



THINK ON THESE THINGS

July 2008

Dear Praying Friends,

Wow! Thank you for praying. There's been absolutely so much stuff going on that it's hard to know where to start. I do apologize for not writing sooner. I'll try to catch you up without abusing your time. But you may need that cup of coffee or soft drink to sit back and get through this one.

Our third trimester at IBB went very well. We had full schedules of classes. For a little over a week of that time our students were involved in a well project. We've prayed for years for a well at the school. God provided the funds a few years ago. Now, a co-worker, fellow EBMer who has the equipment was able to come and put it in. They were able to go down 60 meters (after finding water somewhat before that). The students helped with the project as a means of learning a little about up keeping a well and pump. It's very feasible that most of them will be involved in the future in ministries where wells and pumps are a means of contact with people. Providing water in the desert is a very important means of outreach. We praise the Lord for this well and pray it will be used also as a means to make contact with those around us.

In June, I figured I had 14 visitors with an extra 8 off and on at the school for whom I was providing meals and ice (a wonderful commodity when it's well over 110). Two of the visitors were Pastor Steve Johnson and his wife, Cindy (a pretty good name). Pastor Johnson came to teach a module at IBB as well as speak at our graduation this year. Their church in the States is Zion Christian Church in Sanford, NC. It's a wonderful group of people who've been actively supporting me and praying for our ministries here for years. Our students and others participating in the module appreciated so much their ministry here.

Johnsons did have some great experiences in traveling. They arrived in Bamako and were to fly to Timbuktu for a couple of days. Their plane leaving Bamako was about 5 hours late so they enjoyed sitting in the airport waiting - in the heat. Then the trip over the road from TB2 proved to be interesting. They went by vehicle from TB2 to a town named Douentza. I drove from Gao to Douentza to meet them and bring them the rest of the way. It's a spot in the trip where the dirt road ends and the Gao/Douentza part is paved with potholes, but still paved. They had one flat on the first trek. Then on the second, we were stopped after the last town before arriving in Gao. The town is Gossi, where we have national missionaries out of Gao church. We were stopped because a big truck had found 2 young boys on the side of the road nearly dead. We ended up taking them back to Gossi to a clinic there. Often boys are given by families to religious leaders and misused for begging and other things. It's not an easy life for these boys. One could talk a little while the other's eyes were rolled back in his head and he wasn't doing well. They'd walked in the desert heat for over 30 kilometers with no food or water to get away. In the end their lives were saved but they're back where they were. Pray for them. They did see that they were helped by people from the church in Gossi and that these people continued to check on them. God could use this in their lives to bring them to Him one day.

Then after our graduation, I drove Johnsons down to Bamako to catch their plane. We were doing the trip in 2 days. The first went well. The second, we broke down in the middle of nowhere between two towns. The back axle on the truck broke. I had to leave them there with two other passengers with us and hitch a ride to one town, 1 1/2 hours away. Once there, I had to walk over 30 minutes to get to where I needed to go to find help in getting a mechanic. I went to an office where we knew some of the people supposedly working there. The people we knew were no longer there. They led me to the one in charge and we found out that we did know each other after all. He had been a young person living at a sister's in Gao back in 1007. Both he and his sister were Christians and were in our church. God leads us along! He found me a mechanic. I waited through a sandstorm and 2 hours of rain before he was ready to head out. My passengers also waited through all of that back out in the bush. We eventually got in to town and repaired and were off. It only took from about 9am until 8pm. We did manage to go a couple more hours before spending the night and finishing the trip the next day. God was very good to us. It could have been a lot worse.

We had two students to graduate this year. We appreciate your prayers for them. One just welcomed a baby daughter into his family. It's their first child. They will possibly go as missionaries soon to Gossi, where we took the two boys. The other student is originally from Burkina Fasso and plans to go home and visit his family who he's not seen in over 5 years. I know they'd all appreciate your prayers as they seek to follow God's leading in their lives.

The other big news here is that our pastor in Gao is leaving Mali. Pastor Ibrahim and his wife, Gosia, are moving this month to Poland, Gosia's home country. They felt it was time for this move due to certain needs in their own family. There's been nothing or no one pushing them into this; no antagonism or conflict in the church. It's just the right thing and right time for their family. Samuel Guindo, who is the church missionary in Gossi will be coming to Gao with his wife, Nana, and their two children to fill-in and lead during this interim period. Pray for our church here as they seek God's direction for the future.

I guess that's enough for now. I'm presently in Bamako after seeing Johnson's off. I have three weeks of teaching modules to ladies' groups in both Timbuktu and here in Bamako before heading back to Gao at the end of this month. I appreciate your prayers for this as well. I was able to get some kinks worked out of my e-mail set-up while here so that hopefully I'll be able to do those e-mail updates I've wanted to do. Thank you for your patience. Thank you also for your prayers and continued support.

Until next time!

Yours for the harvest,

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"Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ" Phil. 1:6