

"We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God." – 2 Corinthians 5:20

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Welcome to COVID Culture Shock!

Can you spot which statements are true of first-year cross-cultural missionaries and which ones are true of our current COVID19 quarantine life?

"I had to go to several different grocery stores just to get what I want. I don't ever know if the shelves are going to be fully stocked anymore, and I don't always know where to find good substitutes."

"People don't smile at me when I pass them in public spaces. I don't know how to act around people anymore."

"I'm always afraid I'm standing too close to someone, or that if I stand too far away it's going to be weird."

"I'm afraid I'm going to get in trouble by doing something culturally wrong. The other day a store

employee told me I wasn't standing in the right spot behind the cashier."

"I can still stay in touch with all of my friends, but it's just not the same anymore. Social media is awesome, and Zoom is great! But I feel so drained after using it all day, and I'm not even sure why. And I don't know how to help my kids socialize."

"In order to get spiritually fed, I have to watch sermons online. It's just not the same."

"Church is so difficult for my kids. There's no Children's Church, so we don't know what to do with them while we try to watch church."

"My birthday felt really weird this year. And Easter was definitely not the same."

"I think I feel fine, but then I'll just explode for no real reason. I'll yell at my kids or break down and cry. So I know I'm stressed. But then the very next moment I'll be struggling with laziness and depression. But then I'll also feel very blessed because I know I've been provided for so well, and there's actually a lot of things about this situation that are so awesome. It's such a mixture of constant simultaneous emotion, and I'm more aware than ever of my sin, which my family is getting the brunt of."

"Getting all my work done is so hard because the lines are so blurred. I don't have set work times anymore, and I'm having to trade off with my wife. Plus the kids are always with us, so it's like we're all included all the time."

"I don't feel at home in my own home anymore!"

Surprise! All of these comments can be heard in BOTH situations. So basically we're all living through a very condensed version of the first year of culture shock, even in our very own communities. In some ways, this has made this pandemic time feel oddly familiar to us, and overall I don't think we're struggling with it as much as normal.

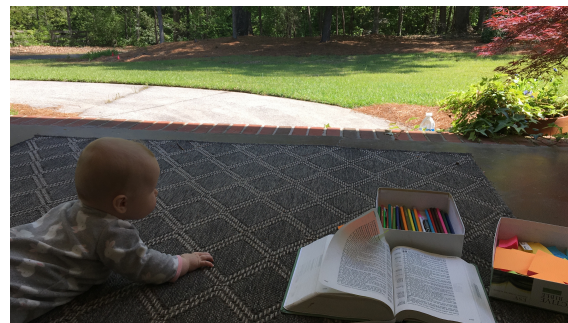
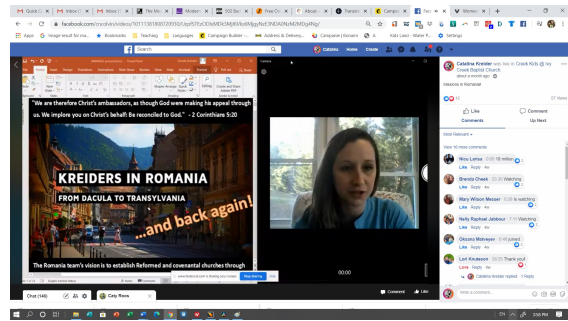
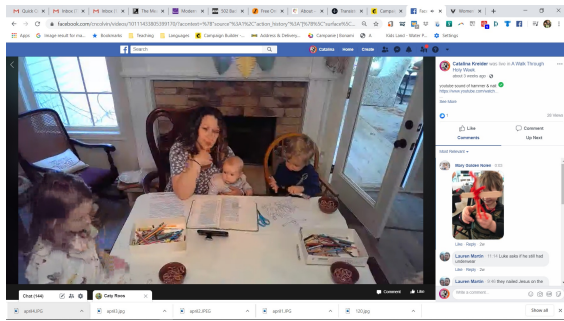
In fact, the Lord has provided for us a wonderful home for us to stay in while we wait to return to Romania, and we've been able to largely carry on as normal. We get up for 5 a.m. Romanian language tutoring three times a week and are excited about the

progress we're making. We participate in Bible Studies and Prayer Meetings with our Romanian community, and we've helped out with figuring out digital church services and made Holy Week children's activities in both English and Romanian. So we're definitely staying busy, while also feeling a sense of calm as we've been able to slow down with the rest of the world.

We are very eager to return to Romania as quickly as possible. The Romanian President recently announced that they plan to come out of their state of emergency on May 15. So we're prayerfully hopeful that we'll be able to return in June, though everything is still very much up in the air about that. Please pray with us that we will be able to return soon.

PRAISE AND PRAYER:

- We are fully funded to return to Romania! But all missionaries need prayer right now for provision, as a decrease in giving is an understandable and probable reality for us. And please continue for our teammates, the [Ebberts](#), since they are already behind in their monthly support and need to be using this stateside time to support raise.
- The Lord not only met our needs with housing provision, but he has GIFTED us an amazing place to stay until we return to Romania. It's a beautiful, spacious home with lots of outdoor space. It has been a beautiful reprieve for our family!
- After rescheduling three times due to COVID, Atticus is set to get his ear tubes out on May 14th. Please pray that this appointment can go through, and that it will be the helpful change he needs to be healthier when we go back to Romania.
- Continue to pray for the Romanian church, our leadership, and our search for a Romanian pastor. It has been really awesome to see our church members take initiative in setting up their own Facebook prayer meetings and lead one another to take on different leadership roles in the group. What an encouragement it has been!
- Our hearts have been very heavy for our Roma friends, whom we haven't been able to check up on since they aren't typically as connected in social media. We've read news reports that some parties and fights have broken out in the Roma village we frequent. It is such a high-stress time for us all.



Life in the States Update:

April has actually been very busy! We celebrated Easter in our homes, and it was actually a very special time. Leading up to Easter, we celebrated each day of Holy Week with a kid activity, craft, Scripture reading, and "act it out" time. We've been doing this as a family tradition for about four years now, and last year we even turned it into a "Walk Through Holy Week" experience at our church in Romania. But this year we went virtual and [led the activities through Facebook LIVE!](#) It was really neat having people from literally all over the world participate with us and use the resources we pulled together. We had people join us from Georgia, Florida, South Carolina, Ohio, Kentucky, Australia, Scotland, Slovakia, and Romania! Just another example of how what seemed like a setback (not being able to hold the same event in Romania), turned into a blessing as it pushed me to provide the resources for even more corners of the world. I'll link the videos and activities below in case you want some ideas for your family for next year.

I also had the privilege of presenting on Facebook LIVE for our kids' AWANAS group at Ivy Creek Baptist Church. I know we're all already used to technology and probably getting tired of Zoom, but I really don't want to overlook the huge blessing that it is to stay in touch with people this way! I think back to many of the missionary biographies I've read that spurred me toward this life, and to think that they were never able to communicate the way we can across such vast distances is such a good reminder of God's blessings to us today.

We've enjoyed the blessing of such beautiful weather this April and are grateful to have so much outdoor time. The pictures above highlight just a few of the things we've done with the kids. My favorite is going on daily walks with the kids, and Denton pretending the big stick is his "shoot gun." Derek has been telling him bedtime stories about Bigfoot, and he LOVES Bigfoot now, even though he obviously has absolutely no idea what that is! In the picture above, he was using his shoot gun to shoot many Bigfoots, wolves, and polar bears that we found on our walk. :-)

[WALK THROUGH HOLY WEEK VIDEOS](#)



IN CASE YOU MISSED IT

04/03/2020 - [Bonhoeffer, Pacifist or Assassin?](#) (podcast) by Derek

04/04/2020 - [Holy Week](#) (videos) by Catalina

04/13/2020 - [Revival](#) by Derek

04/24/2020 - [The Case Against Abortion: The Foundational Question](#) (podcast) by Derek

4/24/2020 - [Sacrificing God](#) by Derek

04/25/2020 - [The Case Against Abortion: Intrinsic Value and Degreed Properties](#) (podcast) by Derek

Continuing - [Podcast Series](#) by Derek

Check us out on Facebook! We post on Catalina's ["From Dacula to Transylvania"](#) album or our ["2019-2020 HMA"](#) album so that you can stay up to date with us. You can also follow [our photos on instagram](#) or check out our [video archive](#). But best, of all, you should let us know if you want to join our secret Facebook Group to get more updates!

Support Account Reminders:

- If you're interested in one-time giving and would rather support projects, we have a project account for the Romanian church which goes towards things like the youth program, elder trainings, etc. The account is **#94978** for the Romania church plant.



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