

CROSSING OVER

a report of the Talley's work in East Africa

SPECIAL FOCUS



Three Faces of Abi: Flexibility is a trait Abigail has learned to develop as an American Kenyan living in Tanzania.

The Other Member of the Talley Team

Sometimes amid the surveys, reports and studies in missiology, a key part of mission ministry goes unrecognized. In a missionary family it is expected that the husband work full-time in ministry, with the wife heavily involved. The kids, however, are usually seen as innocent bystanders who often suffer from their parents' vocation.

In truth, missionary kids can open doors and hearts that their parents cannot approach. They soften the "foreign-ness" of their parents, narrowing the gap between cultures. What may take adult missionaries years of study and practice to learn in cross-cultural communication, missionary kids often do naturally. They may well be a missionary's best asset.

Thus is Abigail...our best asset, our biggest concern. Her willing-

ness to be stretched socially, linguistically and educationally has made our ministry here possible and given her a ministry as well. But this has not been without a lot of thought and prayer for her well-being. Satan knows our soft spot. It seems every time we see growth in ministry, Abigail takes a hit. Sometimes it is just small things... having her books and calculators stolen at school. Other times it is more frightening... being choked and bitten by a woman labeled as "demon possessed" while in the market. It took three people to free Abi from the woman's grasp.

So we ask for your prayers. The difficulties Abigail may face here are certainly no more frightening than the ones your children face in America. They are just different. She is not faced with the social

pressure of drugs, alcohol and sex, but the things she does face, she faces without peers.

Abigail is a 14-year-old mixture of America and Africa, maturity and naivety, shyness and courage ... and a great help to our ministry. We just wanted you to know.



Teacher, student, babysitter: Abigail helps teach Sunday school and often re-teaches it while adults have after-church meetings.



Solar Laundry Mat: Abi's great at doing the outside chores; hanging out laundry, burning trash, feeding our slop bucket to the neighbors' goats. Now if I could just get her room outside...

A Peek at Abi's Diary

July 21: My first day of school and I was so nervous!! The first thing I had to do was line up against the wall in the headmasters' office for uniform inspection. Of course EVERYTHING was wrong. My sleeves were too tight, my skirt and my socks too short and my shoes had rubber soles instead of leather... I think the matron enjoyed watching me fight back the tears. But when the bell rang for assembly she was suddenly all sweet and held my hand as we walked. We were late so all 500 students had already lined up. The rumble of conversation became dead quiet as the matron (who was still holding my hand) led me to my line. Everyone just stared. I guess I'm the first mzungu student at Popotal Secondary School. I kept my head down because I knew my face was very red. When I got in line the hush dissolved into hoots of laughter and whispers of, "Ah! Mzungu! Ah! Mzungu!!!" I had to look up...and smile.

July 22: Oh my cow!! My class has 9 girls...and 30 boys!!!! Thirty-nine students and they're so much older than me! One guy is EIGHT years older! He is 22!! All of the boys have beards, goatees or moustaches! It'll take me forever to remember all the names.

July 23: I don't think it will be difficult to learn the boys' names....half of them are named Mohammed.

August 9: Today's my birthday. I couldn't believe it, but several of the girls brought me little presents...knick-knacks and hair clips. It was so sweet!

August 16: First math test. Surely the things Mr. Msumai asked us to do with numbers are illegal!

August 17: Good news and bad news about the math test. Good news: I made 3rd highest grade in the class! Bad news: I made a 21%. Good news: that's still a "D". Mom says that's still bad news.

September 19: Today at assembly I felt like I was at an execution. Six boys had been caught with cell phones. Mr. Siagi brought them on stage and gave them a frighteningly sweet lecture about the sin of bringing phones to school. You could see the fear in their eyes. Mr. Siagi then got his three-foot long cane and with a full swing back over his head he caned the boys. Abdul got five sticks. As annoying as he is, I still felt sorry for him.



Something All Girls Should Know: Though she's too young to drive legally, being able to change a tire is a necessity here.

October 13: I love the way Madam Swai punishes the boys (despite the beards they can be so immature!) Some of them are really picky about their hair. They slick it back with gel and let no one - and I mean no one - touch it. Today Shivam and Yusuf, who preen like peacocks, were misbehaving during Madam Swai's chemistry lecture. She continued talking while casually walking down the aisle towards them. Without missing a beat she swatted both of them on the head with a chalk board eraser. When the cloud of chalk settled, their once shiny, black hair had disintegrated into white goo. It was too funny!

October 25: Today my calculator was stolen by a girl I thought was my friend. It's taking me a while to figure out who likes me because of my skin

color and who doesn't like me because of my skin color. Both make me feel uncomfortable.

November 10: In assembly today Mr. Musa gave us a long lecture about using Kiswahili in school. He predicted that we'd never learn English and never get jobs because we speak in Swahili. He then banned the use of any language other than English while at school. I found it very interesting that his speech was in Kiswahili!!

January 15: New school year, new teachers, same students. I'm glad. Miriam, Yakuta and I are still best friends.

February 5: I had an adventure today! As I was riding my bike home from school a man grabbed the back of my bike as I went by, knocking it down to the ground. He demanded my bike and when I said, "No!" he grabbed me. I got scared, but there was no one around to help me (except a crazy man in a loin cloth). I started to give it to him when suddenly he said, "Nenda! Nenda!" (Go! Go!) I jumped on my bike and peddled like mad. I got home in record time. It's weird he let me go.

February 14: I found a chocolate bar in my desk this morning. Fauz told me it was a Valentine's treat from Fahad, a pompous boy who thinks he has all females at his beck and call. I was going to eat it, but Yakuta freaked out, saying that he had probably put "dawa" (a love potion) from a mganga (witchdoctor) in it to make me like him. So I left it for the scavenger birds. They can keep him company. Hee, hee!

March 1: We are going on a school trip to the Ngorongoro Crater! How cool is that?! They say it's the eighth wonder of the world!! I'm so lucky!!!!



All Work and No Play: There are no sports for Abi's class at school, so any sport she does has to be organized by Tim for after school hours.