



Last edition to "The Harris Happenings"

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“I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy ***because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now.***”

Philippians 1:3-5

This will be our last official “newsletter update”

Greetings from cold, white, wintry Nebraska! It has snowed (enough to stick) at least 3 times already, and it is cold! We were told that it has already been a milder winter than most, and that we should be thankful for the warmer weather we have been having. We are very grateful for the beauty and the wonder of wintertime - it is a unique and special season in so many ways! But the cold can be a little uncomfortable when you have grown accustomed to warmer weather year-round (especially at Christmas time)! The holidays looked a little different than they have over the past few years: but they were beautiful, and we were blessed! We were able to enjoy both Thanksgiving and Christmas in a unique way this year.

For Thanksgiving we had some very dear family friends come out to stay with our family over the break. We have been friends since back in our Bible School days, and we have kept up with communication and grown in our relationship over the years since then. We love this family, and they have loved us so well, all along the way. We were generously allowed the use of a local "hunter's cabin" and both our families were able to stay together for a few days. We actually ate our Thanksgiving meal at the local church, along with our family, and these friends though. We are thankful for our family far and wide every year, (and always), but this year we were part of a picture of the various types of family enjoyed all in one setting: immediate family, friends as family, and the church family!

The Lord has blessed us "abundantly above and beyond anything we could have asked or imagined" for ourselves, regarding our own home! First of all, He provided in an amazing way such generous financial giving for our family, specifically to put towards a home/settling stateside, etc. That after much prayer, time, pursuing of options, pushing on doors and having them close...the Lord allowed one door to swing wide open for us to own our own home! After about 4 months of waiting, and wondering when things would happen, regarding a house-it all happened so fast and smoothly and beautifully, it could only be the work of the Lord! The very same day that a previous option (the one we thought was our only option), fell through, was the day that we came across the home that we are now living in. It had literally JUST gone on the market! We were the first family to view the house, and we all instantly loved it! Within just a couple of days, the deal was made, and we were on our way to becoming homeowners! And we were actually able to be in our very own home just in time for Christmas!

In addition to having our own home, the Lord has already blessed us with some “furry friends” which has always meant so much to our kids! It was just one very hard and sad part of having to leave our home in Kenya, when we had to also leave behind some “living” things. The Lord was very good and gracious to provide homes for our pets when we left Kenya, which helped our hearts in leaving. But we knew that it might be some time before we would find some new furry friends of our own again. Well, since the Lord provided us with our own home...we were also able to get a couple of cats for Christmas!

And while this may seem like the “biggest Christmas gifts of a lifetime” to get our own home and a couple of cats for Christmas...let us not forget the biggest and best Christmas gift-EVER!!! Immanuel-God with us. Wherever we may call “home” for now, we know that this world is NOT our home, and we would do well to remember that we are only passing through.” We know from the Christmas story, that there was “no room in the inn” on the night of Jesus’ birth, for the Son of God to be born. May there always be room in our own hearts for the Lord Jesus to make Himself at home!

We are also very grateful for the good health we have been experiencing so far! We thank God that our family has remained healthy for the most part. We realize that this is not to be taken for granted, and we cannot just assume that things will always be this way for our family (as has not been the case for SO many others). But we want to thank God, “in sickness and health” and always. Please continue to pray for our family, as with the rest of the world, for the protection of the Lord in the health of our homes, and for the provision of God’s grace for the moment, and peace in His presence, with whatever He allows.

We finished up our first semester at the local public school. The kids seem to be doing better than we had expected and continue to adapt and adjust each day and in every way. We are so proud of them for putting up with so much change so gracefully and are grateful that the Lord is helping them to learn to “bend” instead of being “broken.” Ellie continues to see this position at the school as so much more than “just a job.” Although very different from homeschooling our own kids at home, she is grateful for this opportunity for growth. We continue to see this opportunity as from the Lord, for a real purpose “for such a time as this” in our own lives and personal walks with the Lord, in our marriage, as a family, and also in the lives of others outside as well.

We continue to wait on the Lord and His perfect timing and purposes regarding “work” for Brad. While there are several job opportunities that Brad could definitely do, we are still holding out in hopes that an opportunity for him to work in some form of “official, full-time” ministry might open up. It has been quite the journey of trying to pursue various opportunities and options that looked like potential possibilities, learning as we go, and trying to lean on the Lord through it all. We know and believe that it is the Lord Jesus Christ Himself that does the living and loving through us, whatever we are doing, wherever that may be, and whomever we are working with and among...so, we want to be willing to “do heartily as unto the Lord, whatever our hand finds to do.” But Brad has a big heart for “official” ministry, and so we will pursue this avenue until the Lord clearly closes any and all doors for our family in this area. The Lord has been faithful to our family in allowing answers to our questions and inquiries as we search. We would very much appreciate continued prayers for clear direction and guidance, patience and peace in the process, and wisdom “from above” regarding what the Lord would have us to do, when, and how.

As you know, we will be “resigning as full-time, foreign missionaries” with TBM at the end of this year. We just wanted to say “THANK YOU” for everything over all of these past years! It has been both an honor and a privilege to serve our Savior alongside you. Thank you for your faithful interest and investment in our lives, family, and the work we were doing. You have sacrificed of your time to read our updates, talk/listen and encourage, you have sacrificed of your resources as you opened up your homes, and the stewardship of your possessions, and sacrificed of your very own selves as you opened up your hearts to share in our joys and sorrows. Thank you for your loving hearts that cared for ours so well, both when we were hurting and rejoicing. Thank you for the grace and understanding you have always extended, especially when we needed it most.

We could not have wished for a better support system than you have been for our family. We have been so blessed and humbled by how warmly we were received from the very beginning...and how very well we were loved and supported ALL the way through our time on this journey together with you! What a beautiful example of love for the Lord, flowing out onto others. We thank God for you, and ALL that you do. We know and understand that you are impacting and influencing so many more than just our own family, and those

people we were working with (your reach probably even stretching farther and wider than even you realize). But we really appreciated the personal relationship that we were able to share with you. We have always appreciated the godly words of encouragement, wise counsel, faithful love, prayers, hospitality, encouragement, and support that you have shown towards our family, from the very beginning...faithfully until the very end of our “official” time together.

This will be our last official “newsletter update” that we will be sending out. And while we will miss the more constant communication that we have shared in the past with you, we are grateful that our common bond in Christ will always remain, regardless of any “official” connection we retain or not. And we will look forward to any and all future interaction and connections that we have the privilege of making with each one of you. We would welcome any continued prayers, communications, encouragement, guidance, and advice that the Lord lays on your heart to share with us. We love you guys. We are so very thankful to God that we are able to know you and call you our friends. May God continue to richly bless you, your family, and the many other lives you reach with the love and light of Jesus. You have been such a BIG blessing to our family and the work God continues to do both IN and THROUGH our lives. Blessed be the day when we will all be together again, praising God our Savior, with no more sadness, death, sin, or goodbyes!

With much love always,
the Harris Family
(Brad, Ellie, Rachel, Ben, Ruth, Beka, and Rose)



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