

Bethan and Gareth Shrubsole

New Year.

January 2022



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As we start 2022 and look back over the final weeks of 2021 there is so much to be thankful for, and that in turn gives us hope and optimism for 2022, despite the many challenges it offers.

We know that we serve a God of love, who came to give "life in all its fulness" (John 10:10), and we've been blessed to enjoy some of that fulness of life over the last two months; starting with Bethan's 40th birthday, which was celebrated with a fancy dress party in our compound. The next day we went to a bonfire with other Brits on November 5th and then a more sombre ceremony for Remembrance Sunday at Chad's military cemetery - which includes the graves of 4 Royal Airforce personnel lost during World War 2. Then we had the Guinebor 2 Hospital nativity play which happened on our 16th wedding anniversary, followed by the best celebration of all, the birth of Jesus, and then Gareth's birthday on 27th December. Gareth enjoyed taking the children sailing for the first time at the retreat centre by the river on the other side of town. We then celebrated New Year with friends at MAF, and a welcome supply of British and French cheeses (thanks to our pre-Christmas visitor Tommy Hori!).



In between all these celebrations there was a lot of work to be done, with Gareth covering for two Chadian colleagues as they took annual leave in Nov and Dec as well as trying to keep on top of his own job, and Bethan juggling her new Tuesday disability clinic, the challenging work with vulnerable women, and regular afternoons of community health visits in neighbouring villages as well as having all three children at home sick or on school holidays. Bethan also had Covid, thankfully very mildly, and all three children had a vomiting bug which wiped them out for a few days each. By the time we finished work on the afternoon of Christmas eve we were both exhausted, running low on grace or patience and ready for a break.



When Jesus talked about offering "life in all its fulness", I believe he meant ALL its fulness, with both rough and smooth. The Puritans who focussed only on the hardship and sacrifices of the Christian life, forgot that Jesus' first miracle was to replenish the wine at a wedding party. However, there are also many Christians today who are so excited by God's grace, love, and provision that they forget he also told us to "pick up our cross and follow him" and that he never promised us an easy or pain-free life. Here in Chad, we are very aware of both. When you've been sick and you see sick patients coming into hospital every day, you really celebrate the gift of another year of life and health. When you live in a country where coups,

political instability and violence are constant threats, you treasure coming from a place of relative peace and transparent democracy. When you work with women who've been abused and mistreated by men, you value the blessing of a good marriage. When you've worked and sweated until you feel ready to drop, you really savour a week off with restorative company, nourishing food, and, finally, some pleasantly cool temperatures (15-30c!).



When we visited the UK back in the summer, we asked some of you to pray for the success of an application submitted to GOADC (Guernsey) to fund a new physiotherapy building. Praise God this funding finally arrived in November and the building has progressed quickly since then with all the brickwork now almost complete. We are excited that this will provide a real improvement over the cramped and stifling hot shipping container currently used for physiotherapy.

December has been a quiet month regarding patient numbers at Bethan's new disability clinic, after a wonderful start where 8-10 children came each week. This is supposedly because mothers don't want to bring their small children out in the 'chilly' 18 degrees! However, there has been a core few children so I have been teaching parents skills to encourage and help their children at home with their physio and communication needs. One of the physiotherapists is a carpenter in his spare time so he and I have fabricated some support chairs for the children who cannot sit unassisted. Some of the parents are going to buy these for their homes. This term I will attempt to gather these skills together into a training package to offer to other professionals working with children with disabilities in N'djamena, or beyond, in the future. Alongside some of the vulnerable women I work with, we celebrated Christmas by delivering gifts to them in their homes. One lady had a safe delivery of her new baby the week before Christmas and was doing well with him. Another, who had a baby three months ago after losing her previous baby last year after only a few weeks, was very tentatively starting to move out and about, only just beginning to trust that her baby may

live beyond a few weeks. The community needs assessments are coming to a close, with the last one happening as you read. They have been extremely interesting and the data collected will help us to mould future projects at the hospital. We estimate that around a thousand people heard some positive health messages through the drama and songs presented at the meetings too. The actor in pink portrayed a witch doctor handing out bad advice and medicines to a pregnant woman, which the actor in the Dr's coat berates him for and then gives out G2's positive health messages as part of the sketch. Although the children were afraid of the witch doctor ('larger than life' seems to sum him up!), they all found him wildly amusing and he kept the attention of all in attendance.



Prayer requests:

Give thanks for all the blessings of 2021 and that we've all entered 2022 in good health and good spirits.

Pray for the successful completion of the physiotherapy building, including being able to source all the equipment we need within the budget we have. Pray that children will come back to the disability clinic despite the cool weather.

Please pray for a shipping container full of hospital supplies from America which is currently stuck in customs here in Chad.

Please pray for the upcoming board meetings and hospital audit, that both will pass smoothly and lead to continued improvements in the management and governance of the hospital.

Please continue to pray for Abakarand for faith and wisdom in helping him meet the many challenges faced within his family whilst continuing to disciple him in the faith without creating dependency on us.

Keep in your prayers the ladies in work with as they continue to deepen in their relationship with Christ and their commitment to improving their lives for them and their children.

Thank you for your continued support and prayers. We wish for you all a blessed 2022.

If you would like to support Bethan and Gareth Shrubsole by prayer and committed regular giving, visit bmsworldmission.org/partners or call 01235 517617 for a 24:7 Partners leaflet.



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