

The Messer Message

March 2007

Dear Friends and Prayer Partners,

Hello from sunny San-Pedro. Are you all thawing out yet? We are just roasting away out here, but relief is coming. It has rained a couple of times in the past week or so and when the real rains come it will cool down considerably. We are not in a rush for the rainy season because there is still work to be done. God is working and we are blessed to be allowed to join Him. We believed it was His will to build a church here in the La Cite area of San-Pedro. Now, we believe it even more. Let me explain.

We began this church building project some time ago. The foundation was dug and cement bricks were laid back in 2004. When we evacuated, the walls had not yet begun to be built. Since we came back in March 2006 (March 17th will make a full year for us) we have seen God supply in a mighty way. The walls went up in September. The church people rejoiced. We were praying much for the roof. In November 2006, we received some money for the church building, and Andy bought some of the material (about half of the zinc roofing). We seemed to be at a standstill. We felt pressed to get the church done because of the rainy season coming in May and June, but the money just was not available. However, I must say that the break in construction did allow our family to relax and have a more calm month of December (Christmas...) With the new year came a renewed sense of urgency to finish this building. We prayed and many of you prayed as well. We did receive two nice gifts to help with the roof and so the construction began. Andy was able to buy the wood needed for the rafters and such. He still needed about half of the zinc roofing but we were praying.

Now most of you know about the Krouman crisis. :) They are the tribal group who used to own the land (OK, it was their great-grandparents who owned the land) way back when. Sort of like the Native Americans in the U.S. Well, apparently when the settlers came here (they were French people) the Krouman were living in camps... No real villages or cities. The French people built cities. They helped establish a government here. During the late 1960's the Ivorian country became independent from France. The government (according to what we hear) agreed to pay the Krouman people for their land that the city was now using. I guess it never happened. So, now, the Krouman have some kind of ancestral right to demand money from anyone who is building on "their" land. Enter missionary Andy Messer. So, these Krouman demanded payment and said until we paid, we better stop construction -- or else. Well, we stopped. We asked the authorities and were told that YES, they have the legal right to demand this money. "Thanks for telling us about this when we bought the land." Anyhow, we have negotiated with the Krouman (Yao, our brother in Christ and long time friend in the ministry here was the one who negotiated with the people.) They are willing to dicker. :) True Africans. Anyhow, they are going to meet again next week to finalize the whole issue. We will pay them and they will give us a paper saying that we have completed our ancestral right payment and we owe nothing more. They said we could continue with the construction in the meantime. This allowed us to get the roof completely finished. Praise the Lord! There is other good news. Because of this crisis, MANY have responded to help our church out here. With the gifts that have come in, we can almost completely finish the church--FLOOR, CEILING AND ELECTRICITY! This is a tremendous blessing and a huge answer to prayer. God took something that was stressful to us and turned it into something wonderful. We feel sort of guilty for even feeling stressed, but we did not know how great it was going to turn out. A good lesson in TRUST THE LORD! So, we ask you to join with us in PRAISING our Heavenly Father! May God receive much glory in the work out here! He is an awesome God.

We would be very remiss if we did not take the time to THANK all of you who pray for us. Thanks to those who give faithfully at your churches. We are so blessed to have such a loving and faithful team of

supporters. We do not lack and it is because of God supplying our needs through you all! We appreciate you so much and thank God for you! May you all drink from your saucers because your cups are overflowing!

Now this note has gotten long. On the home front--all are well. Hadassah is walking really well now. She still looks funny and wobbly, but she can get from here to there and back. Prisca is doing great with the potty training. We do still have accidents from time to time, but all in all we are encouraged that she will leave the diapers behind! Yea! One less expense! Lexie can now swim! She swims like Hadassah walks. They stay close to the edge (just in case). She has swum across the pool though. I'm so proud of her! Nadia, David and Leah are plugging along in school. They have earned dinner out twice this year for very good behavior over a period of at least three weeks. We are currently working on earning a pizza party. They amaze me with their ability to learn new things. They are also working on learning French. The babies are getting French each day from the lady who works here with me. She talks to them a lot and they understand a lot. Leah is communicating quite well in French and has dreamed now twice that she was witnessing in French. :) It's a good sign. David is a wonderful helper and a terrific eater. :) He eats just like Andy. He loves onions and green peppers... Things that I thought kids were not supposed to like. Almost anything that Andy eats, David eats, including hot pepper and an occasional snail in a nice palm butter sauce. Nadia is a tidy-up little girl. She loves to clean up, set things straight and make a room look pretty. She also loves to cut flowers. She is able to get Hadassah up, change her diaper and clothes, feed her a banana and keep her happy for long periods of time. She (Nadia) will make a terrific little wife and mother one day. The other girls do well also, but Nadia enjoys it!

Well, that sums up our life out here. Andy stays very busy with church, Bible School, church construction, house repairs and, of course, quality time with me and the kids. :) All in all, we feel so blessed by God. He is wonderful and we enjoy serving Him here. There are challenges, but God's grace truly is sufficient. He has given us strength and wisdom for each new trial and we cannot help but praise His Holy Name! Amen and amen!

Much Love,
Andy and Becky Messer
Leah, David, Nadia, Lexie, Prisca and Hadassah
San-Pedro, Cote d'Ivoire

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