

# Christine and David Torrance

Link Letter no. 1 | November 2021

[churchmissionsociety.org/torrance](https://churchmissionsociety.org/torrance)

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*The call in action*

Dear Friends,

Welcome to our first link letter! Every few months, we'll be in touch to keep you up to speed on our family life and work in Tanzania. Thank you for supporting us with your time, encouragement and prayer as we go see what God has been doing in Kondoa.

## Our journey so far

In summer 2018, we felt God calling us to ministry overseas, and especially in Africa. Christine had previously worked in a secular capacity in The Gambia, where she delighted in making friends and enjoying deep conversations about life and faith in an unfamiliar culture. David has visited a theological college in Nigeria, and felt his background in theological education, as well as his experiences as an ordained minister, could be useful in equipping believers where such training was being requested.

Church Mission Society (CMS) helped us discern this call, arranging visits to explore theological education in an African context as part of David's ministry training. Our call came into focus with an invitation in late 2020 to live and work in Kondoa, Tanzania. You can read more about our journey at [churchmissionsociety.org/torrance](https://churchmissionsociety.org/torrance)

In 2020 the third (and cutest) member of the family, our son John David, made his appearance. We aren't sure what adventures God will invite him on in his own life, but we do know he is an absolute joy, loves getting into new experiences and will hands-down beat us in any language learning!

## What are we doing now?

In September we moved into a spacious house in Oxford with three other families training as mission partners with CMS. Two families are going or going back to Latin America, and the other to South East Asia. We share weekday dinners, a cooking rota, chores and Monday-Friday classes on theory and practice for cross-cultural mission work. Topics this week ranged from context-specific ways of doing theology, to managing finances and photography skills and ethics.

Balancing childcare with classes and homework has been challenging, but we're settling into a pattern. Evenings and weekends are free, so we rest as parenting permits, see John's godmother Abi who lives nearby, and walk to a lovely church on Sunday mornings where an old friend of ours works. A few other churches in the region have invited us to come share our story – so if you've signed up to these letters after such a visit, thank you for having us and we're happy to welcome you!

Getting John out to toddle had us exploring the neighbourhood from the start. There's a trendy vegan cafe on the street opposite, and an international vegetable shop which supplies John's much-coveted okra. Multiple play parks, open fields and even a botanical garden are all within 20 minutes of the front door.

So that is a lot of what we are doing. You probably also want to know how we are doing. Honestly, the most descriptive word is "exhausted"! Moving into the Oxford



**Name:** Christine and David Torrance

**Location:** Kondoa, Tanzania

**Our call:** To contribute to the theological education of local Christians as we experience together discipleship and ministry in Kondoa.

**Our role:** Teaching at Kondoa Bible College, local discipleship and community involvement



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*Our new room with a spacious view;  
It didn't take long for John to unpack and settle in to Oxford;*

house was the 12th time we changed sleeping space in four months. After leaving our home in Southampton, moving frequently enabled us to see lots of family, which was a blessing, but there's just no getting around being tired! Thankfully, John for one seems to have taken each new place and new person in his ever-lengthening and increasingly-balanced stride.

### What will we be doing?

Bishop Given Gaula of the Diocese of Kondoa extended his invitation to us in the midst of a global pandemic, so we've not yet been able to visit those who have remotely welcomed us with such warmth. We're looking forward finally to meeting our new church family in Kondoa, but some might want to ask us why we're moving somewhere we haven't even visited?

The practical reasons we outlined above and on our web page were certainly helpful in informing our decision, but ultimately it has been a response to a sense of God's call. For Christine, this feeling was immediate. After being told about the possibility of going to Kondoa, she started to ask God "Are we going-" and felt as though God interrupted her to say, simply, "Yes".

For David, this feeling of call was slower – he prayed through each of our options and finally felt as though God told him to pick up a pen and draw. So, in his prayer journal, he felt compelled to draw an outline of Tanzania, with a cross over the country, the intersection over Kondoa. After this, Jesus on the cross, the wound in his side, and swirls of water filling up Tanzania. This image, while striking, meant nothing, but David felt called to write below the image: "The water of life flows from Jesus' side."

Subsequently, David learned two things that seemed to confirm this image described God's great love for Kondoa. First, the origin story of the Irangi people of Kondoa is that they were travellers looking for water, and settled in Kondoa because under a dried-up lake bed there were reservoirs for wells. Second, that twenty years ago, Christianity in Kondoa had first started to grow after a foreign missionary offered his blood for a transfusion, saving the life of a local woman. This act of love traversed a number of social boundaries and became the basis – according to the current Bishop of Kondoa – on which God started to grow the church rapidly.

So there were a number of prayers and "coincidences", each of which ultimately seemed to point to the same message: God loves Kondoa, and we are invited to see what he is doing there.

We are planning to move to Tanzania for our initial Swahili language training next summer (2022). After completing the CMS training course in December, this will give us six months to tie up any loose ends related to our lives in the UK – including fundraising, fulfilling a book contract for David's PhD thesis and administrative tasks.

### Prayer points:

- practical matters: fundraising, visas, language learning and John settling into childcare
- relationships: for us as we go, our families as they send us and our future neighbours and co-workers
- faith: that through the Holy Spirit, Jesus would draw us deeper into the Father's love, reality and power

With love,

Christine, David and John

*Photos from top to bottom: Delegates encourage David in prayer at the CMS Africa Conference, October 2021; CMS supported us to visit churches in DR Congo and Uganda to help discern our call; In Rhino refugee camp (Uganda), we met young Christians touched by the Holy Spirit and called to share their faith with their peers – God is at work in every nation and we are excited to see what this looks like in Tanzania.*



## GOING FURTHER WITH CHURCH MISSION SOCIETY

**Are you pondering a call to cross-cultural mission?** We'd love to connect and help you discern what God might be saying. Find out more about how we can help you to step into God's mission at [churchmissionsociety.org/explore](https://churchmissionsociety.org/explore)

If you would like to discuss your mailings with us or to receive this link letter on a regular basis, please email [supporter.care@churchmissionsociety.org](mailto:supporter.care@churchmissionsociety.org) or call 01865 787400

You can give to Christine and David at: [churchmissionsociety.org/torrance](https://churchmissionsociety.org/torrance)

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