months of seminars on a variety of legal topics starting in early February.
- Construction of the building which AMAC intends to occupy as its new office in Beira. Work has been delayed several months as we continue to wait for permissions from local government.
- Wisdom and discernment for Annet and I as we continue to work as a couple in the area of justice ministry. Please also pray for our young marriage as we build our home together in Beira, Mozambique.

***Wishing you all a very happy and prosperous new year! Damien Miller and Annet Ttendo Miller***

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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