

Merry Christmas 2012

Dear Family and friends,

I can't believe we are wishing you all a Merry Christmas. Wasn't it just yesterday that the Lord graciously ushered in 2012? It seems the older we get, time just passes by that much sooner, and sometimes it is easy to neglect and reflect on all that the Lord has done in our lives over this past year.

Brittany: Along with its challenges, Brittany has enjoyed being a 1st grade teacher. The kids love her and she brings home the cutest stories about what her students say and do. Patrick went to her class to share with her students about living in a foreign country. He shared stories about life in Africa and Peru and the kids were so intrigued. Mr. Cassidy... how big are the fish in the Amazon River, are they really, really, really **BIG**? "Yes," said Mr. Cassidy. "Like how big are they," said a student? Are they as big as your nose? Haha...kids can be so honest! God continues to use Brittany (she is just like her dad- no matter where she is- it's always a mission field!). Each day Brittany shares a verse from her own personal devotions with some of the other teachers (she teaches in a public school). One day I (Gina) visited the school and several teachers told me how much Brittany has blessed and encouraged them. I couldn't help but smile and thank the Lord! The highlight for Brittany this year was taking a trip to Uganda, Africa. She taught Bible studies to the ladies and worked in an orphanage.

Mike: Continues to live in Ohio and decided to go to Phlebotomy school in order to get a better paying job while he continues to attend college. Mike has been sharing with his dad each week the lessons that he has learned in church. It has been a great encouragement to Patrick to have this relationship with Mike even though miles apart. Recently, he shared about prayer and how we need to be constantly working on our prayer life... getting into the habit of taking the time to speak to the Lord about everything in our lives and to just make the time and effort to listen to Him speak to us through His Word.

Zach: Graduated with honors this year from high school and has decided to stay at home for a year while attending college. He received a first place ribbon for one of his debate speeches at Pikes Peak Community College. That was a surprise to us, since Zach is the quiet one in the family. His study habits are impeccable and after speaking to a college counselor he has decided to pursue a career in engineering. This year he was able to take a trip with his girlfriend and their family to Disney-World, Florida. Recently, he came home with a dog (pit bull/lab). Gina freaked out, but he told her the story of how the dog was neglected and although she was first intimidated by it, she has grown to love the beast!

Hannah: Got a job at Yo-Yogurt this year! It's been 6 months since she got hired and she still loves it. We love it too, since she gets a 25% discount on all purchases and it's often the place where we have our date nights. Hannah has really grown in her relationship with the Lord this year. She has had a burden for her friends to know Christ and has even challenged them in their faith. It has been such a blessing to see Hannah discover and live out her own faith.

Patrick and Gina: After returning from Africa, we were given some terrible news. It had been 2 months

since we had heard from Pastor Dolo (Liberian Pastor). We would often hear from him because we regularly sent him money to help give rice to the people of his congregation. He usually checks in with us to let us know he has received the funds and shares how his church is doing and would even ask a theological question or two to Patrick and then they end their conversation in prayer. However, we became a bit concerned when we hadn't heard from him for several weeks. We eventually tried calling him, but his number had changed, which so often happens. We ended up writing one of our missionary colleagues in Liberia and asked about him, but did not hear from him until we returned from Africa... and that's when we were given the terrible news that Pastor Dolo had passed away. We were in shock and our hearts were saddened. Pastor Dolo was such a wonderful servant for the Lord. We loved his passion and heart for Christ. In our own selfishness, we wish he were still here. In the short time we have known Pastor Dolo, both he and his wife, Kertee, have become very dear to us and we love them very much. Please pray for his wife and children. We were also given more sad news... Joseph, one of the PA students, had also suddenly passed away. The two of them had gone home to be with the Lord just one week apart of each other. Joseph was a real character and a man full of joy. It was evident in his life that he loved the Lord. Joseph and Patrick enjoyed working together and he would often interpret for Patrick when he preached in the jungle. He was also a key person in helping our missionary colleague with the PA program and will be greatly missed.

Ministry: Most of you know that Gina and I have been taking trips to Africa each year. Like our other trips to Africa, our recent trip to Tanzania was no different and it was very apparent that the physical and spiritual needs in that country are great. We had written a letter to our supporters before we left to Tanzania asking that you would pray for the Lord to lead us in the direction that He had for us regarding foreign missions. Gina and I had a wonderful trip, but felt even more burdened than ever to want to do something about it. Without hesitation, we feel confirmation that Africa is indeed the place for us to minister full time and we ask that you would continue to pray for us as we present this request before our ABWE mission board, finish our proposal for ministry, find medical/dental and biblical resources, help our kids with the adjustment, and work, work, work at raising the needed funds to return to the foreign field. We were at 50% of our needed support, but recently two of our major churches had to let us go due to some financial difficulties. This has brought our support down to approx. 35%. We have no doubt that if the Lord wants us to get back into foreign missions He will supply our needs. Please pray the Lord would give us opportunities to present our vision for Africa to many individuals and churches in 2013.

May the Lord bless you this Christmas season as you reflect on the awesome story of the birth of Christ. After meditating on Luke chapter 2, we as a family are so impressed with the enthusiasm of the shepherds and how they ran to see the Messiah-Immanuel (God with us) and then went and told everyone about what they had been told by the angel and how they had seen Christ themselves. Oh that we would have the passion of the shepherds to tell everyone about Jesus! AMEN.

Merry Christmas, from our home to yours,
Patrick and Gina Cassidy and Family