

The Messer Message

February 3, 2009

Dear friends and family,

Hi everyone. Some friends requested that we share this small little update. So, here it is. J

I (Becky) had another adventure. J There is a girl in our church named Caroline who often asks for prayer for her family in the village whom she thinks are unsaved (they are Protestants in name, and quite religious, but not really obeying God's Word and not clear on salvation) For many weeks, I have prayed for these people and often felt burdened for them. I told Caroline that we should go to her village and witness to them. She agreed and after some planning, it was agreed that she, an Ivorian pastor/Bible School student (Jean—who also happens to work for us), and I would go to her village and spend one night. We left San Pedro on Friday around 7 AM. The bus took 7 hours to do a 4 hour trip (it kept stopping at every village until the passengers started calling it a bush taxi.) One aspect of the bus ride that was very interesting to me was that an Ivorian salesman got on and rode with us doing his sales pitch on the bus. He was selling "Chinese Medicine"—which included soap, toothpaste, pain pills, worm medicine, a natural antibiotic and other stuff. This is how they work. They sell on the buses. It was entertaining and the health advice that he was giving was quite accurate. Most of it was stuff that we take for granted or learned when we were kids in school, but many of the people out here just don't know it—like the importance of brushing your teeth, washing with soap, keeping your bathrooms clean to cut down on disease, and the fact that a lot of salt is not good for those with high blood pressure. He gave information on Diabetes. Also, he explained terms like "Anemia," "Hyperglycemia," "Hypoglycemia" and "Blood Pressure." He did a good job and I was impressed. I even bought some soap and toothpaste from him (the prices were amazingly low compared to the cost of these items in the grocery store.) I guess the grocery stores are more for the French or Lebanese (richer folks) and the average, Ivorian, working person travels by bus, so that is where he gets his stuff at a lower cost.

We arrived at a town called Dabou around 2 PM. From there we took another beat up old bus to Caroline's village (another hour or so). When we got to the village, we met the grandmother and then the father. We talked with them for a while sharing the gospel and answering some questions. We were able to help resolve a conflict that had been festering between two people and in the evening after supper, we went around and shared the Gospel at least 6 different times among groups of people sitting around their porches or cook fires. There were 13 who prayed and asked the Lord to save them. There were many more who heard the plan of Salvation presented clearly. Pray for the people of that village—I can't spell the name (I have not seen it written) but it sounds like Lig-na noo. When we got up at 5 AM the next day to leave (there is only one bus that goes back and forth from Lig-na-noo to Dabou, leaving the town each morning at 6 AM and coming back at 6 PM to spend the night) I was wishing we had more time. There are hundreds of villages like this all over Cote d'Ivoire and if we can just have the time and take the effort to go to them, they will listen. The people WANT to know more about God and His Word. Many just do not understand.

In closing, I'd like to share what I told the people of Lig-na-noo. They are very religious. They go to church (live in God's house), they hear the Bible read (eat God's spiritual food) and they even pray memorized prayers (talk to God)—but all of this does not make them God's children. Many were baptized as infants and have no recollection of it at all, but believe they are saved because of it. I told them that if a child who did not belong to me came and lived in my house, ate my food and talked to me for many years, the child could easily think I was his/her mother and that he/she was my child. However, if I did not have proper adoption papers, the day I had to go back to America, I could not take the child with me. I explained to them that they needed to be "born spiritually", adopted into God's family (saved) so they could be children of God. We read Romans 10:9-10. We talked about Faith and we read Hebrews 11:1, 6 as well as Romans 10:17. We talked about how salvation (or being adopted by God) is a free gift that one cannot earn (Eph. 2:8-9) I explained that my children do certain chores because they are my children. Doing the chores does not make them my children. As God's children, once we are saved, we will also be about our Father's work. However, it is not the doing of God's work that makes a person belong to God. II Timothy 2:19 says that God knows who belongs to Him. We know that when He comes back, many will say "Lord, Lord" (they wouldn't say this if they did not think they were saved!) but God will say He does not know them. So my challenge to anyone who claims the name of Christ is to examine himself to be sure he is in the faith (II Corinthians 13:5) and if he is, then live for Christ. Obey what Romans 12:1 says.

I figured I'd go ahead and put all these verses in this letter so that if perhaps you have someone you want to share the Gospel with, the verses will help you in doing it. So, here I am, back at home and very thankful for the opportunity God allowed me to reach out. By the way, the village was not bad for sleeping—I had a room with a bed (foam mattress), a FAN (they did have electricity!), I got a hot bath (bucket) and enjoyed a yummy supper. I kept the window (wood) shut so I did not get bit up by mosquitoes and with the fan, I was not too hot. The bed was a little conducive to a back ache, but considering I thought I might be on the floor—I was happy.

Hope you each have a blessed day.

Love in Christ,
Andy and Becky Messer

World Wide New Testament Baptist Missions
PO Box 725

Kings Mountain, NC 28086