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Josh and Louise Pagden

Prayer Letter November 2009

Dear all,

Time in France

We have had a busy few months since we wrote to you last and life has changed quite dramatically. Throughout April and May we both worked hard at our French studies, in between regular trips to the hospital for maternity check-ups.

Louise could be seen out riding her bike and swimming until the week that she gave birth, and she even attended class up until the day before she went into hospital.

Benjamin Nathaniel Pagden

Finally, on 9 June, a very sunny summer's day in France, Benjamin Nathaniel Pagden arrived weighing 3kg. Louise and Benjamin were both pleased to leave the hospital a few days later and begin to adjust to life, in our little home, as a family. It is amazing to think how much our little baby has changed in such a short space of time.



Benjamin is now smiling, laughing, squealing and chatting (although we are not sure in what language) and loves being the centre of attention. He is very gregarious and really knows how to work his audience! He has really enjoyed the opportunities he has had to meet some of you, and hopes to make your acquaintance soon, if he hasn't yet.



Whilst Louise spent the rest of June and July adjusting to life with Benjamin, Josh completed the French



summer school. Both of us left France at the beginning of August with a good level of French, eager to find more opportunities to use the language.



International Mission Centre (IMC)

A few days later we moved into the International Mission Centre, Selly Oak. We will be here until next May, when it is planned that we will leave for Guinea, West Africa. IMC has had many different guises during its life, including St Andrew's Hall and Carey Hall. Currently, it is used as the teaching centre for people who will serve with BMS overseas, as well as many different visiting groups. It has approximately 30 study bedrooms and seven family flats. The Heart of England Baptist Association also has its offices here, so there are always many different people passing through the doors each week. During the first four weeks of term we were sharing IMC with the Action Teams. These are 25 individuals aged 18-23, who have chosen to take a gap year with BMS. They are a brilliant group of young people, but things are much quieter now they have left! The teams will be based in India, Brazil, Uganda and Sicily.

During the month of August we were both working hard, finishing off dissertations for university courses back home. It was a relief to send them off in September, ready to start the new phase of training at IMC. Our mornings begin at 8.30am with devotions in the chapel and we have both had opportunities to lead these. Lectures and seminars begin at nine, and we work through until lunch at 1.00pm. Since being here we have been studying a variety of courses, including missionary life and work, theology, world religions and communication skills. It has all been very challenging and we are both enjoying the opportunity to deepen our understanding in these areas. Our afternoons are spent studying and preparing assignments for the morning courses. Since arriving in Birmingham we have also been able to continue our French studies, and we have set up a French language café at IMC which meets fortnightly for local people to practise the language.

Alongside us there are ten other people in training for various positions with BMS. They have varied professional backgrounds from a car mechanic to an accountant, and their destinations are equally as varied, from Albania to Uganda. It has been great getting to know them and we look forward to journeying alongside them as we all take up our different positions around the world.

Next steps

Whilst we still hope and pray that we will be able to move to Guinea next year the political situation there remains unstable, with the elections approaching early next year. Already violence has flared up in the capital city, Conakry, with many people reported to have been killed. Whilst this does concern us greatly, we hope that God will guide our next steps. We still intend to move to Guinea in May 2010, but we would value your prayers as much uncertainty still remains, due to the recent troubles in the country.

We thank you for your continued support and interest in our work and we look forward to hearing all your news soon.

*Love from
Josh, Louise and Benjamin*

Prayer points

- ◆ Thankfulness for the safe arrival of Benjamin and the blessing that he is to us and others.
- ◆ For a fruitful time at IMC.
- ◆ For peaceful elections in Guinea.
- ◆ For Louise's mother, who is unwell at this time.

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