

—CALL TO PRAYER—Andrea Herman— November 2008

*“The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in him, and I am helped. My heart leaps for joy and I will give thanks to him in song.” Psalm 28:7*

God has been busy protecting and blessing this month in numerous situations in Guinea and Mali. Once again Guinea has had a few strikes this month. The first was when fuel prices were lowered (from about \$5.50/gallon to \$4.40/gallon). People were upset because they said the government didn't lower the price enough, considering how much oil prices have fallen worldwide. The government said that it couldn't afford to lower it any more due to Guinea's poor financial situation, and there haven't been any related problems since.

The second strike was due to the lack of electricity promised to Siguiiri by the international gold mining company (SAG) just outside of town. The strikes were well-organized, and there was no property damage or injuries, which is a first. However, 2 other missionaries in town (not with LCMS) had a very close call due to mistaken identity, and a misjudgment about the seriousness of the situation. However, God completely protected them, using the mechanics, who have their shop right outside my yard; they explained to the crowd that none of us has any association with the mine. Without their intervention, the problem could have been serious, but God protected them.

I was scheduled to return to Siguiiri the next day (I was up in the village in Mali during both strikes), but my friends called and told me to wait a few days until things cooled down, which they did when Siguiiri received the promised electricity. I praise God that he kept both of them safe, and also that He kept me from unknowingly arriving during a bad situation.

While I was waiting in Narena, Mali to return to Guinea, we also had to deal with a scary situation. Since the rainy season is over, things have already really dried out, and the government encourages people to do “preventative burning” of wild grass, so that when fires are set in March and April, to clear land for farming, when everything is extremely dry, including the trees, it doesn't get out of control and destroy everything.

One such “preventative fire” had been set on a very dry, windy day out in the bush on our side of town. Because it is currently harvest time, virtually everyone except the very old and very young are out in the fields, which are often several miles away from town. Due to the strong wind and abundance of dry grass, this fire was roaring toward our neighbor's houses with the wind pushing it along. The flames were taller than the house itself, and there was nothing in between the flames and the house except for tall, dry grass. Kjersti, the single Norwegian missionary there and I started to pray when we realized the gravity of the situation, and she also called others from her mission to pray that God would protect our neighbors and their homes.

Fortunately, on this particular day, our neighbor and her kids had not yet left for their farm, so they were there trying to beat down the flames while we prayed. Miraculously, the wind changed directions and died down (it ALWAYS comes from that direction) and the fire stopped about 10 feet from their home. We were so thankful for God's intervention in this situation, as our neighbor's would've lost everything, including the harvest that they had already brought in, had the fire gone any further. Kjersti and I were also extremely thankful, because the only thing between our houses and our neighbors' is a lot of tall dry grass and kindling.

There is a young Norwegian couple on the other side of town (about a mile and a half away) who were asked to help a sick woman (the wife is a nurse). They went to visit the woman and her family and pray for them. When they arrived they realized that she was deathly ill, likely in the last stages of AIDS, but they went and brought a local doctor to the woman see if anything could be done for her. The woman died the next day and the couple attended the funeral. The impact of the missionaries' visit on the family was very profound, and the following Sunday, the brother of the woman who had passed away joined us for our time of prayer, and studying God's word. This was a MAJOR step for this man, since we meet outside, and he was publicly joining us in worship.

There are usually 2 Maninka believers that join us for worship, but neither came that day. Kjersti had prepared the Bible lesson in French, and this man didn't understand French. So, because out of the 4 missionaries, I was most comfortable speaking Maninka, I got a crash course in translating from French to Maninka that morning. It was a blessing to be able to share God's word with this man in his own language. Please be praying for him. I don't

know his name, but God does. Please keep him and his whole family in your prayers, that they would be drawn to the love of Jesus that they saw in this young couple.

While I was away in Mali, both of MK's young children were seriously ill. Her daughter had improved by the time I returned, but her son was worsening. After several days of being severely dehydrated, he stopped nursing. I was extremely concerned, especially to see her strong-willed and son so lethargic and limp. Again, God answered prayers and has brought him back to health. I'm just glad he even has the strength to cry now. It is a joy to see him back to his temperamental self again. ☺

H.S.'s mom, (S.K.) with the severely infected foot, went even further downhill after I left for Mali. However, she is very slowly starting to improve. She is now able to talk again (last I saw her she couldn't even talk due to the extreme pain), she is also eating and drinking more now. She is finally on antibiotics that will hopefully clear up the infection and allow her to fully heal and be able to walk again. Please pray for her complete recovery, and her desire to know her Healer.

Please join me in thanking God for:

- His protection for fellow missionaries in Siguiri during the last strike
- His protection of our neighbors in Narena and their homes from the fire
- His protection of me from the strike by delaying my return to Guinea this month
- restoring health to MK's 2 very sick kids
- S.K.'s improved health, and prayer for continued healing for her foot
- Mrs. S reading through Luke in the Bible I gave her last month
- Mrs. S's teenage daughter's (S.S.) eagerness to read God's word; she keeps borrowing my French children's Bible and her mom says she can't put it down
- the blessing of being able to translate the Sunday message into Maninka
- continued (noticeable!) progression in my language learning—woohoo!!!
- preserving my sanity by bringing an end to the insect plague in the village
- the blessing of the annual women's retreat in Bamako, Mali
- the news that our All-Africa LCMS retreat will be rescheduled (it was cancelled due to the problems in Kenya this past March)
- the blessing of electricity and regular city water (almost every day) in Siguiri
- the blessing of being back in Siguiri for a few weeks to visit friends and be "home" for more than just a few days a month, it has refreshed me

Please join me in praying for:

- the 14 seekers in our village in Mali, that they would share what they are learning about Jesus with their families
- forgiveness & UNITY among Christians, especially where they are the minority
- God's continued blessing on my language studies & ability to understand and communicate in Maninka & Bambara
- open hearts to discuss the story of Abraham and Isaac, as my friends here prepare to celebrate the fact that God provided a sacrifice to save the son
- MK & her family, to grow in knowledge and love of Jesus & be guided by the Holy Spirit in all they say and do
- H.S.'s wife, J.S., that God would help us develop a strong relationship, and open her heart to His truth; that she would see God's light and leave the darkness
- long life for my newly replaced computer battery that looks like it might not make it more than another month or so
- restored health: that my sinus infection and fever would go away soon and that my energy would return
- good balance in life and work, and restful sleep