



Ministry Updates

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Taste and See ([Psalm 34:8](#))

Frail children of dust, and feeble as frail, In Thee do we trust, nor find Thee to fail;

Thy mercies how tender how firm to the end, Our Maker, Defender, Redeemer, and Friend.—[Robert Grant](#)

We love the old hymn "O Worship the King" (*fourth verse above*). Frankly, the truths in the song resonate more now than when we sang it as children. Maybe it is because we feel more aches and pains from passing decades of being "**frail children** of dust." Or perhaps we are just more in tune with our human limitations and His infinite grandeur and capacities. Either way, the shoe fits!

The past two years have been busy, and the busyness seems to increase as we age. We also encounter challenges from the COVID-19 era that need addressing to confidently engage for the next eight to fifteen years. Debbie continues to deal with suspected long COVID effects from her second bout in December 2022. As Verlin started walking to get to over 8 miles several days a week now (less than half of his 2019 walk capacity in a day), he endured foot and knee injuries. It is also possible that passing symptoms related to his severe reaction to the Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine received in early 2022 still dog him unrecognized. As the Ivorian CHE ministry continues to thrive and our presence still stokes the fire or fans ember to flame, we want to verify that there is nothing to keep us from spending the next decade serving King Jesus with increasingly vibrant health and energy. Due to Debbie's verbalized concerns last time in the States, mission leaders at Christian Health Service Corps asked us to get a Stateside battery of "head-to-toe" tests to investigate and address potential issues. Since Verlin missed his physicals in '22 and '23, taking this time seems reasonable as a checkpoint. His other 'oscopies' are past due by five years, as well.

In all cases, diet and activity changes enacted post-COVID appear to boost our well-being, longevity, and usefulness. Debbie's skin has never been smoother; Verlin's tongue and nailbeds never more pink. So, we return to the States in mid-November, projecting our return in early February after getting our stateside exams done. Thanks for praying with us through the process. The downside is a possible slowing of activity here; the upside is confirmation of well-being to continue working vigorously. A blessed side benefit will be a rare chance to see family, friends, and ministry partners during Christmas rather than July!

Come and See ([Psalm 66:5](#))

Thankfully, recognizing our status as **frail children** does not hinder but strengthens our Father's work through us. In fact, Paul reminds us that when we are weak, we get stronger ([2 Cor. 12:10](#)). We gain experiential understanding as Verlin has seen others step into the void COVID-19 and our slowness brought. We thank God for Paul's example to "take pleasure" and "be content" in infirmities, reproaches, and distress. These experiences are part of our Maker and Defender's plan.

Verlin returned home on Tuesday night after non-stop 17-19 hour days for eight weeks. As he finished in Abidjan, the Lord gave him many opportunities to encourage the faithful and make ministry connections. He needs to make two more trips out of town before our travels to the States. The whirlwind of activity and contacts for us to complete in the next month and a week will continue to swirl. The UFHB time stoked it. We want to prioritize well to get the essentials done.

Prayer & Praise

☞ Thank the Lord for a good finish in Abidjan. Verlin made it home and installed replacements for 23-28 y.o. (or older) appliances made possible by a generous ministry partner. We now have a washer that does not leak on the floor and a certain way to dry clothes in the rainy season.



☞ Pray for efforts related to setting up a regular CHE training site at a Bible Institute in western Cote d'Ivoire. Pray that Abidjan's two new pastor contacts who desire to pursue CHE training use the strategy to add to the overall national effort.

☞ Pray for the many details we must cover before our trip to the States in the next few weeks. Pray our 'mountain' priorities remain preeminent over the proverbial 'molehills' and that we experience the grace to get the necessary done.

Your partners in the Gospel,
Verlin & Debbie

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