

The Messer Message

October 27, 2007

Dear praying friends and family,

It is already near the end of October. I don't really know exactly when I last wrote, but life has been very busy between then and now. My main event has been home schooling. Andy's is the ministry here. Of course there are all the side issues of life. Our side issues last month were mumps, malaria, flu and a cold. Fun eh? We are thankful to the Lord for the healing that He granted, and everyone is either well, or on the mend. A few have that last bit of cough that seems to take forever to officially go away. It's one of those things where you don't notice it leaving until one day when you say to yourself in surprise, "I'm not coughing anymore!" By then, it's about time to catch something else. :) We really had been doing pretty well, but I guess we got tired out with school and life. This always make us more susceptible to the germs and bugs around here. Now we do take a product called Juice Plus (it is great for the immune system) but due to the difficulty of getting it shipped out here, we have not been taking it as we should. So, we were sick, but now we are better. Thanks to those who knew about it and prayed.

4th grade science is changing my life. We are studying about insects and flowers. I have bugs in jars laying around my house now. We had a dead cockroach that had been frozen. The kids wanted to see if it would thaw out and run away (roaches are supposed to do that.) I think it was already dead before they froze it. Anyhow, it thawed out all right, but it did not run away. Then came a bunch of little worms in the jar. Since we do not believe in spontaneous generation (life coming from non-life) we figured some sort of flying bug laid its eggs on the dead roach. Is this grossing you out? Well, for whatever reason, the worm things seem to have died also (no food? Maybe they don't eat dead roach?) Then came the ants to get whatever they could out of the whole thing. It was all sort of interesting in a morbid way. We had a Katydid for a while, but let it go. Andy caught a huge moth and wanted to put it under some chemical to bring back to the U.S. I'm not sure what he did with it. They've been catching Goliath Beetles, crickets, ants and grasshoppers. It is fun. On our morning walk (for exercise--at around 6:30 AM--for those who know me, don't faint, I am getting up that early SOME mornings to go walking with Andy!) we see lots of flowers and plants. When we were studying plant life, I came home with a whole bunch of them to dissect and examine. Andy said it was embarrassing to carry flowers (Andy says it was not flowers. He said it was stems and plants and weird stuff) while walking. Men.

The ministry here is going well. Thanks to many gifts toward the benches, our church now has mostly benches for seating. There are more coming on Monday (if the carpenter keeps his word--he's pretty good about it) and we shall take some pictures to send out to those who are interested. We've had some Sundays with great attendance, and some Sundays with very few. When it was summer vacation, AND it was raining, we have very low attendance. Now that school is back in session, everyone has returned home, and the pews are getting full again. It is always encouraging to see everyone at church. I did not mind the low attendance last month, as I was battling so much illness (with the kids, and with myself). I missed 3 weeks in a row of church--getting the mumps at age 32 is not fun! I even had the vaccine for that one. :) However, during it all, the faithful were still there. There were a few decisions for salvation. Pray for a young man named Frank who got saved just a few weeks ago. He really wants to grow in the Lord, and is almost ready to get baptized. He is living in a home that practices fetishes and African witchcraft. Pray for him to shine brightly for the Lord in their darkness. We still have some couples that are not really walking with the Lord (they say they want to follow Christ, but they are living together out of wedlock.) Please pray that the Holy Spirit will bring conviction and change. We can't change them. They must see the sin, and choose to repent (turn from it!) It's very anti-cultural out here. The parents of the girl make it so difficult for the man to pay the dowry, and have it all done. It usually comes down to a matter of money for the man--he does not have enough to satisfy the family, and then pay for the wedding at the Mayor's office that is required for a legal marriage. The family will say, "Well, just take the girl and pay us when you can." At that point, they move in together and start their family. With no legal marriage, the wife is completely unprotected. The in-laws have a lot of control over the young couple. They say, "Do what we say or we'll take our daughter back." If the man dies, his goods will revert to HIS parents, not to his wife. It is a difficult thing when they must choose between their family and the Lord. Jesus already made it clear that He must come first. One girl from the market (named Ami--pronounced Ah Mee) who is Muslim, told me that she wanted to believe on Jesus, but when she told her father, he said, "If you choose Jesus, I am not your father and your mother is not your mother!" She says some day she will choose Jesus, but she is not ready to give up her parents. How very, very sad. It does break our hearts, and makes us very frustrated at times.

Andy is currently at the church for **Bible School**. He has three students in his class this time. There are two Ivorian men who have already completed the program who are teaching as well. One has 4 students and the other has 2 students. These groups are small, but they are like seeds that, Lord willing, will grow into large plants. If each student were to train 2 or 4 others, the group will become quite large over the years. There is another man who finished the program (he goes to my brother-in-law's church) named Paul. Paul wants to start a church in his home village. Andy and Dan were able to go there last week and show an evangelistic film on Saturday night. Paul said he has 4 people who normally come to his Bible Study on Sunday morning. After the film, there were 28 people who came to the Bible Study. That is an 8 fold increase. Praise the Lord!!! God is definitely working out here.

On the subject of finances--God is SO good and He does indeed meet all of our needs! We've been getting letters from fellow missionaries (Brazil, Canada...) telling how three things have worked together to make it "chaufe (hot/difficult)" (as they say out here) for them. First, exchange rates have dropped, so our support turns into less money on the field than it did a few years ago. Second, prices have gone up (I think it always does this). And, third, churches in the U.S. are struggling, so some have dropped or lowered support. I

think these things are affecting missionaries all over the world right now. I have not done a study, so I can't say that for sure, but it seems to be the trend. We have our struggles like everyone else. I know that many of you struggle as well. Let me say right now, **THANK YOU so much to you our churches, friends and family for your support of this work out here.** We understand that many of you have chosen to give to the work when you could for sure use the money yourselves. We pray that God will bless you and meet all your needs, as He does ours. I want to tell you that in the past few months, God has done some marvelous things for us financially! We have been able to get wooden benches in our church to replace the white plastic chairs that were breaking apart! Thank you to all who gave toward those benches!!! Hey, would you like to come out and sit on one of them?? We'd take your picture and everything! :) Also, we have received gifts to help the Baptist church in Tabou (a church that Andy has worked with quite a lot in the past.) They are so thankful, and are in the process of doing their construction. Another gift has made it possible for us to considerably reduce our construction debt! We feel that God has opened heaven and poured blessings on us. Not just financial blessings, but the health He gives/restores, the strength He renews, and the sweet fellowship we enjoy with our fellow missionaries here. It is a wonderful thing to be serving the Lord. My dad always said that you will be the most happy in the center of God's will. Do not think for a moment that if you surrender your life to the Lord He will ruin it. How foolish. If He wanted to ruin your life, He certainly would not have to wait for you to give it to Him. He is your Maker, so He knows what is best for you. Trust Him! He is absolutely trustworthy! We are overflowing with thanksgiving for how He has met our needs this past month, and all the years before! Part of that thanks goes to you! Your giving and your prayers have availed much!!! Thank you!

Little update on the kids. Leah is doing well in 4th grade. She loves reading, but dislikes spelling. She is a joy to teach, and I am pleased with how hard she works. I can tell that she wants to do well. I also teach my two nephews (Isaiah and Stephen Cuthbertson). They have indicated to me (via thank you notes that they were forced to write for Language class) that they like going to school with us. They mostly like getting stickers when they do well on Math or Penmanship. :) I'm very thankful that I have a lot of stickers. :) David does not like school, but he does very well at it. Math is his best subject, and spelling is his worst. I can't blame him. I never liked spelling either. I remember writing the word scissors 100 times for misspelling it on 3 tests! :) Hey, I know how to spell it just fine now. Nadia is in 2nd grade and she does well. She would do better if I could spend more one on one time with her, but it is hard with the whole "one room schoolhouse" thing going on. :) Nadia has long hair now, and is so pretty, if I do say so myself. Lexie is a sweet, full of energy, loving, vibrant 5 year old. She loves Kindergarten (which she does with my sister, Joan Cuthbertson) and she loves to spend the night with her cousin Rebekah. She told Joan that Rebekah (Joan's daughter) had spent "too many nights" up there at her own house, and needed to come back to our house. The cousins really do love each other. That is another huge blessing from the Lord! Prisca is 3 and Hadassah is 2. Prisca is potty trained during the day, and Hadassah is almost potty trained. When we are done with diapers, you will hear some loud singing coming from Africa, "Hallelujah!" That will be Andy and I! Both of these girls (Prisca and Hadassah--whom we call Chowie--weird eh?) are in that stage where you sort of need to watch them all the time that they are awake. One evening when we shut our bedroom door, and turned off the light to go to bed, we heard a little voice saying, "I'm coming out." (Imagine it all high and squeaky/soft). I quickly flipped on the light to discover Prisca hiding behind my chair, PAINTING HER TOENAILS with my nail polish. She had also spread insect repellent cream all over her legs, and on my floor. It was not too bad of a mess, but she knew she was being naughty--hence the hiding behind the chair. It was sort of funny. The next night it was lipstick (a burgundy/mauve color) all over the floor in my room, the bath tub, the sink, the toilet (even inside the toilet bowl--YUCK!) and on the handle of the toilet scrubber, not to mention all over Prisca and Hadassah. It took me a while to scrub that all clean--including the babies. Oh, lets not forget the water fiasco. In our school/upstairs bathroom, there is no sink (yet). The pipe comes out of the wall and has a thing to turn it off and on. I think it was on Wednesday when I was teaching History and Science to Leah, Prisca and Hadassah came upstairs. They said they wanted to take a shower. The bathroom has a functioning shower, so I said, "OK," thinking it would at least keep them busy. So, I'm sitting there teaching, and hearing water running/splashing, and thinking nothing of it all. Then one of the kids goes back there to go potty and says, "Mommy, there is water flooding in the back." Still thinking it is just water from the shower that has splashed out, I'm in no rush to deal with it. I go to look at the "mess" and what do I find? The babies have opened full blast the pipe coming from the wall, and water has indeed flooded the back. Out the bathroom door and in a line going through the back room toward the outside door. YIKES. I was still in the middle of a class, so that became Andy's mess. :) He came and cleaned it all up (sounds a lot easier than it was!) and life went on. Well, about 3 hours later, I was up there with Nadege (she is doing well by the way!) working on the alphabet with her (in French). We hear water running again. For a few minutes, I was thinking it was from the neighbor's house. All of a sudden, it hits me! THE BATHROOM PIPE!!! Yep, you guessed it. Flooded again by Hadassah. "ANDY!!" Don't worry, it is now all taped up and they can't turn it on again! :) So, you can guess that we stay hopping here. Life is fun with the babies though. They are very cute and it is always a joy to watch them learn new things.

The **Radio Station permit** is still on hold. We are still waiting for some crucial paperwork to be completed. Our goal is to get the station up and running next year, Lord willing.

Well, again, we want to thank all of you. Thank you for your interest in the ministry here in San-Pedro. Thank you for your prayers for us. Thank you to those who support us regularly, and thank you to all those who have sent extra gifts. You are a blessing to us. May God bless you richly!!

Love in Christ,

Andy and Becky Messer
Missionaries with World Wide New Testament Baptist Missions
Serving in San-Pédro, Côte d'Ivoire
Sent by Salem Baptist Church of Winston-Salem, NC