

Journey Together

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

May 2009

Faith Journey

I recently had the opportunity to share my faith with a young Fuhlani girl that befriended me last fall. In Fuhlani culture, a friendship is often marked by the giving of gifts. Without any prompting on my part, she gave me a beautifully woven grass mat and two small woven grass hot pads. I had no idea how to return the gesture. I finally decided to give her a bracelet someone had sent me that had some beautifully colored quartz beads that represented various aspects of the Gospel. This, I thought, would be my chance to witness to someone. When the day finally arrived (after some admitted stalling on my part), I enlisted the help of a veteran missionary colleague who could speak the Fuhlani language, and with sweaty palms and a fast-beating heart, I dove in.

Despite the fact that I'm a missionary by occupation, it's still not necessarily "easy" for me to share my faith. I still worry about what other people will think of me, even in this culture. My Western upbringing still clings to me as I fear that people do not want to talk about faith. In this culture, however, "faith talk" is common place. It's not all that different from some of our "church speak" back home. "God bless," "May the Lord bring you to good health," and "May the Lord go with you" are common every day greetings, regardless of your faith. Here, like back home, it is easy to "talk the talk" but not as easy to "walk the walk". Perhaps, then, it's our cultural value for privacy that makes the biggest difference in the way we approach sharing our faith. Back home, it is not anybody else's business if we're having personal struggles. Here, everyone knows. But with that knowledge comes the opportunity for people to come alongside you and offer help, support, encouragement...and the openness to share your faith.

It didn't turn out to be all that difficult to share my faith with my Fuhlani friend. The more I spoke, the more I remembered that I truly value and believe what I was sharing with her. I was reminded, too, that this is the Lord's work, not mine, and He will bless it, regardless of the reaction. And as the conversation continued, I was pleasantly surprised to realize that there was openness and agreement there. Binta assured me that she has already recognized and accepted Jesus Christ as Lord, though she does not necessarily feel free to worship Him openly for fear of rejection by her family. So I encouraged her to use her new bracelet as a way to talk to her friends and family about her faith. And I rejoice to know that, despite the awkwardness that can sometimes be found in a friendship that has so many cultural and language barriers, one day I will be able to really communicate and relate with this new friend. When I let the realization of this truth really sink in, all the looming obstacles to sharing my faith become much smaller.



Last month before the Brinks left us, we took a hike with them to some big cliffs near one of the waterfalls. The waterfalls aren't much to look at this time of year, but we enjoyed the clear view for miles, the quiet solitude and refreshing breeze of the cliffs, and even spotted a few monkeys!

Life Journey

Personal and ministry-related events to pray for this month

Not much going on this month aside from normal work and a few visitors!

Prayer Journey

Weekly prayer topics to guide you in your prayers

May 1-7: Spiritual refreshment along with the physical refreshment that the rain brings

May 8-14: Wisdom in time management

May 15-21: Wisdom and a tender heart to know how to help our neighbors as food becomes scarce

May 22-31: Joy in our work and in our relationships with each other

Specific prayer requests and praises

Praise for some good rains in the past week!

Praise for continued progress in our Gourma language studies, even if it's slow a times

Praise for friendships with our Burkinabe neighbors that keep us from being lonely when our missionary colleagues are gone

Praise for quick healing and visiting doctors when Liz got stung by a scorpion

Pray for continued wisdom in juggling our responsibilities and maintaining our priorities in proper perspective

Pray for the Lord's help in motivating and empowering the Burkinabe staff at the CAH

Pray for consistency, patience and perseverance in training up our two energetic little boys

Pray that despite the feeling that we can never get everything done that we'd like to, the Lord would lead us to do what is most important for the moment and that we'd trust Him to take care of the rest

Pray for Francoise's travels in Europe – that the Lord would give her strength and endurance as she keeps a busy fund-raising schedule

Our prayer letter is distributed by: **Steve & Krista Frank** ♦ 5 Fieldcrest Drive, Mechanicsburg, PA 17050 , USA ♦ 717-791-0648 ♦ smfrank@gmail.com