



Paul, Tania and Lana Baker

Kiwoko Hospital,
Luwero Diocese, Uganda

Christmas 2016



CMS Ireland Link Letter

Dear Friends...

Home assignment in numbers

Our three months of deputation visits came to an end on 29th November so we're now enjoying a few weeks of rest before travelling back to Uganda. These few months of church visits have been tiring but encouraging. As a fan of statistics, I thought we could paint a picture of Home Assignment with numbers...

We've given 31 talks, showing 18 different PowerPoints, travelling hundreds of miles in a car which was kindly given to us by some very good friends. Since the average temperature was around 7 degrees Celsius, we have endured 11 colds between us. Health checks included vaccination updates with a total of 10 needles. Lana has discovered countless new programmes on channel 121 including Teletubbies, Bing and our new family favourite; Hey Duggee.

look forward to being told *"You have increased!"* by our friends back in Uganda. It is apparently a compliment.

On 29th December we'll take three different flights, covering 4,315 miles from Belfast to Entebbe, Uganda. Then, on New Years' day, we'll drive for three hours north to Kiwoko.

God only knows what this next term has in store for the Bakers. He has been with us in our first 6 years and we're excited to see how he will use us in 2017 and beyond.

Prayer warriors

One thing we have always so appreciated when home on leave is discovering how many people are praying for us. Like our friends' 4-year-old, Rosie, telling us she was praying every night that we would have a nice home to live in while in Ireland; to a lady telling us she had sleepless nights praying for our visa application for Lana.

Sometimes we feel selfish asking for personal issues to be prayed for when we see people dealing with greater life or death issues every day – both in Ireland and in Uganda. So it's incredibly humbling to realize others have taken our personal requests and made them their prayer focus. And even more amazing to be living proof that God answered those prayers and therefore hears and will answer those life or death prayers too.

Two Christmases

(Spoiler Alert – not to be read by young children).

This is of course Lana's first Christmas in Ireland, and it will be very different to what we do in Uganda. For a start, there will be no BBQ on Christmas Day! One of the biggest differences we have noticed this year is how Santa is the focal point of Christmas for most children here in the West.

Tania speaking at our home church in Bangor



Lana slowed down traffic in Bangor by pressing every 'green man' button during an almost daily walk up and down Main Street. 35 of Ward Park's ducks are better fed and the swings have been swung off their bearings. Lana's eight cousins and many new friends are now fluent in Lana's own little language.

The hospitality we've received has been incredible. Thank you to everyone! This has resulted in a [number with-held] stone increase in our combined weight. We

In Uganda they don't do Santa. In fact the concept that Christmas is all about the presents does not exist. It is very much a family occasion and people will travel across the country to spend Christmas with their family. They will enjoy a special meal together and those that can afford to will get new outfits for the day. I have only heard of rich families in Kampala buying toys for the kids for Christmas.

These 'two Christmases' have given us some food for thought as parents. We've decided to *not* introduce Lana to the idea of Santa this year while in Ireland. We feared that next Christmas, in Uganda, she would tell her friends there about this magic man who travelled the world giving out free presents to all the children. This would invariably raise the question – "Well, why didn't he come to Uganda?" Soon it would be realised that this Santa only visited rich children in the West and those in developing countries - who could do with some free toys – were ignored. Suddenly Santa doesn't seem like the amazing wonder children here adore, but instead a rather cruel joke on those living in poverty.

It's been suggested to us that by not telling Lana about Santa, we are depriving her of a 'magical Christmas'. At this stage, though - we want to make sure we share with her something truly magical and amazing - about

the time when God, who is bigger than the universe, reduced himself to a baby that he may enter this world in human form and save mankind. That God would show such an unconditional love, that no-one could afford to buy for their children, but He would give out completely freely to all – rich or poor.



This Christmas, let's be sure to worship the true Father Christmas – the Father who actually did beget this holiday and offers us a gift no reindeer driven sleigh could carry.

We've also bought Lana a Teletubbie ;-)

Have a happy Christmas!

Paul, Tania & Lana

Prayer Points:

- The journey back to Kiwoko is quite long and gruelling, especially for Lana. Please pray for journeying mercies.
- Pray that we'll fit back into life in Kiwoko and that we will stay motivated to reach and serve anyone we come across.
- Kiwoko Hospital is embarking on a period of transition. Please pray for extra wisdom for the leadership.

For more news and views from the Bakers, check out their blog on the CMSI website.
You can also support the Bakers financially via the website or by contacting the CMSI offices.



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