

May 2011

Dear Friends,

Well this letter will end up looking different from our others and I'm not even sure what it will turn out to be by the end! Tim is traveling for 2 weeks so is not here to decorate for me! But we wanted to get a letter out for May anyway. June is going to be a busy month as 3 of our kids show up to be with us for a while. To say I'm anxious for that would be a gross understatement. I'm counting the minutes.

Since our other letter was a bit late there hasn't been a whole lot to report from our area directly. Andrea Herman is on home assignment and Tim and Heidi Norton have taken a leave of absence, so it's been pretty quiet on the missionary front in Siguirii!!! We had a couple of team meetings with Jack and Cathy Carlos which was good since of all the missionaries in Guinea, they knew us the least. This gave us a chance to visit a bit and talk. Their kids will also come out to Guinea during the summer so things will pick up eventually!

We have had some good news, however, from the Forest Region and thought we'd share a bit about that. You've heard us mention the CCCS before, the Christian Children's Concern Society. They have been partnering with us in Guinea for many years now to help make it possible for the church there to sponsor schools for young children who live in the village. Often government schools are far from the village and it is almost impossible for kindergarten age children to walk there. By the time they are finally old enough to walk to school they have missed crucial learning opportunities necessary to succeed at an older age,

one of which is French. The EELG (The Lutheran Church in Guinea) decided to take on the ministry of providing schooling for these little lost lambs, seeing an opportunity to teach not only French, math and reading, but Bible as well. Folks in the village are thrilled to have these schools, and children very often take home and share what they have learned about Jesus! We've had villages come looking for us just to have these schools. It's been a wonderful ministry.



A CCCS school in Guéckédou

Where we used to have hundreds of children hearing the Gospel we now literally have thousands being taught the basics of the Christian faith and about what Jesus did for them. In the latest report shared by Thomas, our church leader who is in charge of the CCCS schools, we read about how various stories of the Bible have ministered to students and their families. Of how the story of Hannah asking God for a child speaks to women who also may be having trouble conceiving in a culture where that is still a shameful thing. Or how the story of the faith of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego encourages listeners that there is a very powerful God who loves and protects His people. Simple Bible stories learned in school that take home a powerful message of hope! We praise God for this opportunity to reach out to so many through these schools, and pray that this will have a positive affect on the country of Guinea as this next generation learns to walk in the steps of the Savior! If you'd like to learn more about CCCS or support their efforts in Guinea you can visit them at www.cccskids.org. These schools are making a difference!

Another organization that has been extremely active in our area lately has been LCMS World Relief and Human Care (WR/HC). We wrote last month about the fighting going on in Côte d'Ivoire. The church there was able to get help from WR/HC quickly in both Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia where many of our church people ran to.



And they were also able to send immediate help to our church in the Forest Region when a fire swept through a local area burning down the houses of eight families. All told this meant that 72 people had lost everything they owned. Losing a house is always devastating but when you have nothing like insurance to step in, where do you go for help? And so the church requested help from our WR/HC. LCMS is helping to provide roofs for new houses that will be built with the help of the local church. They will also offer immediate food assistance as well as seed rice so these families can plant for next year, clothing and some basic pieces of furniture. What a blessing this is. And what a testimony to the love of Jesus we strive to show to others as we ministry to physical needs. If you'd like to learn more about what LCMS World Relief and Human Care is doing, or help support their efforts in Africa you can visit them at www.world-relief.org.

Tim scolded me last month for talking about the kids' plans before they were certain, and he was right. We found out soon after that letter that Joel's plans for England or France fell through, however he had an interview with a gentleman about the possibility of spending a month rotation next year in Madagascar! He's praying about it right now to see if that's where the Lord is leading. He hopes to end up serving overseas at some point in his life, so this may be where God is directing. We will wait and see. I mentioned that Tim is traveling. He is currently in Benin visiting with the church there. He wants to travel to the north of the country with the church president and touch base with the churches there! After Benin he will head to Togo and visit the seminary. He had planned to visit Burkina but there has been trouble there. However the new president of the church there is at the seminary in Dapaong, so Tim will be able to touch base with him anyway. That worked well! Please pray for all Tim's travels! He'll return home on June 1st. Katie and Joel just arrived in Dakar to spend time with Andrea there. Then Katie, Joel, and Andrea will arrive here in Bamako on the 4th of June and we'll travel together to Guinea. Pray for their travel as well. Pray also that God will continue to use the CCCS schools that are functioning in the Forest Region to bring many to know the saving Gospel! May he use those little children to reach thousands more as they share the stories they are learning each day!

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God be with you all!

Beth (for Tim and I)