

Letter from Africa

by Riley & Duncan Murdock Spring '08

We have been back in Benin since the end of November, after spending nearly 4 months in the US. All missionaries (that we know of)



get a "furlough," when they go back to their home country for a while to see family, visit supporters and

churches, work in a home office, and hopefully get a little rest. We spent most of our time in Washington DC and Wyoming, and drove from one to the other, roundtrip, with a lot of stops along the way. It was great to see so many people, but it was also a little tiring to be on



the move so much. Mom and Dad, especially Dad, talked a lot with people about our work here. Duncan and I got to do things we normally don't get to do so much - we especially liked eating ice cream, playing in grass, playing in snow (in Wyoming in September!), going to playgrounds, fishing, playing with so many different kinds of toys (especially robots), and getting to be with so many English-speaking kids.



But missionaries have not always gotten furloughs. Did you know that 150 years ago, when people left their home to become missionaries, many of them knew they might never go home again? West Africa, where we are, was called "the missionary graveyard" and instead of packing their stuff in suitcases or trunks, people used coffins - in case they needed to be buried once they arrived at their destination! A LOT of missionaries lost their lives here. Imagine the kind of love you would have to have, to leave everyone you loved and still come here even though you knew you might die, because you wanted a chance to tell people about Jesus before THEY died. Being a missionary today is pretty cushy in comparison, but there is still something really special about being able to go to a different land to tell people about Jesus. He really is Good News for the whole world!

Anyway, it is good to be home again. We are going to be moving to our farm soon. Mom and Dad think it is getting too crowded in our neighborhood in town, and since most of Dad's work now takes place at the farm, they thought it would be best to live there. Our house is being built right now, and should be



finished in a few weeks. I will miss all our trees. Someone set a fire at the farm the day after Christmas and it burned up a lot, but we are going to plant a lot of trees once the rain starts. I am also excited to plant a



there, and we will be bringing our duikers and horses with us. This picture of me with the

garden. It will be fun to be closer to our friends there, and near all the animals. We have cows, goats, pigs, donkeys, geese, ducks, chickens, dogs and cats

monkey – someone was wanting us to buy it, and I really wanted it, but my parents said no. Too bad! He was a red patas monkey, which is the fastest monkey in the world!



Here is a quiz so you can test your knowledge about Africa:

1. Is Africa a country?
2. Is there such a language as "African"?
3. How big is Africa in relation to the US?
 - a. the same size
 - b. half as big
 - c. three times as big
4. What is the longest river in Africa? (Hint: it is in the Bible)
5. What is the highest point in Africa?
6. What is the dominant religion in North Africa?
7. What is the dominant religion in the countries below that?
8. What is the name of the big desert in the top half of Africa?
9. How big is this desert in relation to the US?
 - a. the same size
 - b. half as big
 - c. twice as big
10. Which do we find in Africa:
 - a. some of the poorest nations
 - b. some of the largest populations
 - c. some of the harshest living conditions

1. No! It is a continent with 54 countries in it, which represent thousands of tribes.
2. No! There are over 2000 languages spoken in Africa, and none of them is called "African." Many people speak more than one language.
3. (C)
4. The Nile River – over 4,000 miles long!
5. Mount Kilimanjaro in Tanzania – almost 20,000 feet high.
6. Islam
7. Christianity
8. The Sahara Desert
9. (a)
10. All of these