



Hi everyone,

This is a bit of an extended update from us, but we wanted to take time to say a huge thanks for your prayers and support and share a bit more detail about our time in Senegal. It has been nice to just be part of church life while we have been home. We are so thankful to you all for your support to us as a family and wanted to just share some more about what we have been involved in.

Early days in Senegal. We arrived in Senegal with a couple of suitcases each and had shipped out a few boxes ahead of time. Missionary friends who we knew from our time in Congo were willing to let us live with them until we found our own place. Although we were very grateful for this, living with others is not easy when you have 3 kids including a 3 month old who we would later discover was dairy intolerant. Gary and Sharon were so helpful to us and generous in so many ways, but they certainly got more than they bargained for when they offered to help us. I doubt they got much sleep in those 2 months as Daniel cried most nights and we were not sure what was causing it. It was hard to get good medical information or help there since we didn't know anyone but after a while Kyla was able to figure out that Daniel had a certain level of dairy intolerance.



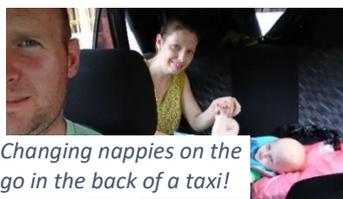
Those early days were very tiring as we got the kids settled in school, adjusted to the heat and humidity, met so many new people and started to get to know our way around. We had a 90 day visa but needed to find a house to live in so that we could apply for a visa extension. In the end God provided us with a lovely house only 6 or 7 minutes' walk from the school. The following weeks were taken up trying to get all our paperwork in order for our long term visas

and getting work done to our house (new security bars on the windows, doors and locks as well as painting the house and all the bits and pieces that needed fixed). I can't remember the hours I spent chasing workers or waiting for workers who were 'on their way', but who never arrived. Other times they would come but then leave 5 minutes later to get the right tools only to not return. It was hugely frustrating but part of daily life in Africa.

Once the house was nearly ready, we began to get the basics we needed to move in. We were very blessed by those who gave us various financial gifts before we left for Senegal and also a gift from TBF Thompson Trust. These enabled us to buy what we needed to set up home. Beds, mattresses, mosquito nets, fridge, cooker, sofa, cupboards, wardrobes, dining table, chairs, cutlery etc etc etc. When other missionaries were leaving we were able to pick up bits and pieces they were selling although you had to be quick as stuff sells fast. Getting local carpenters to make stuff isn't as cheap as you'd expect and we got very frustrated with the time it took to get work done and the quality of the final product. We found 'container shops' around the city with furniture from USA or Europe. These are hit and miss ... you might find something suitable but can equally spend hours in traffic going around the city looking for something



without success. It's very time consuming and easy to just wish you could get on with the work we came to do, but through it all, we got to know the city, met many people along the way and were able to build up a network of people and places which we knew would be helpful in the future. We finally moved into the house in October and it was nice to get into our own place and I'm sure Gary and Sharon were glad to get some peace and quiet.



Changing nappies on the go in the back of a taxi!

Christian & Missionary Alliance and the mission community. You can't get a long term missionary visa unless you are with an existing mission recognised by the Missionary Fraternite. Until Ambassadors gets established in Senegal we need to come under another mission and so we were seconded to the Christian & Missionary Alliance. This is an American mission and their support was a huge blessing as we were invited to lots of events and gatherings and got to know quite a few other missionaries in our first year.



Lessons learnt. There are often discouragements and struggles that we face on the mission field as there are at home too. There were lots of new challenges, frustrations and things to adjust to at the beginning, and in many ways it felt like we just managed to survive, but we are thankful for the lessons learnt and friends we made. The book of James challenges us to 'consider it pure joy' when we face trials, knowing that the testing of our faith produces perseverance so that we may become mature and complete. Although at the time we were guilty of not considering it 'pure joy' and often wondered if we could keep going, we are thankful that God brought us through the early days and we have found again and again that although there are certain sacrifices to make, God blesses us in so many other ways. The missionary life overseas is very different from our life at home, but we feel very blessed and privileged to do what we do.



Family Life. Thanks for your prayers for us as a family. The kids are growing up fast and doing well overall. They settled quite quickly into life out in Senegal, love school and being outdoors a lot. They have made friends at school and also have some Senegalese kids in the neighbourhood who come round to play from time to time. Daniel seems to have mostly grown out of his dairy intolerance now and is a great wee boy, full of life!! When we go back he will soon be ready for nursery and we plan to send him to a Senegalese one in the neighbourhood as it will help him learn French. The kids have enjoyed their time back home. There have



been a lot of changes for them over the past few years but they have done really well and we are thankful for that. We would value your prayers for our transition back to Senegal. We plan to leave on 6th January and are so thankful for the safe arrival of baby Micah. Although Micah will only be 6 weeks old when we travel, we do feel that it will be good to get back to our home and routines in Senegal.

Ambassadors Football, Senegal. Having settled in, (I) Robert began to look at developing work locally as well as the regional work. Our vision is to invest in training churches and coaches to use football as a means of outreach and discipleship and I formed a small leadership team consisting of 3 other missionaries who are with other organisations but felt led to get involved with Ambassadors. They have years of experience in Senegal so it's great to have them involved. In the early years of our ministry in Northern Ireland, I led several tours to the south of Senegal. The main church we partnered with was pastored by Youssouph Danfa who is now Director of the Evangelical Bible College near Dakar. God willing we will be partnering with them when we go back so it's amazing to see how the tours we sent in those early years have played a key role in the ministry we will be involved in going forward. We serve a God who is always at work and has a perfect plan.

So as we look back on our first 2 years in Senegal, we are thankful that God helped us not only survive, but also be able to put in place a good foundation for going back. We are fairly settled in Dakar, have made some friends and there is a small team who are now helping with the work. In all of this we want to say a huge thanks for your partnership and trust that you will be encouraged and know that God has used you to be a part of what He is doing in Senegal and across Africa.

Thanks for your support:

- 1) **Prayers.** There have often been times when things have been difficult but God has answered prayer in so many ways and knowing that there are people praying for us has been a huge encouragement.
- 2) **Encouragements.** We are so thankful for those who encourage us in lots of other ways. Whether it be through letters, emails, verses, phone calls, personal visits, Christmas presents for the kids or whatever. So many of you have passed on clothes or toys for the kids which we really appreciate and also given or lent us things during our time at home. We are very blessed to be part of such a generous church family.
- 3) **Financial support.** Quite simply we could not do what we do without your financial support. It has been amazing to see God provide for our needs at very appropriate times and we are very thankful!

God bless and thanks again!

Robert, Kyla, Jacob, Manuela, Daniel and Micah.