

Mango Musings
July 4, 2010

Since Sunday is July 4, and our small group of missionaries is planning a picnic for the afternoon, I thought it wise to start the Musings a little earlier than normal. It's Wednesday morning and it rained in the night, so the workers at the hospital site were sent home, with instructions to return this afternoon. I'm waiting to hear from the crane people. I went to Kara yesterday to negotiate for the crane, and we have an agreement I hope they will honor. The crane was supposed to be loaded last night so they could leave first thing in the morning. But the truck didn't arrive from Lome until well into the night, so Gao, my contact man in Kara told me this morning that it would be loaded once the rain stopped. I'm not sure why one cannot drive a crane onto the flatbed of a truck in the rain, but that is the decision they made in Kara. So we do hope to have a crane by nightfall, and if the rains hold off here, and the crane works, and the driver they send is competent, we should have the trusses up on the duplex by Thursday evening.

Nogbedji had a new apprentice who missed a week without explanation. When he asked her why she didn't show, she said that her aunt, with whom she lives, told her she needed to stay home to help with some work. Nogbedji overlooked it, but when the girl missed another day without being excused, and she gave the same reason, he decided to walk over to the aunt's house to find out what was going on. There must have been quite a conversation, and some heated words. But Nogbedji was in the right, and he knew it. The aunt said it was her prerogative to tell her niece who she was feeding, to stay home and help with some work. Nogbedji replied that the aunt didn't have the right to ruin her niece's future. He said, "You wouldn't take her out of school for a week without explanation, would you?" Well no, she wouldn't do that. "So why are you ruining her opportunity to learn a trade in order to make a living?" There was no good reply to that. Finally the aunt complained about Wednesday evening, when the apprentices stay late to pray, and where I usually teach a short Bible study. At that point Nogbedji knew he had the true reason for the absences. The aunt was afraid that her niece might become a Christian. With clear African reasoning, he said, "To whom do you pray?" She replied that she prayed to God. Nogbedji then told her that we pray to God as well. "And did you know," he said, "That your niece asked us to pray for you when you were pregnant? (She didn't.) And God protected you and your baby was delivered safely. So God answered our prayer for you. And here you are complaining about our Wednesday evening prayer time!" Nogbedji then turned to an elderly gentleman who was listening in, and asked him to be the judge. (It turned out that he was the lady's older brother.) "Is it right that I expect my apprentices to come faithfully

to their classes? Or, is she right to pull her niece out of class without even telling me? Who is in the right?" The older brother had to come down on Nogbedji's side, and the case was closed, for the time being. In the process Nogbedji learned that several of the men in the family are not Muslims, and even the name of the apprentice (Odile) is a name given to Christians. But the incident revealed what we have always anticipated, that there will be persecution and opposition to the preaching of the gospel. We need to pray.

It's nearly noon Sunday and there have been several changes to what I wrote above. First, the small group of missionaries has grown by at least nine Americans who have come to Mango for a few weeks. It's kind of like a private Peace Corps. In fact the lady directing the group told me that Crossroads Africa was founded in 1958 by a Presbyterian minister in Harlem, and it was their work that gave John Kennedy the idea to create the American Peace Corps. So we have 8 college girls from around the States, and I think they are happy to have a place to celebrate the American independence. We will be serving hamburgers and hot dogs, although the hamburger buns, baked in a clay oven, look more like pita bread. The last time the lady made hamburger buns, they were a bit large, so Esther told the lady to make them a bit thinner, which she did with a vengeance. We will get it right one of these days. And maybe I can get a few pictures of the event. Will at least try.

The second change has to do with the crane for the trusses, which is no longer an option for us. The man I was dealing with called to tell me that the director would only let us have the crane if we repaired it for them first. Not knowing how much that would cost, or if we could even find parts, we declined the offer and decided to go another route. We took this as from the Lord, and at some point during this week we will start hoisting those trusses up on to the walls with the backhoe, and then dragging them into position, again, I'm assuming, with a chain and the backhoe. We would appreciate your prayer for that work, both for safety and for wisdom, and of course, for success.

Thanks so much for your prayers on our behalf. We had a good meeting with our little group of believers this morning, and that is always encouraging to us. Esther is feeling much better, following a week of what was evidently a malaria attack. Three days of pills (Co-Artem) have her back on her feet and feeling fine. Thank God for modern medicine that is available to us today. I sometimes think of the early missionaries who either toughed it out, or died in the process. Today we have a medical answer to this killer, and we are grateful to the Most High, "Who heals all of our diseases."

Yours in His service,

Tim & Esther Neufeld