



Merry Christmas from the Buchanan's

Don't fall off your chair, yes, you are holding a Christmas letter from Mike and Wendy Buchanan! This is a first as far as I can remember. I guess I always felt that most of you received our mission newsletters four times a year with all of our news that you didn't really want/need to hear from us again at Christmas. And I usually felt very overwhelmed at Christmas time with just keeping up with life that Christmas letters weren't even on my radar but this year my energy and health are better and so here it is!

As I look over the past year what stands out to me is God's Provision in so many ways.

Elizabeth had enough credits to graduate last year, but wasn't ready to go to college at the age of 16. So this year she has had many opportunities to volunteer in classrooms in local schools in hopes of deciding what area of education she wants to pursue, either Art or upper elementary, with hopes of teaching in Cameroon some day at Rainforest International School. She has visited three colleges and been accepted at two of them in South Carolina. She is also teaching a homeschool art class which is great experience and provides some income too, along with a couple weekly babysitting jobs. What she loves most right now is being a student leader for both Jr. High and High School JAARS Youth Groups, plus one day helping out in the office. The LORD has also provided a car for her at a great discount because it was a salvage car! My heart also is filled with thanksgiving for God's provision of nine years of piano lessons she has taken from an excellent pianist and fellow missionary here. I love singing with her as she plays – too much fun!

David has also seen God's Provision of a wonderful fiancé Ashley! They began dating the summer of 2015, became engaged this October and planning the wedding for May in New Hampshire, one week after graduating from college and one day before his 21st birthday! She is a graduate of the same college, Clarks Summit University in PA, and is a teacher in a variety of settings for autistic teens with emotional and behavior disorders. Future plans are for David to continue his education at the Master's level for philosophy/theology though the specific school is yet to be determined. David has also seen God's provision for experience in church leadership through the church plant he has been a part of the past three years. Leading a home group of mostly new Christians and seekers has been invaluable in his spiritual growth. This spring he will be part of a new adventure in training lay leaders for leadership in the church as he also finishes his senior year of classes.

Recently we were trying to figure out where we might stay in PA the week between David's college graduation and wedding. I was looking for a house-swap opportunity, but God provided in another way. Mary just happened to be at JAARS with her church from Florida and we found out that she had a house in PA that she wanted to use for traveling missionaries. It is a beautiful log house just 30 min. from David. We have already used it for several days during David's fall break/Thanksgiving week and the log house was beyond our expectations. Ashley was able to join us for most of the time and it was so great to have this time to spend together.

Here is a highlight from 2016 for Mike . SIL International, a partner with Wycliffe, works alongside speakers of more than 1,600 languages in over 85 countries. Transferring funds securely to the SIL groups in all these countries is a vital task. In the past, these transfers were initiated, approved and coordinated over email but a security audit showed us this was not the best way to administer the transfers. In March 2016, I was part of a team that looked into commercial solutions which would provide a way to request and approve financial requests via a secure website. We looked at numerous vendors, but I realized that we already had a possible solution using the JIRA system which I administer. I made a proto-type in the JIRA system and presented it to the search team and we all agreed that it could meet our needs. The new system went live in September and is slowly being introduced to all the SIL groups. This was a very clear picture of seeing God's Provision for this need using both my finance experience and my computer system administration experience to help create a system that is easy for the finance people to use, very secure and provides an audit trail of each step of the process.

For me, Wendy, I am so thankful for the patience God has shown me in my walk with Him. Growing in prayer seems to be His theme with me this past year. I have been having a growing burden to see my prayer life grow and my dependance on the Lord to deepen. One opportunity for this to happen has been through the prayer team at church which I joined this summer. We get together during the worship services and pray for those attending the church services as they submit their requests to us for God to work in their specific situations. Another highlight for me has been the women's Bible study that I am leading using Stormie Omartian's book "Prayer Warrior". Through this study I am learning to engage in prayer more often and in different situations like never before. I wanted to be a missionary because I wanted to serve God through foreign missions but just last week my eyes were opened that when I pray I am also serving God. When we are praying for others, we are helping to fulfill God's will for them. When we advance the kingdom of God in prayer the works of darkness and evil are defeated. When we pray for others we are being part of breaking chains of bad habits and sin, allowing captives of the enemy to go free! Our prayers help to bring restoration in relationships where there has been division.

Ephesians 6:10-19

We look forward to hearing from you! Mike & Wendy, David & Elizabeth