

The Messer Message

February 27, 2007

Dear Friends and Prayer Partners,

Greetings to each of you. Well the devil is at work again. It is good that God knows all about his plans. We have been busy trying to get the roof finished on the new building. Today we started putting on the roofing. Before noon, a man from the Krouman people (a tribal group from this part of the country) arrived at our church lot and demanded that all construction be stopped until we pay what is owed (heritage rights according to them) to them since they are the original owners of the land (a little over \$500). There have been many owners since they owned it. Well, they see that we now have our building up and they want to collect. Our small church work does not have \$500 to give to anyone, especially to someone who has nothing to do with our land. They even sent a small group to the church with their "official" letter of invitation to regulate this problem. Our church has had the land for over 4 years. We already have one building on it. Why did they not say something before? This is all about money. The "love of money" controls the heart of so many people. So, we stopped the work for today. We did manage to get over half of the roofing on the building. Please pray for wisdom and divine intervention. Tomorrow we will see the "Prefet" (a high ranking civil servant for the government - he enforces the laws of the country and he is also the one who signed for our church land purchase) who should be able to give us some direction on what to do to regulate this. For now our work has stopped. It just helps us to focus our attention more on our Lord. You many be asking why we are stopping. The Krouman are a large tribe here and one of the most violent of groups. In order to keep peace, the work must stop for a time while the people of God pray for a time such as this. We are eager to see God's will for this situation. Please be in prayer with us. Rainy season is almost here and we would like to have the roof finished soon. Bye for now.

Serving Christ together,
Andy and Becky Messer
Cote d'Ivoire, W. Africa

UPDATE

MARCH 2, 2007

Dear praying friends and family:

Thank you so much for praying about this situation with the Krouman people. It turns out that they do have a legal right to demand something from anyone who has begun a new construction or is still in the process. One Italian man, who was constructing a small hotel along the beach, did not think he had to pay and the Krouman people came and busted down the walls of his property. After he paid, they were like friends. It is amazing how a few dollars in your hand can change your attitude towards a person. In case we did not tell you before, this whole problem resulted from the government's unwillingness to pay for the land it took when the city of San-Pedro was first developed many years ago. The Krouman were the original land owners. The government said that they would pay, but never did. Now the government has given them a legal right to collect from the new land owners. The Krouman have assured us that once we have paid, they will give us their "official" document stating that we have completed the payment. They first told us they wanted around \$500. After prayer, and negotiations with them, they have said they would accept \$300. This is all in God's hands and we are not the least bit worried. Because we did contact the Krouman, we were allowed to continue the construction. And now we can announce to you all that our roof is completely finished. Amen and amen!! It was finished yesterday by late afternoon and during the night we had a big rain storm. It can rain all it wants now. The roof is on. Praise the Lord!! Now we have to finish the inside with the electric, ceiling, doors and floor. So you see we still have a ways to go but we are hoping to be done before Easter. Next week, Lord willing, we hope to be completely finished with the land rights to the Kroumans. Thanks to all who have prayed for us during this time. Thanks to all who have given to see this church building completed. We love you and thank God for you.

Serving Christ together,
Andy and Becky Messer
Cote d'Ivoire, W. Africa