

Merry Christmas



“This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many...” Luke 2:34

The first Christmas was not what anyone expected! It was a time of massive movement of people, social upheaval and unexplained heavenly phenomena. Maybe not so different from this year's Christmas season after all?.

This Christmas season started off very differently than any that we can remember in the past. Over the last several weeks, we made preparations to be with our Africa team in Namibia in southern Africa. We had been planning for this trip for over a year. Suitcases, clothes and gifts were set out to start packing. However, it would appear that God had other ideas for us.

The week before we were to travel, we made a quick trip to Toumodi, not far from Yamoussoukro, for a time with the church there, celebrating a baby dedication, a harvest festival and a church dinner afterwards! Larry had not been feeling well already, but after preaching and doing the baby dedication, he felt really drained with some chest tightness. LeAnn drove most of the way home so that Larry could rest. By the time we got home, we were both exhausted.

Even after a good night's rest, we were still worn out, especially Larry. So we thought we should get checked. Our first thought was perhaps COVID. We went to a clinic to get a test but learned that they do not do COVID tests without seeing a doctor first. So we waited to see the doctor. Upon examination of Larry, the doctor ordered blood tests and an x-ray. He came back later to say that they suspected a blood clot, but would need an angio-scan to confirm this.



In the meantime, Larry was put on oxygen and kept in the emergency ward. After a trip by ambulance to another hospital for a scan, the doctor's' suspicions were confirmed that Larry did indeed have a blood clot lodged in his arteries entering the right lung. So he was hospitalized for the next four days to begin treatment to dissolve the clot and check for any other possible clots. A cardiologist confirmed no heart damage and no other clots present and said that we did well to catch this clot very quickly before it could do any damage or move to another location.



This meant no traveling for a while, so Larry had to cancel a trip to Yamoussoukro to meet with the Executive Committee and we had to cancel our long-awaited trip to Namibia to join our teammates. But we thank the Lord that this happened before these trips and not during them, which would have been much more complicated and risky. And we have access to good medical care here in Abidjan. We have already received a full refund from the airlines for our flights, which was unusually quick. It also means we will be having a quiet Christmas, close to home as we await the full dissolving of the blood clot and a clean bill of health from the doctor. Thanks for your faithful prayers that God hears and answers on our behalf.

Before all this changed our plans, we were able to install a new pastor at one of the Abidjan churches. He is a recent graduate of IBAO and has been serving this church for some time, but now as the official senior pastor. We have also been delighted to see a fence put up around the new Abidjan property in preparation for building on it. This time has been very long in coming.



Just like that first Christmas long ago, this one holds surprises, troubling world events, social upheaval and maybe even some unexplained heavenly phenomenon. But just as then, this year we find peace, security and meaning in trusting in the Prince of Peace who came then and still bears with us in every circumstance, desired or not. May Christ's light bring deep meaning to your Christmas time this year! We thank you deeply for your prayers and support throughout the year!

Larry and LeAnn

“For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you prepared in the sight of all nations: a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of your people Israel.” Luke 2: 30-32



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