

I've been asked several times lately in emails and texts, "Where are you?" Perhaps you're wondering the same thing! Well, I'm currently in the southern United States, on home assignment. I stayed in South Sudan longer than I had originally planned so I could get done all that I needed to before leaving. I had a very enjoyable Christmas and New Year's with my team and left the following week. Then I spent two weeks in Nairobi, Kenya, getting some rest, taking care of a few medical needs and saying goodbye to friends.

Many thanks to those of you who prayed for me during my final months and weeks in the village. The Lord gave me the emotional and physical stamina to finish well, renewing my strength when I was weary and sustaining me through all the packing, handing over of responsibilities and saying goodbyes.

### My Plans

I'll be on home assignment in the US and Canada until late May, finishing up my service with RP Global Missions. I'll be visiting supporters a final time and also seeing some friends and family. Sometime in June, I'll head to Montreal, Quebec to begin to settle in there. I'll find a place to live, some work and a new church family. RP Global Missions will continue to provide my salary until September, which is a wonderful provision from the Lord for this time of transition.

### Highlights from My Final Months in South Sudan

\* One of the most difficult things I had to do was break the news that I was leaving to the group of nine ladies from my village church to whom I'm closest. In early October, I gathered them together and recounted how the Lord had initially called me to Africa, first to Senegal and then to South Sudan. Then I told them I believed that God was now calling me to leave South Sudan and return to live in Canada.

As I said this, I began to cry and so did they. Yet what followed was a very sweet time. One by one, through their tears, they acknowledged that God had brought me to live among them, and now they needed to accept that he was taking me away. They knew he would still be with them and that he would also go with me. We have comforted each other with this truth many times since then.



\* In late November, Cush Christian School had its annual parent-teacher interviews. I teamed up with my junior teacher Abop, and we took turns leading in the interviews for the grade three class.

I always enjoy meeting my students' parents and talking with them about how their child has done

during the year. It's not always easy, though. We had hard things to say to some parents. Lord willing, these conversations will result in the students doing better next year.



\* A highlight of the whole year was serving alongside these brothers and sisters in Christ who make up the faculty of Cush Christian School. What a privilege. I will miss them!

I want to single out the thirteen junior teachers, who range in age from 16 to 22. They are the ten young men in the back row and the young woman in the front row with the baby as well as the two young women on either side of her. The junior teachers teach in the mornings and do their own schoolwork in the afternoons. The school couldn't function without them!

I taught each of the junior teachers for several years, some of them since I started at the school in 2015. I saw them advance not only academically but spiritually. What an encouragement! They are some of the fruit of your prayers for my ministry here. There is so much potential in these young people to be used for the advance of God's Kingdom, both now and throughout the rest of their lives.

\* Before I left Parot, various friends invited me over for meals. Church friends, students and neighbours also came by my house to say goodbye. Bittersweet moments--how I will miss these dear ones! Below are a few of them.



**Longtime friend, health group and Bible study member Awek and her twin boys -- two of my favourite students!**



**L: Former student Agop--we have a special bond since my Dinka name is the same as hers. R: Akuem: student, junior teacher, friend**



**Dear friend Agau, my foremost health ministry disciple, faithful servant of Christ**





On New Year's Day, my team presented me with a beautiful book of remembrances containing notes and pictures for me contributed by a few dozen current and former teammates, both long and short-term. I was so surprised and touched! Some of the kids on my team gathered round to look through the book with me. They loved seeing pictures of people they know, including themselves, in a book. And for some reason they found it hilarious to see pictures of me wearing the same dress I was wearing that day!

\* The following week, some of my closest friends accompanied me to the airstrip near our village for a final goodbye.

### Prayer Points

- Praise God for his work in the lives of the junior teachers at Cush Christian School. Pray that the Lord would continue to work in and through them and many other CCS students during the coming years to bless their families, their churches, their communities and their country. May they be used for the growth of Christ's Kingdom here in South Sudan and, Lord willing, beyond!
- Pray that God would provide more workers for the Cush4Christ team, both long-term and short-term. Pray also for encouragement for the team: this month they are saying goodbye not only to me but also to dearly loved Kenyan team members the Njuguna family.
- Pray for safety, good health and that I would be an encouragement to those I visit during these coming months of home assignment. Pray also for a good transition to life in Montreal and for the Lord's provision for my needs (apartment, work, church). I'm thankful to already have good friends as well as some family members in Montreal.



As I close this final newsletter, it's hard to find words to adequately say thank you for all the prayer support, financial support, emails and various other forms of support and encouragement I have received over the years. I hope to see many of you during the coming months to say thank you in person and share more of what the Lord has been doing through our partnership.

*"May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by his grace gave us eternal encouragement and good hope, encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good deed and word." 2 Thess. 2:16, 17*

With much love and appreciation in Christ,

*Jan*



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