

The Messer Message

July 15, 2007

Dear Friends and Prayer Partners,

I love that word, "Friends." It implies so much. I want to start out by saying THANK YOU so much to all of you who are our friends. We appreciate you so much. Thanks for your prayer support for us and for many of you, thank you for your financial support as well. This ministry out here would not be where it is today spiritually without your prayer help. It would not be what it is physically without your financial help. So, please accept our deepest gratitude! We are so thankful for you!

We trust that you are enjoying some warmer weather now that summer is here. Ours has not been too bad. Remember, your hot time is our rainy time. We have had some whoppin' rain storms (the kind that turn the roads into mini-rivers). The kids LOVE to play in the rain, and we like anything that lures them to play outside. Less mess to clean up inside--though I'm not so sure about the rain thing--lots of wet clothes etc. They absolutely love to play on the wet trampoline with a bar of soap. Have fun, get clean. Kill two birds with one stone. :)

We keep reading about everyone's VBS programs and have responded to the call (or was it pressure?). Really, we want to do something special with the kids during vacation time, so we are planning a VBS here for the children of our church as well as a separate one (in English) for the little MKs. The church one will most likely be the 2nd week of August. We would appreciate prayers that this will be a fruitful outreach. The children of our area are very open to us, and they love to come to church. If we have a special program (meal, film...) they can turn out in the 50s and 100s. The only problem is that there is no team to run the show. It's just us. We are getting help from some of the more faithful members of the church (this will be a great experience for them as well), but we sure could use your prayer support. It's not easy to keep that many children under control, as well as teach them lessons that will, Lord willing, stick with them long term. Keep in mind that most of these kids are very undisciplined. They have taught me many new words in French (I can say them but I probably can't spell them correctly: Kokota -- to knock on the head with your knuckles, limé -- to hit, giffilé -- to slap in the face, frappé -- to hit hard.) Get my drift? They like to fight. It's hard for them to learn to overcome evil with good. We teach and pray. Progress is slow.

With the summer vacation comes a lot of travel for our church people. We've had several move to the village or to Abidjan in the past month. We get new people as well who are in San Pedro for vacation. Naomi, the mother of the twins, has moved to another city to live with her "husband's" parents. He has paid dowry for her, but they have not had a legal wedding yet. This story repeats itself often in various degrees. Some "husbands" have paid part dowry, some have paid none. It is so difficult to make them understand that living together without a real marriage is SIN. Bottom line. It's going to take real conviction from the Lord to bring change to these people, so we ask you to pray!

Remember Felicité? The mother/cousin of Nadege. Well, I'm pleased to report that she has been quite faithful at church lately. I always try to speak to her, and be friendly, but I find myself keeping a little distance from both her and her daughter. I just want to see if they will seek the Lord for HIS sake, and not for my sake. It's hard to explain. We so desire to see these folks build their own relationships with God, and get to know Him better, and love Him. Not because they might get some financial or medical help from us, but because He is the one true lover of their souls. He alone can truly satisfy their hearts. If only they would learn to know Him.

Did I mention the guard across the street from our house? His name is Moktar and he was a Muslim. He keeps asking me to come and do Bible study with him. I try to go out and "visit" (with my Bible) with him on Thursday afternoons (we sit out by our gate) while my kids play at Joan's house. I've had the opportunity to share Christ with him as well as much from God's Word. Andy has also witnessed to him (multiple times) in the past. So, the last time, I asked him if he had made a decision about Jesus Christ. He informed me that he has decided to believe on Jesus as his Savior. He said, "That is why I want you to come and teach me from the Bible." That is a huge answer to prayer. Andy has also been witnessing to the night guard - also a Muslim (his African name is too hard for us to pronounce, let alone write). We pray that he too will decide to trust Christ alone for his salvation. There are many more just like them.

This past month has been busy with church ministries (Sunday School, Worship Service, Membership Classes--a basic discipleship course, Choir practice--we could use major help, Visitation--Andy has been able to lead several to the Lord, One on One Counseling--every Monday morning at the church, and Bible School--we had 4 men finish our Church's Bible School program this month -- a huge blessing!). A group of Americans came from Arlington Baptist Church in Baltimore,

Maryland to visit for about 10 day, and work with the Kings (our friends and co-workers here in San Pedro). They were able to visit our church as well, share testimonies, sing and be a real blessing to the Ivorian believers. They did a mini VBS with our kids for two afternoons. The kids loved it. My brother-in-law, Dan Cuthbertson, has a niece named Shanna who is here for a few months to help out as well. She is teaching Sunday School to our kids and the Cuthbertson kids. It's great to see them excited about going to church again (finally, a class they can understand!) and about learning verses in English. I am very thankful for Shanna and the work she is doing with our children.

In addition to all of that, we've had the stomach bug going around (both in our home and in our town). We've treated several for worms. I got to superglue my first gash--a little girl from our church who fell and cut her forehead--not pleasant! We've killed several cockroaches, but thankfully no snakes. :) The children are working on French studies (that is their summer class every Tues. Wed. and Thurs.) I am happy to say that my children have found an Ivorian family to whom they have attached. It's great. They have someone to visit now, and they like to go there once in a while. The lady goes to our church along with her niece and nephew. This contact is also helping the children practice their French (or maybe learning French with their tutor is what has helped them make this contact.) Either way, it is a blessing.

So, thanks for sticking with us. We hope your summer will be fun and profitable for eternity. Out here is is very easy to see souls in need, but I'm sure they are all around in America too. It's harder there because everyone is so busy (difficult to really notice if someone is in need, and even if you notice, hard to help with the hectic pace of life) and also folks are very private, so they often hide their true needs. Out here we can be overwhelmed with all the people and their needs. Tiny example. We were eating dinner. A little boy from our church rang the bell and gave Andy a note for me from his mother. I had given her some baby cereal a few days ago because I knew they were struggling and had noticed that the baby who was fussy a lot was very happy after he ate some at my house--I figure he fusses a lot because he is hungry. The note said (in French), "please give me some milk for my baby's cereal, my family has not eaten since yesterday (it was evening), Do you have medicine for a wound? CouCou (the little girl that I got to superglue shut) fell and cut her head." I gave the boy a container of milk powder and a container of rice along with stuff to make sauce. I told him that she would have to bring the little girl for wound care as I can't just send medicine. They came in about 15 minutes and we got the wound cleaned out and glued shut. It was nerve wracking as it was my first time doing this--my sister Joan has done it several times, and assured me that it would work well--so far it really has! The little girl was at church today doing very well. This is just one tiny example of what life is like out here. Come visit and see first hand. If you want to minister and help people, there is no end to the opportunities. Sometimes we feel overwhelmed, but I still believe that I should do what I can while I can and trust God to care for it all after that. He will reward if we faint not. (Gal. 6:9-10 is one of my favorite verses!) Look it up.

Well, may God bless you indeed!

Much Love,

Andy and Becky Messer
Sent by Salem Baptist Church, Winston-Salem, NC
World Wide New Testament Baptist Missions

P.S. We are planning a trip to Abidjan in September (my mom is going back to the U.S. for a short time and needed a ride to the capital.) We are going to be checking on the Radio Station permit. PLEASE pray with us about this. We have a couple of months to pray! God is able to have that thing ready if it is His will. Try to remember to pray about it with us. Thank You!