

Merry Christmas—Bartholomew Newsletter 2020

We're trying to get into a Christmas spirit here but it sure is hard when many days you contemplate "should we put in an A/C in this house" 'cause your house is 90F...or, "oh, we sort of forgot to pack decorations and gifts for each other", or, when the next door family comes caroling one evening and all we're thinking is "we're not opening this screen door lest all the bugs come in" and they are all sweaty....and lastly, NO SNOW! But thankfully our guest house coordinator gave us a used Christmas tree and some bulbs and we did bring a string of red/green lights. So while repeatedly playing the same 3 Christmas CD's we have, we are festive! The kids just had a schoolhouse auction using tickets they earn for schoolwork and good attitudes etc., and they were able to 'shop' for some presents. Huyen sat in the back to coach them on how and what to bid for! 😊 I'm getting an umbrella from Alex!



Our tree



Our Christmas cutout cookies with leftover icing from Alex's B-day



Thanksgiving on site



Auction day at the school on the compound after a ←-----snacktime.

All the goods they ended up with at the auction----→



Huyen is doing good with food in a limited setting. Now that anesthesia is old hat for her and OB isn't so busy, she is learning to make such things as ricotta cheese, bagels, donuts, bread, pitas, cookies and FINALLY the correct concoction for tenderizing African meat and chicken!!! (baking soda). We were trying diet coke for a while at Tim's suggestion as he thought he remembered a teacher at Galmi H. when he was in Niger doing that, but alas, it didn't work for beef although it did for chicken (and the coke was quite gross to drink afterwards I must say!), The neighbor missionary family here from Bangladesh showed her how to make Indian Nan (Mmmmm!). We found an Indian restaurant in Lome', so Tim gets his paneer masala about 1x/month!

The girls love school here and have lots of friends, mostly girls actually, to play with. It's hard to get motivated when dad wants to do "extra school" of science, French and violin when school is out, but petit a petit.....



Sometimes you need your own private swimming pool and it's amazing how much fun these 2 (or 3) can have in a 2.5' diameter pool!

Huyen making power shake mixes for Tim's patients he sort of renders "difficult to chew" with surgery.....



Huyen in action...



Hopefully, buddies forever....



Working and trying to keep family life running reasonably smoothly can take, as you know, 99.9% of your time. We've tried to be intentional about getting close with some of the hospital staff as often missionaries can be so focused on "new, outside-the-hospital converts only" vs. those who attend the local church that are there right in front of us sometimes having difficulties for whatever reasons. These can get overlooked as sort of "already accounted for in the Grand tally", and sometimes those folks can be better evangelists than us white folk. We are also fortunate to have lots of friends (specifically, specialist docs) who have been very generous with email consults to help several staff member's family health problems. One in particular, Pataka an O.R. tech who has essentially lost everything due to investing (and borrowing) all he has and can into the care of a son with a hopeless malignant brain mass. He is in debt beyond what he'll ever get out of and so we've been able to help him in several ways with advice (from others back home), \$ and praying with him as he is at a loss what's left for him to do.

Everybody here has "a need"—that we as Americans can think of as legit or self-imposed—even those who have steady jobs at the hospital. We mostly focus with financial help to patients in need but friendships and conversations beyond the casual "How are you today" can go a long way with these folks. Tim spends a lot of time before and after surgeries with equipment, so that affords time to talk with the O.R. staff, pictured below.



Tim also talked with one of the older hospital chaplains recently to get a picture of how his work is going. Here's a brief synopsis of what he said:

In 2020, chaplains saw 1289 people say they wanted to know Jesus. Chaplains then contact pastors in or near their villages/towns to make a way to try to shepherd these folks. Muslims are the most resistant and he said they've seen 15 men make decisions for Christ last year. Most then have to secretly meet with a pastor or his wife when they return home.

Of the 1289, he thinks about 50 total people can be said to be solidly following Christ still. They report 1409 people for the year 2019. The chaplains are always there, always active and many times we are so busy, we don't see all they are doing, but we know they are doing the lion's share of evangelization. I Corinth 12, Romans 12!! But we all do need to be sure we *don't* fall prey to the old adage, "well I let my life be my witness". As well, the phrase, "Preach the gospel; if necessary, use words" is NOT right! But it IS the EASY way out!

We thank you for your prayers and support and know that some of you are not doing so well financially with covid restrictions. Don't kill yourselves to continue to support us if you are not keeping your head above water there. We pray that this will pass and life, someday, returns to normal. Here in Togo, for some reason, covid is apparently not too much an issue. We are grateful.

Tim, Huyen, Alex and Emma.

Here are links to our support options, if your head is not under water!

1. Grace Fellowship Church, 365 Straub Rd. East, Mansfield OH 44903. Checks only, but we get 100% with this option! Make it out to "Grace Fellowship Church" and paperclip our names to it.

2. Online one-time and recurring gifts can be set up via this link:

<https://www.cmalliance.org/give/gift?desc=Tim%20and%20Huyen%20Bartholomew%20-%20mm>

And what would a letter be without some patient pics! We do have to prove we are doing work, you know.....



Burned long ago, hypertrophic face scars



Silicone sheets from Walmart



Marvel comics--Supergirl! (actually, a pressure mask with a bicycle inner tube!) She's bad with follow-up, so we shall see how it turns out...



Massive maxilla tumor



Massive cheek/ear keloid we took off last week. She'll get her Superwoman mask next week!



Palatal Tumor



Eyelid neurofibroma



Huyen's Christmas present Tim made himself! (with parts from Lowe's and an Amish machine shop back home). It's a hanging pot rack in case you wonder what it is.