

He comes to make His blessings flow
far as the curse is found



December 2020

Dear friends and family,

Greetings to you in these last days of 2020! It is my hope and prayer that you are finding rest this holiday and have had a good holiday week! I am continuing to make preparations to move back to North Africa. Here are some final thoughts for 2020.

December Highs and Lows

December was an eventful month for our family. Early in December, my **older brother got married** in a small, beautiful, socially distanced backyard wedding. I gained a new sister! Then, just a week after that, my **younger sister had a medical emergency that put her in the hospital on three separate occasions**. At first, the doctors had no idea what was causing her extreme pain. On her third ER visit, the doctors finally determined her intestines were twisted and sent her into emergency surgery. When she was in surgery, they realized she had a GI tract infection AND her appendix had ruptured. The infection had become so severe that her appendix was gangrene and she had gone septic. They caught the infection in the nick of time, cleaned it all out, pumped her full of antibiotics, and after six days in the hospital she was able to come home.



The whole situation was scary and exhausting, but she is recovering incredibly well. I was able to stay with her and her husband the first week post-op and help out around the house, and she was even well enough to Christmas with the rest of our family. We found ourselves feeling very sentimental and thankful this Christmas as our immediate family gathered: of all the years, **2020 has been a season where we have been reminded to not take the most precious things for granted**.

Going back to North Africa!

Meanwhile, this past month I've been **raising support and preparing to go back to North Africa to start my new season overseas**. Last month I announced that I have joined a small, new team in North Africa that is **dedicated to spreading the Good News through the "Cousin" world by catalyzing intercessory prayer**. We will be based in the "Big City" in North Africa, and will intermittently travel throughout the year to places in the Cousin world where the Good News is not known, launching and nurturing intercessory prayer groups as they do the work of planting "gatherings" in their nations. We will also use our time to reach out to the marginalized Cousins in our area. I will be working with refugees and possibly incarcerated women, using my trauma recovery skills to help them and to serve as a bridge to share the Good News. I hope to join my new team at the end of February or the beginning of March, which is coming up soon!

In December I received some **really encouraging correspondence about opportunities to serve refugees from Y, the little country in the gulf, next year**. I have been talking with a family that lead a small initiative to serve Y refugees by helping them receive medical care, giving food and financial assistance, and doing leadership training and soft skills training.

I'm excited to partner with this family in the future. Y has been on my heart for a very, very long time, even before I spent my first year overseas—although Y is a small country, its needs are great. Y has been devastated by war, disease, famine, and natural disaster, losing a significant portion of its population in the last 2 years alone. Despite this, the Y people have been overlooked and unaided, both in relief efforts to the Y country itself and in refugee relief organizations abroad. Since there are only small initiatives to aid the Y people in the "Big City," I am so very thankful for an opportunity to get involved with them.

I'm about \$900 short of making my monthly support goal. I need about 6 more people to support me monthly! Would you consider joining my team? If so, email me at aelizabeth@fastmail.org or check out the donation information below!

Our Hope in 2021

I don't know about you, but I have felt a lot of dissonance in this holiday season. Driving to my parent's house on Christmas Eve was very strange. My sister had almost died just days before. I found myself thinking through some of the major events of 2020 as I passed houses decorated in festive lights. I felt like what was supposed to be joyful was heavy and surreal. I felt like mourning, not celebrating. For some, the holidays always feel heavy, a reminder of sorrow and loss. But this year, with a pandemic and seemingly countless human rights crises around the world, this has been a year of global, collective loss. We've all surely felt some sort of tension, on a micro and macro level, sitting around our tables and opening gifts around our Christmas trees. *What a broken world we live in.*

While I was driving, I had this thought: the holidays are for the weary. **Isn't that what advent is all about? Hope coming to a weary, groaning world.** Hope, not in the form of empty platitudes or inaccessible well-wishes, but a real, tangible, present, living hope as Immanuel Himself: God with us. The Son of God, who came to reconcile man to God. He came and did what He said he would: He made things right. **Immanuel is right now working in us and among us, and will come again to restore all things to Himself.** We groan but we know: our Redeemer lives, and at last He will take His stand on the earth (Job 19:25). This is our hope! Many of us found ourselves disappointed in 2020 by things we could not control. We don't know what ahead in 2021, but we do know who is hope unshakeable: Immanuel. He is rich in mercy (Eph 2:4), patient in love (2 P. 3:9), and full of lovingkindness and truth (Ps 86:15).

Pray

- Praise God for my brother's new wife and my sister's recovery!
- Pray that the Lord raises up more monthly supporters so that I am able to go back to North Africa fully funded. Praise God for the provision I've already received!
- Pray that the Lord continues to build and nurture good connections for me in the "Big City."
- Pray that the eyes of our hearts would be fixed in hope to Immanuel in the new year.



"I know that my Redeemer lives, and at last He will take His stand on the earth." (Job 19:25)

He does not change (Heb 13:8) and is unspoiled by the evil of man (Jas 1:13). He invades the darkest places (Jn 1:5), carries us through grief and sorrow (Ps 147:3), and makes us become glad (Ps 30:11). He digs up and cleanses out all the sin and ugliness in us (Ps 51:6-7). He makes meaning of things that feel senseless (Rom 8:28). He will make all things right in His time (2 P. 3:10-13). He is with us, gone behind and before us. He is our redeemer, and the redeemer of the world.

Some of us are very tired at the end of this year. We might have seen redemption in whispers this year but we long to one day see it in full. If this is you, may the substance of the Good News, Jesus Christ Himself, comfort you and give you great joy in hope as we enter a new season together. May He carry you through the rest of this year and right into the next. **We have hope because He is our hope. We have hope because He is with us.** He is with us now, and when we look to the future, He is there.

Many thanks to those of you who have supported me in this last crazy, tumultuous year, and those who have been walking alongside my journey. My heart is with you! I pray that you have a fun and relaxing new year, and I am so blessed that you are walking through this journey with me.

In Him,
Ana Cooper

Partner with me

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aelizabeth@fastmail.com

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