

JANUARY 2020



Dear Friends,

Thank you again for your prayers! We can hardly believe that we are entering our fourth week here. As ever, there is so much to be thankful for, so here is a rundown of what we've been up to...

We are starting to settle in our schools (Bobby and Grace at Agape, Chad and Sophia at Latrikunda, Tom and Ellie at Greater Banjul, and Dan and Lucy at CCLK). Despite feeling slightly thrown in the deep end and the many differences from schools in the UK, we are thankful for all that we are learning. Alongside our everyday lessons we are forming relationships with the teachers as well as students. Grace, Bobby, Dan, Lucy, Ed and Sarah all enjoyed the opportunity to teach the Friday devotional at Agape. We got them singing some songs and then taught them the creation story. We pray and hope they will have remembered that 'God is really powerful' and 'God loves and cares for us'. It is such a privilege to teach God's word to over a hundred - mainly Muslim - children. Chad is also preparing some bible talks to give at lunchtimes in Latrikunda Lower Basic.



On Wednesdays we spend the day with GAMFES (Gambia Fellowship of Evangelical Students) which has been really encouraging. In the mornings we are currently doing bible studies in the book of Esther. We have seen that God's sovereign hand is always at work, even in ways and times we do not expect. In addition, it has been really interesting to experience a different way of studying God's word and to see where our Gambian brothers and sisters expose our cultural blind spots.

It is amazing to be able to spend so much time learning from God's word. We have weekly seminars, bible studies, SMILE church and we've been reading 'God's Big Picture' by Vaughan Roberts together. This has been a fantastic way to grow together in Christ. We have been focusing on 1 Corinthians 8-10 which is really helping us to think about how we adjust our freedoms in different contexts for the sake of the gospel. As much as we are gaining bible knowledge, we have also seen that 'knowledge puffs up' whereas 'love builds up' (1 Corinthians 8). Please pray that we will have humble hearts that use our knowledge to love, just as Christ has loved us.

We have all started serving at Omega in both the Sunday schools and the youth work. Some of us also took a trip to the choir practice, although sadly Dan's Western beats on the drums weren't fully appreciated. Grace and I sang in the Sunday morning service which was good fun, despite half the songs being in Wolof. We have also decided to visit other churches to learn and experience different ways of doing things. Ed, Sarah, Chad and Bobby enjoyed visiting New Creation Bible Church

(Mama's church) and afterwards had the opportunity to talk to some Muslims introduced to us by a friend.

We all had a fantastic day on Saturday visiting SOW (Servants Of the Word). We tried our hands at some manual labour to help with the building of the bible training college. Then once we were hot and sweaty, we headed over to Nick and Harriet Algeo's house for lunch. We were delighted to have a taste of home: spag bol, garlic bread and Christmas pudding with ice cream! It was wonderful to be able to talk to Nick and Harriet and Mark and Mands Vernon - both couples serving



as Crosslinks mission partners. They were so welcoming and encouraging; we also loved entertaining their kids Phoebe and Arthur. We have now planned to babysit once a week so that Harriet is able to make the most of her teaching ability. Seeing the progress of SOW is amazing and meeting some of the students helped us see the fruit of God's work through the vision of Pastor Steven.



We have been so blessed in all the time we have had to rest as well. In our free time we've loved: playing frisbee with a group of people at the MRC Hospital, catching waves at the beach, and visiting the local bookshop 'Timbooktoo' that Ellie discovered. Peace (GAMFES Staff) showed us around the labyrinth that is Serrekunda Market - we most certainly would have got lost without her! We were really excited to buy material for our first garments made by Bob the builder tailor. We've even got creative ourselves having done some (greatly appreciated) baking and cooking. However, Mama is by far the superior chef of us all - we are so

thankful for her delicious meals and joyful attitude. Chad and Ellie have become our 'attaya' experts (the local sweet tea, which is quite some endeavour to make!). We are hoping it will give us opportunities to be able to have good conversations with local neighbours.

Praise God for:

- Answer to prayer: our water situation has been sorted
- Settling into schools
- Opportunities to teach God's word
- The encouragement in seeing the work happening at SOW
- The fun we have had as a team in our free time

Pray for:

- Our teaching in schools - that we gain confidence and help the students
- Relationships: with teachers, pupils and friends we have made. Pray we would be a witness to non-believers and an encouragement to our brothers and sisters
- The work of SOW: for the logistics of the building work and farming, but even more that through the bible teaching God would be proclaimed and glorified in The Gambia
- The GAMFES mission week in a couple of weeks