

Dear Prayer Partners,

We wanted to send you a note to thank you for your prayers and let you know that we arrived safely in Ouagadougou last night at around 5pm local time (1pm in eastern USA – Burkina Faso is 4 hours ahead). Aside from being very tired, we had a very good trip. Caleb did pretty well on the actual flights, though during the layover in Paris and the stop we made in Niamey, Niger to drop off some passengers he wasn't so thrilled. Still, that's pretty good for having traveled a total of 18 hours. We had a few plane delays, but nothing drastic. There was a long security line at the Paris airport, but one of the security guards noticed us and took pity because of our young kids and had us jump in line in front of everyone else.:0)



On the flight from Paris to Niamey/Ouagadougou, we noticed a TV crew that kept filming different odd things at the airport and on the plane. Turns out that they were filming a “race” of some sort. They weren't allowed to tell us if it was THE race (the Amazing Race), but unless there's going to be a spin-off sometime soon, I'd bet on it. So, who knows...we may end up in the background of some shots that make it onto the TV footage.:0) One of the contestants and his father were from Chicago and they sat across the aisle from us, so we got to talk to them a little bit. We were surprised that the show would send the contestants to Burkina – there's not much here and it's not well known – but on second thought, I guess that makes sense.:0) So, whenever the next season of the Amazing Race airs, make sure you watch it! I believe there's a season currently running, so it may not be 'til this fall/winter or maybe next spring. Aside from looking for us, the missionary stars on the show, it'll be interesting to see what they show of Burkina Faso, and to see some of the contestants as well. It was amusing, standing in the line for passport check in the airport and seeing some of the...costumes...I'm sure the Burkinabe were amused and maybe even shocked, too. There was at least one team that was “goth.” They had either dyed their hair pink or were wearing a wig (couldn't tell from where I was standing) and were wearing white face paint. You couldn't tell the gender of the person very well, either, and I kept thinking that they looked very hot and ridiculous. Then, there were the girls who were wearing tight warm-up pants...very shocking to the conservative Burkinabe culture where women wear skirts and dresses that go below the knee in public.

All of our bags made it with us (the Walshes were only missing 1 bag, which will hopefully be arriving sometime in the next few days), and when it was time to go through customs here in Ouaga, they decided to just let us through without checking them. What a major blessing that was! (Customs officials can go through bags, pull out “expensive looking” items, and hold them for tariff fees, or on some occasions, bribes.) We arrived to a delicious homemade spaghetti dinner offered by one of the missionary families, and they've had breakfast items and other meals set up for us through this weekend.

Although Caleb did not sleep well at all last night (his first night in Ouaga), he did much better today, and we have hopes that tonight will be better and we will all get some much-needed sleep. When we did get up this morning (at 10am), it was really dark outside, which didn't help our jet-lagged and confused bodies any, but it turned out there was a pretty big thunderstorm brewing. They haven't had rain here in 5 weeks! What another blessing to have the rain come and cool things down considerably so that our first full day here in Burkina Faso has actually been quite comfortable – in the 80's!

The guest rooms are spacious and we are enjoying having a weekend to settle in a little and rest before we have to start figuring out all the logistics of becoming residents, purchasing supplies, and moving out to our permanent home in Mahadaga. We expect we'll be here a week at minimum and a month at maximum. And, we even have wireless DSL here at the SIM guest house in Ouaga, so we've had the luxury of calling (SKYPE with webcam!) our parents and writing this e-mail to you. In fact, the only real reason we haven't written sooner is because our laptop battery died and we didn't have a plug adaptor to be able to plug it in and recharge it!:0) Can't even blame it on a bad connection.

Well, if Caleb sleeps well and we can get our jet-lagged bodies up early enough, we'll be attending French church tomorrow morning at 8am. They have their services earlier so that it's not as hot during the service. Maybe in the afternoon we'll try listening to pastor Phil's sermon online, too. If you want to contact us at all while we're here in Ouagadougou, feel free to e-mail us or, if you have a SKYPE account, we can SKYPE for free (our username on SKYPE is burkinajohnson). It is fun to finally be here, but hard to really process that we're here for quite some time. It still feels like another one of our crazy adventures...I guess it is, just a much longer one than we're used to.:0) We do miss you all and wish we could have brought you along with us to experience and enjoy the fun. Since we can't, we hope our short updates, pictures and other stuff we put up on the web will help "bring you along" for the ride in a different sense.

Thanks again for all your prayers...God is SO faithful and we are blessed in so many small ways each day.

Love,

Dale, Florence and Caleb

