

MARCH 2020



Dear Friends!

These past couple of weeks have yet again been packed with action with: continuing and new friendships developing, helping out at various children's clubs, experiencing the coconut man coming round and Chad's wild market purchases... As always thank you all so much for your prayers, it's lovely to have such support from so far away!



The staff rooms at school have continued to provide new friendship opportunities for us, and the various cultural festivities celebrated in schools here have been a lot of fun! On Monday we had Commonwealth Day where all the children dressed up in their traditional tribal dress and many events were held throughout the day. At the two primary schools we teach at (Agape and CCLK) we marched around the local area waving all the flags of the countries in the Commonwealth in West Africa, ate each tribe's traditional dish together and sang and danced to their

individual tribal songs. All in all, a very enjoyable day and particularly so for Chad who was interviewed on the way back from school on Gambia National Television! He assured the interviewer that he was very happy to see how much the Commonwealth is valued here...

The devotionals at Agape School are continuing to go well with the last one being on God bringing the Israelites out of Egypt through Moses. At Latrikunda Sabiji School, Chad and Sophia started a Christian Union with Chad, Sophia, Tom, Ed and Bobby all giving talks on the Christian message. Sadly, Chad and Sophia are having to leave Latrikunda, so we would love some prayer that God will work in those who have heard members of the team speak at the CU and for those students and teachers whom Chad and Sophia have been involved with.

Back at the Smile House, we've been attaining a growing congregation at our Smile Church sessions on a Sunday evening where we sing songs, listen to a sermon from a church in the UK, chat about it and pray. We now have seven extra members and have been getting to know them all really well, particularly Tom and Bobby with D, a young Muslim. Since Mission Week, Dan, Sarah, Ed and I have managed to stay in touch with a few Muslims we met there. I went back to the University of The Gambia campus last week to chat to a Muslim girl, H, about the gospel. Prayer that God would give us all wisdom in these conversations would be great! At Omega Church, Sunday school classes led by Dan, Tom, Sophia, Ellie and Lucy are going well and Chad, Ed, Sarah, Bobby and I have the great opportunity to lead our first youth group session next Sunday.

Last week, we helped out with the children's club at WEC (a missionary organisation). We all thoroughly enjoyed doing animal balloon making, face painting and puppet making as well as reading some bible stories and singing 'Who's the King of the Jungle'. Dan and Lucy made the greatest impression on the children as they summed up their time with them as 'the best afternoon ever!'. Our weekly visits to SOW to help take care of Phoebe and Arthur Algeo, whilst their parents Nick and Harriet (Crosslinks mission partners) teach, have also been great experiences for us. Ed and Sarah, after helping to fight back a bushfire, won the favourite prize here as Phoebe and Arthur gave them presents of some pretty drawings! Dan, Lucy, Bobby, Ellie, Sophia and I have also been leading songs and games at Peace's kids club once a week and have taken B (a girl who lives in our compound) along with us. Most of the children that attend are Muslims so it is great that they get to hear some of God's word at such a young age and in such a fun way.

In our free time, we have certainly been working hard to become true Gambians. Last Thursday, the coconut man came to the house to climb casually up the long, branchless coconut tree with no ropes to chop down the coconuts with a large machete. Despite all of us being rather worried for this man's life we found out we had 76 very yummy coconuts on the tree in our compound and we've kept half of them to slowly eat/drink through for the remaining months here. Later on that day, Chad's live goat that he'd bought earlier arrived! Let's just say it didn't remain alive for much longer and Chad was observing his successful 'work' and his new goat skin for the rest of the evening! It has made some quite exciting meals though with the various bits of meat being eaten by us over the next couple of weeks. Last Saturday evening we headed down to the beach, collected firewood for a bonfire and cooked a tasty BBQ on it whilst the sun went down, very idyllic! Once it was dark we ate some marshmallows by the firelight and had a spontaneous Ceilidh dancing the 'Strip the Willow' which B (our good friend who came with us) found incredibly confusing! This coming Friday night we will be travelling to Boboi (on the Gambian-Senegalese border) for a restful night away on the beaches and sleeping in the treehouses there. Many thanks go to Ed and Sarah for organising this and so many of our other fun weekend activities!



Thank God for:

- Our developing relationships with other Gambians
- Our time spent at SOW with the Algeo family
- Our work at WEC helping out at the children's club
- My knee which is now recovering!

Pray for:

- Chad and Sophia transitioning to either a new school or encouraging work at university campuses
- Ellie as her wrist has been painful lately
- Ed and Sarah as they prepare seminars and team members as they lead bible studies
- Continued motivation in our teaching

Love from Grace

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