

# Billy, Crystal, and Hudson Coley

## Missionaries in Kenya



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Dear Pastor and Church family:

### So Close, Yet So Far

Here in Kenya, January and February are hot and dry times of the year. This year, it seems to be especially hot and dry. The average Kenyan home is made out of various materials from mud homes to wood-frame houses plastered over with a concrete mixture. One building material that is common to most housing is the *mabati* (corrugated tin) roofs. During this hot time of year, sitting under a *mabati* roof leaves one feeling very much like they are in an oven. When we go for our time of evangelism to visit Kenyans in their homes, we must keep in mind the conditions that we will face. Part of the year, we need to wear shoes that we can easily slip off as it is rainy and muddy. This time of year, we must drink plenty of water to make sure that we keep at bay the effects of heat exhaustion.

I have noticed this past month a change in the response people gave to our evangelism efforts. Usually, people are very polite and willing to talk with us. Often, we experience a seemingly warm reception to the Gospel. They will listen, ask questions, and as the Lord works on hearts, some will put their trust in Christ rather than their own works for salvation. On the contrary, this past month I noticed a more scornful attitude toward the Gospel presentation. There were still some who would listen politely; but more than usual, we found scorners, mockers, and hecklers.

As an *mzungu* (white person) in the Nairobi area, Kenyans frequently presume that I don't understand Swahili. I often overhear people saying things that I know they would not have said if they knew I understood. One lady was talking loudly about me as I was trying to talk to one of her neighbors. She was embarrassed to learn that I understood all that she said. We still gave her an invitation to church and left a Gospel tract with her. Later, a drunk man claiming to be Muslim (A devout Muslim will not touch alcohol.) followed me down a path to other homes and tried to explain to me that *Mwenyezi Mungu* (the Swahili translation for Allah) is "One." He also used the time to explain why I should buy him food. Along with the hot and dry weather, the Kenyan economy is not doing well. Many have lost jobs and are struggling for the basic needs of life. These factors seem to have many people frustrated and irritated to the point that they forget their Kenyan culture of being polite to *wageni* (translates as "guests," "foreigners," and "strangers"). These frustrations are then taken out on the person who happens to knock on their door.

This month, I was reminded of John 1:10-11, "*He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not.*" I had pondered how many saw Christ, heard his preaching, and yet could not or would not believe. The One who came so that they might have eternal life, and they did not receive him. Still today, many are focused on the problems they think are the most pressing; yet they miss seeing their greatest need, that of a Savior. This month, I met many who were so close to their salvation, yet they are still so far. At Karen Baptist Church, we seek to hold forth the Word of Life. Please continue to pray that the Lord will soften hearts and that Kenyans will turn to the Lord to meet their greatest need.

Thank you for your faithful prayer and financial support!

*Billy, Crystal, and Hudson Coley*