

# What's Up With DAI?! (Dan & Angie Thornton)

## ISABELLA 101:

- Mama says I'm becoming Little Miss Independent: One of my favorite phrases is, "Solo Isabella!" (Only Isabella).
- Apparently, I'm also very "curious." My most frequently asked question is "What's that?"
- The hot, sticky rainy season ended recently. It's actually cold enough to wear a hoodie. Brrrr!
- After months of begging, I finally got a tricycle. First thing I did was go see my buddy Fallou so I could take him for a spin. I love my new wheels!
- I've become quite the techie—I know how to look at pictures on my parents' iPods, and my favorites are "photo bebés" and "photos Matt!"
- Speaking of which, Uncle Matt and "Aunt" Lindsey just got engaged! They've asked me to be the flower girl, which means I get to wear a princess dress. Fun!
- I keep hearing people call me an extrovert. I don't know what that means, but I sure do like hanging out with all those guys!
- I want to go to school so bad! Every time we walk by the neighbourhood preschool, I ask mom and dad to leave me there, but they refuse!

## OUR CULTURAL LENSES

Have you ever thought about the cultural lenses through which you read Scripture? Have you considered how they may affect your interpretation of God's Word?

Often, leaving N. America and living in another country opens our eyes to just how much our culture colours how we view the Bible. It's simply impossible to avoid as humans. The question is, how do we identify and eliminate any biases that may negatively influence our Christian lives?

This is a challenge we face as missionaries, and which Dan and I deal with in particular in training nationals. We don't want to transmit our Western cultural baggage while communicating the tenets of the

Christian faith.

The church in Senegal is young, and in a lot of ways, very American. From the pews to the songbooks, from the order of service to the kinds of extra-biblical "do's and don'ts," national believers are a product of their missionary parents.

In this environment, the proper exercise of our spiritual gifts in the local church is a big challenge. Dan is a passionate teacher, and would enjoy preaching at our church on occasion. He also has great ideas in regards to training up leaders within the congregation.

At the same time, he feels torn between a desire to use his gifts and a desire to let

the church be independent, run and taught by Africans.

The problem is that so few leaders are biblically trained. Whether it's the pastor, the elders, or the deacons, all are occupied in full-time work and have little time to dedicate to thorough exegesis, much less formal theological education at ITES. So, the average teaching from the pulpit Sunday to Sunday lacks depth.

Are we to let spiritually young believers go hungry? Is it time to let the church in Africa learn on its own, or does a place remain for missionaries in positions of leadership in the church? These are questions we wrestle with, and for which we'd ask for your continued prayers.

## BEHIND BARS

Their crimes range from drug dealing to infanticide, and their sentences from two years to over ten. But what the women at the Thies penitentiary all have in common is this: Their prayer request week after week is for their swift release.

Some haven't stood trial yet, so questions remain as to their innocence, and they can wait with the guilty for up to two years before appearing before a judge to face charges for their alleged crimes.

While the prison houses over 700 men, the women's wing holds roughly 50 women "behind bars." Only they're not behind bars at all. They live in a common area comprised of three rooms (two for sleeping and one for storing their belongings) and a courtyard for cooking, washing clothes, and hanging out. The entrance is barred with a simple chain and padlock, and two female guards trade-off morning and evening shifts.

Every Tuesday, 3-5 PM, we meet for prayer, bible study, and singing. Of the ten or so who join us, most are Catholic, but some open Muslims have begun attending. We take turns teaching, my colleagues in French, which is translated, and I in Wolof. I'm going through Luke, although I'm more of a preacher, if the truth be told! I put countless hours into my messages, and I give them not only for the ten ladies sitting around me, but also for every woman within the reach of my voice. I dare them not to listen! :) As Paul wrote in 1 Cor. 9:16 "Woe is me if I do not preach the gospel!"

The Christmas season we had the opportunity to preach the gospel not only with words, but also with gifts of love. We collected and distributed used clothes, followed by an evangelistic celebration with a powerful message given in Wolof by Pastor Mambamba, an ITES grad and Muslim Background Believer. Please pray for boldness and open doors, for more women to join our study, and for many prisoners to come to a saving knowledge of Messiah.

### Please pray for us:

- **Family** - That God, in his mercy, would save Angie's immediate and both of our extended families.
- **Finances** - Please join us in praying that the Lord will provide the support we're lacking (updated figures coming soon!).
- **French & Wolof** - As Dan gets back to his teaching responsibilities, please pray that his French would continue to improve. And pray for Angie as she keeps up her Wolof studies.
- **Fruit** - That we would walk in close fellowship with the Lord and bear much fruit in ministry.



### ISABELLA THE EXTROVERT

Isabella enjoys making friends wherever she goes. At the pool, in our neighbourhood, or at church, she loves everybody and everybody loves her. If only that were the case with us grown ups!

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Angie's Blog: [ambassadorofreconciliation.blogspot.com](http://ambassadorofreconciliation.blogspot.com)  
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## MRS. PEWTER SPOON'S CORNER JUST KEEPIN' IT REAL

Let's sit down for a cup of tea together, friend. I have something personal to share with you.

I don't know about you, but I have lots of single missionary friends that I keep in touch with and pray for (almost all are women). Few if any regularly broadcast that they'd *really* like to find a husband, and that they'd appreciate your prayers to that end. But they do and they would. Just keepin' it real.

As someone who got married in my thirties, I was also reluctant to share this prayer request, perhaps for fear of sounding desperate. Godly friends and mentors, including many reading these words, knew better, and faithfully interceded for me over the years in this regard.

And if you've gotten to know Dan at all, you've witnessed firsthand how he exceeded my wildest dreams and is a daily reminder of

God's grace towards this unworthy daughter of the King.

As if Dan the Wonder-Husband weren't enough, I've been blessed with the most precious little blue-eyed treasure in the world, Isabella. How could I possibly ask for more? Should I really trouble my kind friends further when you've already done so much for us?

Well, after serious reflection and prayer, I've decided to go for it and jettison the fear of seeming desperate. Just keepin' it real.

Have you guessed what our special prayer request is? If you've been so bold as to ask about it directly, then you may have already guessed: Our heart's desire is to have another baby. We've been trying unsuccessfully for almost a year, and realized it was time to enlist the big guns: You!

I have reason to believe that I may be strug-

gling with post-partum infertility issues. (I googled some of my symptoms, so it must be true!). We're trying to find the best gynecologist around to look into a more definite diagnosis and possible treatment.

I'm getting up there in years, so I don't have a lot of time to sit around waiting for Baby #2 to just appear. We know that the same God who opened the womb of barren matriarchs in biblical times can grant another child to this 37 year-old. And we also know that God operates through the prayers of His people. So, we want to enlist you, friend, to join us in prayer for this special request so near to our hearts. Thanks for letting me share this time with you. I hope you enjoyed your tea - I like mine fruity. How about you? :)