

# In His Hands

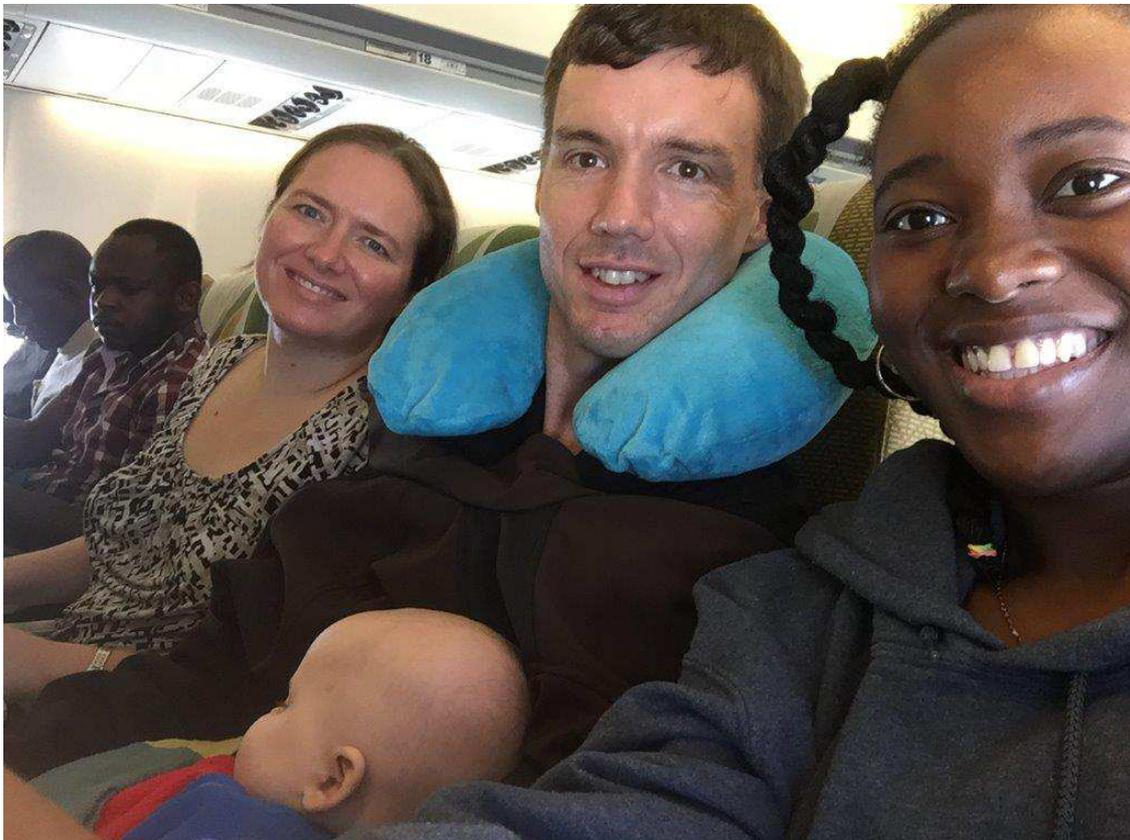
(Isaiah 49:16)



December 2015

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**Thank you** for your generosity which allowed us to attend the American Academy of Ophthalmology's (AAO) annual conference in the US this November! The first significant event was accomplished when we landed in the US with a visa but walked out of the airport with Bintou as a permanent resident! No more costly and time-consuming visas required to travel to the US (YAY!!!) and Bintou can now pursue mission membership so that we can be commissioned as a team!

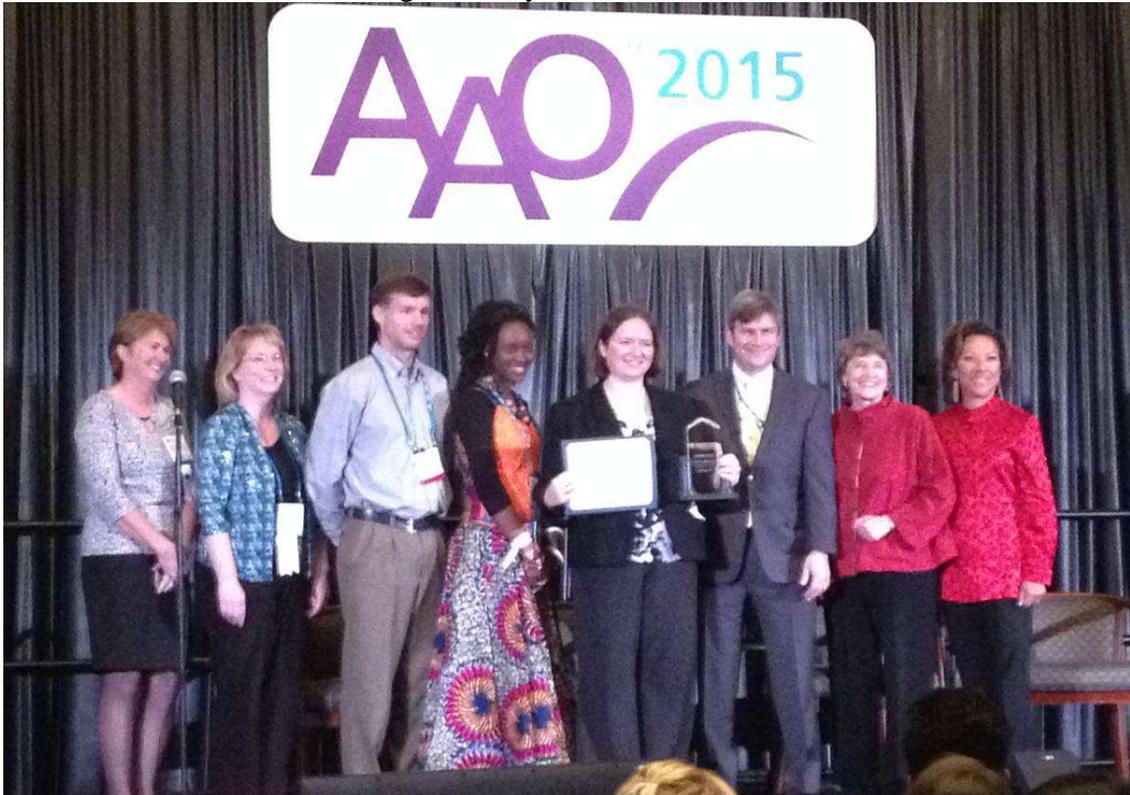


*17 hours in the airplane from Addis Abba to Washington DC!*

The second significant event was Bintou's participation in the conference. When we arrived, we were blown away to discover that there were 20,000+ participants - roughly 1/3 of those being international. The training was first-class and very beneficial for Bintou at this stage in her training. One particularly exceptional opportunity was a 3D anatomy tour of the eye!

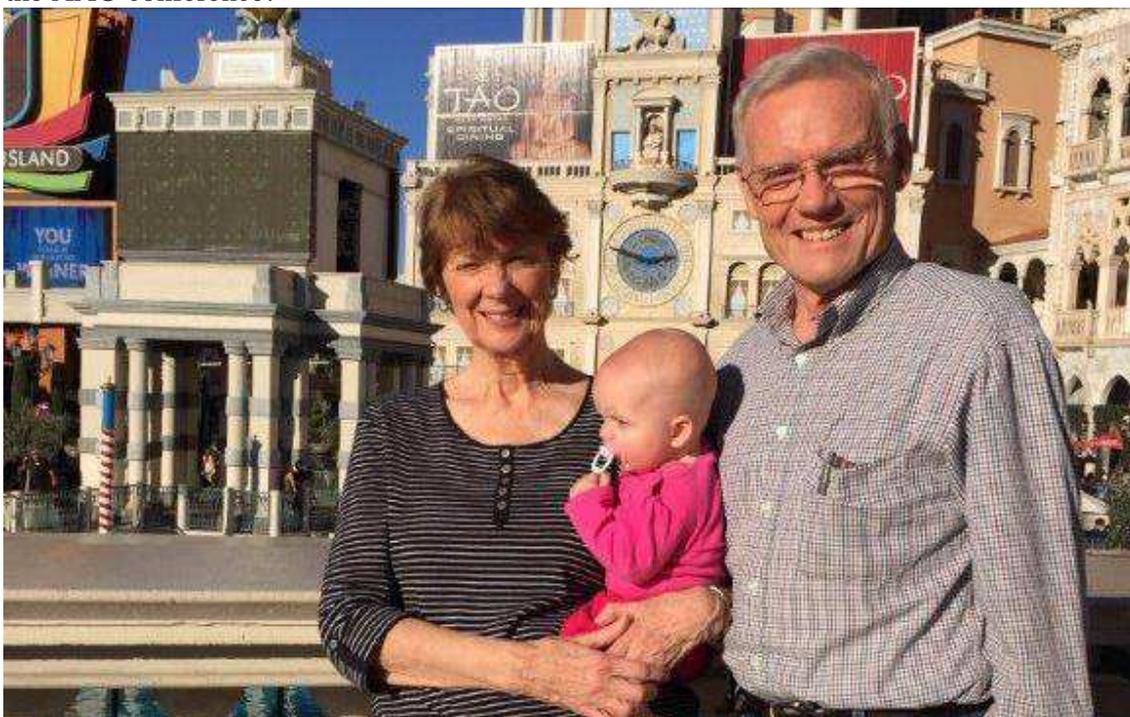
The third was to support Bintou's teacher, Dr. Wendy Hofman, who received the Artemis Service Award from the AAO, and to share about the ministry at the Bongolo Eye Clinic with fellow ophthalmologists. Bintou was interviewed by the AAO for an article in the AAO magazine and Dr. Wendy had the

opportunity to speak to a large group of Christians during a prayer breakfast. We are praying that at least 5 people will volunteer to come to Bongolo next year!



*Dr. Wendy receiving the Artemis award from the President of the AAO.*

The fourth was the blessing of spending some time with my parents who came from North Carolina. Not only was it great to see them but they were a lifesaver to me (Rob) while Bintou and Wendy spent long days at the AAO conference!



*Hannah with her new aunt and uncle!*

However the most significant event for us still weighs heavy on our hearts. Bintou will share the story and the journey:

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It is Thanksgiving week. The Word of God calls us to praise the Lord in all circumstances - in joy or sadness, we should thank the Lord. As we shared in a previous update, I have been dealing with questions of infertility.

This year the Lord gave us the grace to become pregnant. We were so happy! And so full of joy! At last, we would carry our child. A few hours after arriving in Las Vegas, I experienced bleeding, and a trip to the emergency room. An ultrasound measured a heartbeat of 136, normal. Our jubilant relief turned to grief when two days later, far away from my home in a hotel room in Las Vegas, unexpectedly and painfully in every way, I experienced a miscarriage and a lot more blood and another trip to the emergency room. Our journey to accept it and thank the Lord began in Room 4.

I went through some time of deep pain, I just wanted to be alone and I was wrestling with God. I couldn't stay with people for a long time. The only place I wanted to be was with God to talk to Him, ask Him questions: why did you let this happen to us? What have I done to you?

I finally found comfort in God's Word and I can thank God for something that came out of the loss of our baby. I read the story of Job in the Bible; he didn't know what was happening. But the reality is that all the trials that happened to him happened because he feared and loved the Lord. God was proud of him - so much that the enemy couldn't bear it. Reading Job's story brought so much comfort to me.

Tonight as I am writing this Thanksgiving letter, I still don't have the answer. I still cry when I hear a baby giggle or when I think about our lost pregnancy. But I have realized that in deep pain and hurt, God is the best caregiver and comforter and I know that it is His comfort and presence that brings healing and hope!

And although I struggled with it at the beginning, I now know that the miscarriage didn't happen because I am a bad person. It didn't happen because I failed God one way or the other. It may have happened just because God delights in me and the enemy could not bear it.

Another good thing that came out of it is that Rob and I have never been as close as we are now. It was not easy the first days. I was blaming myself and others. We were both deeply hurt and struggling to know how to handle it. We thank God for His sovereign grace in our lives. As we talked and prayed together, we realized that the enemy was also trying to use our loss and pain to divide us as a couple. Praise God, it didn't happen!

Please be encouraged and pray for our encouragement: no matter what happens to you, no matter how deep the pain and the hurt can be, God is there and He cares. In the pain and the hurt of losing our baby, we are thankful for the presence of God like never before.

Happy Thanksgiving to you all!

Love,  
Bintou

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We know that you pray regularly for us. The Lord carried two very emotionally exhausted people on the long trip back to Bongolo. It has been good to be home. Bintou returned to the eye clinic this week and was encouraged to be back. We are praying that within the next month she will have completed her first full cataract surgery! I am preparing for a very busy January and February as there will be a steady stream of volunteers coming to erect the new eye clinic building!



*A treasured memory in the midst of many tears*

### **Praise and Prayer Summary**

#### **Praises:**

- Bintou's permanent resident status.
- Dr. Wendy's and Bintou's boldness to give glory to Jesus throughout the AAO conference.
- Excellent training for Bintou and Wendy along with significant donations of equipment.
- Time with mom and dad and their ministry to us and Dr. Wendy by caring for Hannah.
- A well-attended follow-up meeting by churches and ministries for the establishment of an inter-church Bible translation committee in November in Libreville.
- The Lord's presence and comfort in this time.

#### **Prayer:**

- Bintou and I as we continue to heal, experience new joy and learn to trust the Lord with everything.
- For God to bless us with a second child.
- For favor with the University Medical Center of Nevada as I work out our two emergency room bills. We are still seeking a health insurance solution for Bintou.
- That the Bible translation meeting proposals would be approved by the various churches and an inter-church team would be formed.
- Bintou's heavy schedule at the ophthalmology clinic daily as well as a full reading schedule.

By His strength alone,  
Rob & Bintou

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