

The Messer Message

October 2004

Dear Friends,

Guess what. This month was Andy's and my 11th anniversary. Yep, we're still sort of amazed that it's been that long. I know many of you read this and say, "Oh, you're still babies." You who have made it to 20 or more, but I feel like just yesterday I was turning 10 and here I am married longer than that. I still love my darlin' and I can tell by his actions that he still loves me. Maybe I should not say, "still loves" because I think we have been learning a lot about what real love is in the past few years and maybe I should say, "we are beginning to really love each other." We realize that a lot of our marriage "love" has been that "phileo" friendship love which comes and goes based on common interests. Sometimes it's there and sometimes it's not. What we are learning through God's Holy Spirit is that Agape love that comes from God Himself and gives us the ability to love each other in the bad times, the rough times, the tired times, the sick times and the generally not so fun times. So, here we are and I sure hope and pray God gives us many more years to grow in this love together. Was that too mooshy?

The kids are doing great. They have entertained us with their comments on a daily basis. Andy and I went to Abidjan for a couple of days (he had to have his braces adjusted and we were trying to have a sort of Anniversary get away). While we were gone, our co-workers Steve and Gayle King took care of the kids. I heard from my niece (who was staying with them as well) that Aunt Gayle had informed the kids that she does not like to repeat requests over and over, so they should be careful to obey the first time. David says, "What if I forget to be good?" Then he added something about trying to remember to be good, but "sometimes I even forget my own name." Ha ha. I can't remember all the funny things they do, but they keep us rolling most of the time. Some things are not suitable for missionary updates, but if you were here, believe me, you'd laugh.

The church work is going well and we were excited to hear that one of our churches may be taking an offering to help with the construction. We don't want to count chickens before they hatch, but it's exciting to know that God is providing. The foundation has been laid and the platform is poured (cement) as well as the baptistry. At the end of this month we will have our first baptism in the new baptistry. My children's class has learned the books of the Bible in a song and last week we sang it for the grown ups. It was great and the kids loved it. The church continues to grow and the people have even begun to give better offerings which is a great help with the construction project. Also, on the really exciting side, we now have a completed Church Constitution which the 8 members voted to accept (after much work and discussion) last week. This coming Sunday will be a very special signing of the Constitution service. I don't know about you all, but probably most of you came to a church that was already in existence. Many of you may not know what your church Constitution says or how much work went into preparing it, but for us this has been so exciting. Seeing this work go from just two missionary families and two guys to a body of believers who are struggling to get organized, build a church building and become a real autonomous (self-governing), independent Baptist Church. It's like watching a birth almost (not quite as painful). We so appreciate those who have given money to help us live here, those who have prayed, those who gave to the work on the church and have encouraged us so much along the way. If you've had any part in this ministry, REJOICE!!! Things are happening! If you've not had a part and you want to--COME ON and GET INVOLVED!

So, on the "get involved" side. We have two churches that are very seriously considering bringing their youth groups out here this coming summer (2005). PLEASE (we beg you!) pray that the country would remain

stable and that details would all work out if this is the Lord's will. There is another group of adults that is coming out in Jan. to minister as well. We're gonna be spoiled eh? We are so excited and I just pray that things remain calm and these plans don't get upset. Of course I know that all is in God's hands and if He changes the plans it's for the best, so no real worry, but would be disappointing for sure. We so want to see these folks (Salem Baptist in NC's youth group, Evangel in MD's youth group and the adult group from Evangel Baptist in MI). We pray that we'll be a blessing to them as well as them to us (and our people with whom we minister). The Ivorian Christians love it when fellow believers from the U.S. come to visit and worship with them, and help them reach out to their lost friends and neighbors. If you (or your church) are interested in visiting us, please feel free to contact us. We'd love to have you and our home is always open.

Well, this is long enough for this time. Congrats to all who have read this far. :) We know you must really love us. :) We love you too and we pray for you (in general unless you have shared specific requests--which I hope you will feel free to do).

Much love and thanks,

Andy and Becky Messer