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December 2020-January 2021



## Dear friends and supporters,

We have had our share of adventures since we last wrote to you.

We got to enjoy a very African Expat Thanksgiving! We haven't dealt with much interference in our lives from Covid as many of you have. We know many of you chose to stay home and celebrate alone instead of with family, and that Thanksgiving looked a lot different to many of you this year. Our Thanksgiving certainly looked different too, although not due to the virus! We celebrated our first Thanksgiving in Côte d'Ivoire! Turkeys are very expensive here, so we had chicken instead. But since we're still in our moving-in process, my oven wasn't functional. I ended up cooking our chicken in a slow cooker, which was no big deal... until the power went out for several hours! Because of the delay, we didn't eat supper until after 9:00 p.m.! On the positive side, the food came out nicely, and our little family enjoyed a quiet, albeit late, evening together.

The beginning of December began our still ongoing health saga. Seth came down with an unusually bad sore throat, as well as a fever. However, that same weekend he was scheduled to do a baptismal service near San Pédro; so, he still traveled, preached, and did the baptisms, despite feeling so miserable. I started feeling poorly a couple of days after he did. And while he bounced back pretty quickly and was almost completely better within the week, I felt worse and worse for the next several days. It was about ten days before I started to recover, during which time, I suffered from an excruciating sore throat, fevers, weakness (that seemed to get worse

every day), and migraines.

Because of the time we spent sick, we didn't get to do a whole lot of preparation for Christmas. The Lord still helped us to have a sweet day! The girls opened up presents...lots of things we brought in our container either brand new or packed away so long ago that Eden forgot they existed! We went to the village (Niezeko) that afternoon, and Seth told the kids the Christmas story. Then, we passed out hunks of baguette with chocolate spread.

Around the last week of December, both Eden and Zion both came down with fevers. Neither of them had sore throats, and the fevers would come and go throughout the day. Eventually, both girls seemed like they were on the mend from what we believed was a minor illness. We packed up and headed to San Pédro to celebrate New Year with the church there and to attend a memorial service for a missionary/family friend. But on Saturday, January 2 (which happened to be our one-year anniversary of reaching the field), Eden had a fever that spiked and a few seizures. Long story short, she ended up nearly comatose in the hospital for the next week and was diagnosed with cerebral malaria and a blood infection. She was severely anemic and ended up getting two blood transfusions.

That Friday, we also noticed that Zion looked like she had jaundice, and her energy was very low. She also ended up being diagnosed with malaria, although not nearly as serious as Eden's. She had a blood transfusion as well because she, too, was severely anemic. Both girls are now out of the hospital and are making progress. Zion has a lot of energy back, and her color is slowly turning back to normal. Eden finally spoke a little yesterday (January 12), and can now hold her own head up, sit up unassisted for short periods of time, and can stand and walk a tiny bit with help. Please be in prayer for her recovery!

*Top Left: Seth leading a kids club at Niezeko, the village near our house*

*Top Right: Family picture of our Thanksgiving "picnic" in our living room*

*Bottom Left: A kingfisher that Seth rescued*

*Bottom Right: Eden in the hospital*



This trial has not been easy. But Seth and I have been so encouraged by all the people who have reached out to us to let us know they have been praying for our daughters and us. God has granted us such amazing peace and grace in this time, and we are inexpressibly thankful for our relationship with Christ!

Seth has been able to minister in his dad's church while we've been in San Pedro. He preached the New Years' service, as well as this past Sunday; he's held meetings with the teachers at the church's Christian school; and he will lead tonight's service (Wednesday, January 13). We decided to stay in San Pedro through the week, just in case we needed to go back to the clinic. Lord willing, we will be able to go home this approaching Sunday afternoon.

Thank you for your continued prayers for us! It has been a blessing, especially recently.

Happy in His service,  
The Cuthbertsons  
Seth, Paige, Eden, and Zion

Some praises:

- *Two churches took us on for support in the past month!*
- *Eden is getting her strength back and trying to talk again.*
- *When Eden needed her blood transfusion, there was only one bag left of her blood type. God had it waiting there especially for her!*



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