

The Messer Message

January 29, 2009



Dear Friends,

Hi. I have about 25 minutes before Prayer Meeting starts. I've been wanting to write for some time—just running around very busy most of the time.

I have another adventure (a tiny one) to share. J Last Saturday, I wanted to go walking (badly in need of exercise) and the children were begging me to take them to the big market (a large, open air thing). I decided to kill two birds with one stone—WALK to the big market with the kids. It's really far, so we took some taxi money (it costs about \$0.50 to take a taxi anywhere in our city) for when we got tired and headed out. It was Melissa (my home school helper), Leah, David, Stephen (my nephew) and I. We got to the big market (walked about half of the way) and were just starting to shop a little (I was about to buy an avocado) when we noticed that lots of people were running on the street toward us. I do NOT like to join a stampede without knowing WHAT I'm running from and where I'm going. I was trying to see what was going on (this happened quickly) when I noticed that even those around us were beginning to run AWAY from...I knew not what. I decided right then to just join them and get out of the way. Melissa later told me that she was thinking along the lines of a cloud of insects or a big dust cloud being responsible for the fleeing crowds. I was thinking a fight and then when I saw a girl rubbing her eyes with a cloth, I began to think some kind of gas. I was instantly nervous (too many war movies) and imagining that gas stuff they used in the war to kill people in the trenches. Then my eyes and nose began to burn. By this time I was herding the kids and Missy toward the main road along with the general crowd. A taxi came rolling along and we just hopped in, thus giving a quick and sudden end to our shopping trip. I discovered (from the taxi driver) that the police had sprayed pepper gas into the air to disperse the people. Why? The government is trying to improve the city. They are knocking down all houses and booths... that are not made of cement. Anything that looks temporary is being torn down. These are the people's homes and work places. The Ivorians are not happy and many were there to oppose the process. As in the Hornet Song, the police did not compel the people to leave, they just made them (and us) willing to go! It was exciting and got our hearts pumping - does that count for exercise?

On the more serious side, we definitely covet your prayers as we head into another season of transition. It is very much like the four seasons in America. Winter is the time of change and adjustment. Fall is the time leading up to the change. We are in the fall again. Things have gone well for our church work this term. The buildings are terrific and we enjoy using them. The church members are growing in the Lord. Many are showing faithfulness and initiative to serve the Lord. New souls are coming to Christ almost weekly. Now we are preparing to come home for a furlough (Home ministry—we have a burden to minister to all of you as well! We want to thank you for your love and support—in person. We want to encourage you in the Lord. We want to share in the burdens that are unique to the American church.). We have been working extra hard to get the church ready to stand on its own. It means extra teaching and more one on one discipleship. Showing the leaders how to do what we do and giving them opportunities to try it before we leave. Every time before, we just had to exit in a hurry (evacuations) but this time we sense that the Lord has allowed us the time to prepare the people. We are hoping that our absence will spur a deeper growth and dependence on the Lord in our Ivorian believers.

Personally—I hate change. I don't do well with it. It stresses me out and I don't usually get comfortable for a good 3 months after each big transition. I'm trying to stay focused on the work here and just take it one day at a time. I'm trying NOT to think of all the needs that arise each time we cross the ocean. God will provide—the money, the strength, the sanity, and a vehicle for our furlough in the States. The good part is that the kids are getting older and thus the voyage becomes easier—less carrying, no diapers or bottles, little people who can now tell you what they need... I'm thankful. BUT, I'd still appreciate your prayers for the months ahead.

I have much more I could say, but don't want to go on and on, so I'll close with that. We are getting so excited about seeing you, our beloved friends. I can already picture myself chatting with so many of you. I'm praying for you all as you face the many changes taking place in our own country. It's so comforting to keep reminding ourselves that God is in control. He is King of kings, and Lord of Lords (President of presidents). He always sees His people through even the roughest of times (I think of floods, battles, storms, fiery furnaces, lion's dens, ship wrecks, even death). I heard an awesome message by J.D. Greear about the Hall of Faith chapter (Hebrews 11). He pointed out the group for whom God was BIGGER than seemingly impossible circumstances. God was able to overcome even the most difficult situation. Then J.D. pointed out the group who gave their lives (the martyrs). For them, God was BETTER than even life. It's scary, but I want my faith to be that strong. Strong enough to believe that God is bigger than any problem and better than life itself. With that kind of faith, what would be left to fear? Nothing. That is my prayer during these times of upheaval and change—may we walk through it in faith.

Much Love in Christ,

Andy and Becky Messer

World Wide New Testament Baptist Missions
PO Box 725
Kings Mountain, NC 28086
(704) 730-1440