

Journey Together

(A Monthly Prayer Guide for Dale & Florence Johnson's prayer partners)

June 2009

Faith Journey

A couple of months ago, I was asked to visit the Bible school at Nadiaboanli and give the sermon there on Sunday morning. They didn't tell us that they were having a special program that weekend and that the theme was "Unity in Christ". I chose, without any guidance or prompting from the pastors there, to preach on "Unity in Christ". It's fun when God takes care of little details like that for us.

For my sermon, I did a short study on Ephesians 4, "being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." I was curious about the translation of "being diligent" in English, and the same phrase in French, which means roughly "try hard" or "assert yourself". I thought it was enough of a difference that it might be worth looking at the Greek phrase and try to get the sense.

When I looked again at the passage, what I started to notice was that Paul was describing hard work. He was saying that unity requires diligent, constant, hard work, like construction work for a building. He said, "be diligent," and "equipping the saints for the work of service," and "building up of the body of Christ." All of those phrases gave me the sense that Paul was not thinking of unity as a state of being, but more like a long-term construction project (of the body of Christ), which requires constant hard work. We have to put our hard hats on.

So what? I thought that this was an interesting realization, and I gave my sermon hoping that it would touch someone. But after I gave the sermon, I was sure that it hit me the hardest. When I had to live my message at home and in my office, it was really tough.

We experience so many breakages of our unity. It seems an almost weekly occurrence. We get frustrated with our ministry partners over little things. The deacons at church have a spat over something insignificant. Some employees at the Center just aren't trustworthy. The list goes on and on. Brothers and sisters in Christ sometimes act like toddler-aged siblings instead of like grown-up siblings.

But each time and each day we have a choice. God isn't asking us to work hard to build unity...He is commanding us to. To obey this command is to work and to fight for unity in the body of Christ.

Please continue to help us by praying for unity within our relationships with other missionaries. Pray especially for our church – we have someone in leadership who is behaving very immaturely and selfishly. And please continue to pray for the team at the CAH.



Was it two years ago that we were sitting in a traffic line waiting to cross the border back into the US from Canada after finishing our French language studies in Quebec? We've seen many different kinds of roads since then, some that we like better than others, but the Lord has been a faithful navigator through them all.

Life Journey

Personal and ministry-related events to pray for this month

June 20 – 25: Trip to Ouaga

June 23: Walsh family returns from furlough

June 24 – July 7: Team from our church comes to visit and work with us

June 26: School closing ceremonies for the CAH school year

June 29 – July 2: Leadership seminar offered at the CAH, courtesy of our home church's missions pastor

Prayer Journey

Weekly prayer topics to guide you in your prayers

June 1-7: Pray for our Mahadaga church as the leadership deals with some interpersonal conflicts

June 8-14: Pray for honesty and just dealings within the team at the CAH

June 15-21: Pray for the team from our home church as they prepare for their trip here

June 22-30: Pray for Caleb and Joel as they go through a lot of change with Liz leaving, visitors coming, and the return of the Walshes

Specific prayer requests and praises

Praise for God's protection as we've had several recent encounters with various notorious "African critters" (snakes and scorpions)

Praise for God's provision, not only while we're here, but even as we prepare for our first furlough at the end of this year

Praise for the encouragement and help that the team from our church is and will be

Praise that we have been able to find a childcare solution so that Florence can get a little more involved in the ministry at the CAH and get out of the house for a little bit

Pray that we will be able to find the means and location to take a much-needed quality family vacation sometime in August

Pray for perseverance through these last few weeks of "reduced labor force" on the Mahadaga mission station

Pray for the preparations of the church team, for safe travels, and for a safe and meaningful time of service in Burkina

Pray for our trip to Ouaga as it will be shorter than usual and busier than usual

Pray for the Walsh family as they finish up their furlough, that they can finish what's most important, get some quality rest, and spend quality time with family and friends before returning for their 2nd term in Mahadaga

Pray for leadership team at the CAH and SIM Burkina as they continue to make decisions concerning the future leadership of the CAH and the roles each person needs to be playing in order to see that the ministry will be sustainable and effective