



## The Work of His Hands

**“And my God shall provide all your needs according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus. Now to our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen.” Philippians 4:19-20**

Dear Friends and Family,

Thank you so much for your continued prayers and support. The last year has been an incredible experience for us as we've learned to trust the Lord implicitly and completely in ALL things big and small. We are so excited to return to Zambia this month, as our furlough draws to an end. The Lord has truly used this time in the States to teach us invaluable lessons about His ability to provide for us through His people.

One of the logistical challenges of living in the States temporarily has been housing. Recently we were asked how many times we moved while here. In the last 18 months we have lived in over ten different homes, moving over seventeen times. At first this lifestyle was very stressful, especially when we knew we'd have to be out by a certain day and, until a day or two ahead of that, had no idea where we were going next. Several times we received invitations to housesit from people who didn't even know we were looking for a place to live! Once we went out of town for a few days, taking all our things with us. We prayed that the Lord would provide a place for us to live upon our return. He did. The Lord has truly been faithful in keeping a roof over our heads, and we've enjoyed the hospitality and fellowship of many dear Brothers and Sisters while in the States. The Lord taught us that He will always provide what we need, sometimes from the most unexpected corner, and often in the most creative ways.

It has been wonderful to have a time of growth and discipleship, as we look forward to future ministry. One of the challenges of missionary work is that you are almost always the spiritual leader in your community. In fact, you are often the only one with any kind of firm grasp of the Scriptures. It is easy to get lost serving the “demands of the immediate,” which are generally ever-present and over-abundant in Africa. Sometimes we need to step back and remember that God is in control of both ourselves and our physical surroundings. It has been refreshing and nourishing to be disciplined and built up by our Brothers and Sisters here in the States. We sincerely thank you for the part you played in this by committing us to God in prayer and helping us with our physical needs.



**Monica making the most of American food while she can get it. Smart baby!**



**The challenges involved in collecting and shipping Bibles and supplies to Africa seemed truly overwhelming.**

### Impossible?

Ministry in Africa presents a wide variety of challenges and obstacles, not the least of which is the colossal need for Bibles, supplies, medication, books, education, and aid. I have often wished there was a more efficient way of getting these vital materials to the countless people in need. About two years ago, I started earnestly praying and seeking a way to get more supplies to Africa. I was looking for a method that was both more cost effective and time efficient. Putting together a shipping container of supplies seemed to be the best, if not the only, way of doing this. However, I had a few reservations about engaging in such a project.

Firstly, I'd seen it done before. In 1998 I helped move a container of medical supplies into Sudan. It took two years to travel from the USA to its final destination in Lui, Sudan. The container didn't take very long to reach Africa. However, once it got there, it enjoyed quite a rough journey. While passing through the perilous African road conditions, the truck and container



Poor road conditions + dilapidated vehicles + bad drivers= big messes

rolled off the road, resulting in what I have dubbed, "an African Twisty Truck" (not at all a rare sight on African roadsides). It sat, or rather languished, there on the side of the road until it was later picked up by another truck to continue on to Sudan. When the driver reached the border at Sudan, he watched other trucks leaving the country, their sides riddled with bullet holes. He abandoned the container there at the border, never notifying us of its whereabouts. After a great deal of investigation, we finally found the container at the border, sourced yet another driver, and continued through the Sudanese border to Lui. Once we arrived in the village, the container had to be pulled off the back of the truck and dropped to the ground with chains anchored to large trees. We finally got to open the container and take out our materials. Well, after the general shipment unsettling, rolling off a trailer and down a hill, sitting in poor weather conditions,

and being yanked off the final truck, the contents were truly a sight to behold- the boxes in shambles and their contents thrown chaotically around the inside of the container. We also discovered that, at some point along the way, the container had been jimmed open and some of the boxes had been ransacked and stolen. Needless to say, this experience gave me a great deal of hesitancy about future container projects.

Aside from these challenges, the sheer number of books that would be needed to fill a 40ft container seemed overwhelming. Picture filling several rooms in your house from floor to ceiling, back to front with boxes of books! Furthermore, the amount of funds needed to ship the container, if we managed to fill it, was prohibitive. Granted, it would cost a lot more to move smaller amounts of materials over time, but then we could raise the money over time too.

As I considered the logistical challenges of putting together a shipping container of books, Bibles, and supplies for Africa, I didn't think it could be done. In fact, I was almost positive that it was impossible. Feeling discouraged at the magnitude of such a venture, we spent a great deal of time researching our options and praying for the Lord's will to be evident. I was sure that a container project would be a much better method of getting precious Bibles and books to Africa. Because the container would be shipped to Zambia, not Sudan, I was confident that we could avoid many of the problems we experienced in 1998. I also thought that our Brothers and Sisters in the States might be excited about getting involved in such an incredible project. We finally laid it before God saying, "This is too big for us. But if you would like it to happen... we'd love to be our hands."



A 40ft shipping container can hold almost 2300 cubic feet of material. That is a lot of Bibles and school supplies! Our container weighed over 35,000lbs after we loaded it!



I never imagined that we would have such an incredible response. Thank you for sending us your Bibles and supplies, for praying for us, and for supporting us in this project!

As it turned out, the only thing standing in our way was us. After we gave our desire over to the Lord, trusting Him entirely to "make it happen", well, things started happening... fast. First there was the truckload of new textbooks and school supplies that was donated by Area 127, a home school supplier in California. Then as churches and friends heard about our project, they began collecting Bibles and books for us. Many of these precious materials were shipped to us in Phoenix from as far away as Washington and New York! The Lord quite literally pulled His people together from coast to coast. Over several months, books and Bibles started really piling up. We continued trusting that the Lord had a place for them, as we were running out of room. This problem was further complicated by the fact that we didn't have our own home or garage to store them in. Of course, just when we were really starting to wonder what to do (or, strictly speaking, just as the need became present), the Lord provided a better facility than we ever could have imagined. Our Director introduced us to Tony of Professional

Movers, Inc in Phoenix. He offered to let us use his warehouse to store the Bibles and materials. Additionally, once it came time to pack the materials onto the container, the truck would be able to back right up to a real loading dock, dramatically reducing the amount of labor needed to load it!

In preparation for the long sea and road journey to Zambia, each Bible, textbook, and school supply had to be carefully sorted, boxed, and labeled. Initially we thought this would take maybe a week. I'm glad we started early, because it took eight weeks of daily packing to completely prepare all the materials! We were once again blessed with a lot of help in this, as family and friends generously gave of their time to help us sort through the massive piles of books. In fact, our friend Jacob spent almost a week sorting through Saxon math curriculum alone!

Funding the container could not possibly have happened without God moving in the hearts of His people. This is truly incredible, considering the current economy (another one of our worries before we decided that if this project was going to happen, God would need to be in charge). Several churches helped us raise support, including Valley Christian Church in Arizona. They raised close to \$5,000... at a yard sale! Many individuals and groups responded with donations, and helped raise the necessary funds.

At long last the supplies were packed, the funding was in place, the container purchased, and we were ready to load it for shipment.



Ashley loved sorting all the books into crates. (I'm not even kidding.)

### Over Land and Sea

At long last, on Saturday, August 1<sup>st</sup>, with the help of many dear friends, we loaded over 35,000 pounds of material, totaling 2,260 cubic feet, into the shipping container. The Lord was again gracious in providing an amazing group of men to move all the boxes and materials. We even had our friend Piotr, a packing engineer, to direct the placement of the boxes, minimizing the likelihood of damage and maximizing space. Some of the men and their sons stayed over 8 hours, lifting heavy boxes in the heat to help us load the container in time for shipment. It was incredible to see everything packed into neat stacks, ready for the long journey to Africa. After 8 long weeks of packing, it was wonderful to see it off!

We are expecting the container to arrive in Zambia in late October. Before it reaches us, it must not only pass over land and sea, but also through many hands, all eager to have a share of the materials inside. It can sometimes be difficult to clear the various government agencies when importing goods. Because Africa is riddled with both poverty and corruption, a container full of books and supplies is a great temptation to some of the officials who will be processing the container through the borders.



Thank you to each person who helped pack and load all the materials into the container. Moving 35,000 lbs is no small project, especially in the Phoenix heat!



"We're done packing!!!!"

Please pray that our container will pass safely through the borders and customs agencies.

It has truly been an incredible, humbling experience to watch God at work with this project. He provided such clear direction throughout the logistics and planning, great help through His people, and He was there in all the details (right down to free pizza from Papa John's for our loading crew!) Thank you for the part you played in sending this container to Africa.

### On the Way Home

Now that the container is on its way, our final move to Zambia has begun. After all our moving around in the States, we are blessed to see God's handy work in giving us an ideal accommodation arrangement. While in Zambia last year, I met Hannes and Christel, a South African missionary couple working with Pro Cristo in Kabwe. They were planning to build a guesthouse on their property, which they would rent out to fund their ministry projects. We need a place to stay and they need renters, thus the building process began. As with most things in Africa, building takes time, and there was concern for awhile as to whether or not the guesthouse would be finished



by our arrival. Again, we are amazed to see how God put the pieces together. I am, at this moment, in Kabwe and can see that the paint is going on the walls and the finishing touches are being made. Just in time for Ashley and Monica!!

**The Wheels are Turning**

Another challenge we are facing is organizing the purchase of our vehicle here in Africa. Without a vehicle, our operations are grossly inhibited. By God’s grace and with the help of many of His people, we now have the funds necessary to purchase a vehicle. However, the process of acquiring one is still underway and is logistically complex. Please keep this need in your continued prayers.

**Monica is a Big Sister**

Not only has God blessed us abundantly with this Container Project, He has also seen fit to add to our number. We are very much looking forward to January 7<sup>th</sup>, when we expect Monica’s first little sibling to arrive. She is very excited and often pats her Mommy’s tummy, lovingly saying, “Baba. Baba!” She has also taken to carrying her baby dolls around, generously sharing her own milk (dolly has needed a lot of baths) and patting “baby” to sleep. We’re pretty sure that she is going to take good care of her little brother.

God willing, we plan to deliver this baby in Africa at a good, clean clinic that has come highly recommended. Please be praying for us, as we have a long road and lots of travels between now and the birth. January is also the height of malaria season, which means many extra precautions for pregnant Momma and newborn baby. Please pray for God’s grace and a safe, successful pregnancy and birth.



Above: Mr. Keller at 18 weeks

Right: Monica practicing her big sister skills (sharing is important, right?) She can’t wait to play with her little brother!



**www.KellersC23.com**

We recently published our first website. You can read more about our projects, see and download pictures from the field, write us a note, and access our latest newsletter. Ashley is also starting a blog which can be accessed through the webpage or at [www.KellersC23.com/blog](http://www.KellersC23.com/blog). This is a new adventure for us; we’d love your feedback. Our website is a work in progress so please let us know if there is anything we can do to make improvements.

Pro Rege,

Timothy, Ashley, Monica, & Baby Keller

Please pray...

- For the Lord’s hand to be on the Container as it is shipped to Zambia.
- For the Lord to go before the Container and see it safely through customs.
- For Ashley’s health and our Baby’s development as we reach our fifth month of pregnancy.
- That the Lord will continue to give us grace and wisdom as we serve Him in Africa.

Gifts may be sent to: The Keller Household, c/o ITMI, PO Box 7575, Tempe, AZ 85281

To receive a tax receipt, cheques should be made out to “ITMI” and designated to “The Kellers” (or “Keller Container” for Container shipment funds)