

Ah my dear angry Lord,

*Since thou does love yet strike,
cast down yet help afford,
sure I will do the like.*

*I will complain yet praise,
I will bewail yet approve,
and all my sour sweet days
I will lament and love.*

“Bitter Sweet” by George Herbert (1593-1633)



Six months in: We are still alive and kicking. The poem I have used as foreword was mentioned in a sermon by Rev. Roger Slater on Paul's sufferings in II Corinthians 6 (thank God for Mp3 sermons). It captured part of my mind-set over the last few years. The Christian life is not only flower and garden but also hardship and wasteland, until heaven that is.

Carine and I have both individually and together been through times of doubt and difficulty lately. I am not speaking of our marriage relationship (whew) but of our work in the Lord. Obviously this is what we have been expecting, but these times are never easy to go through. We have however drawn nearer to our Lord and Savior because of it. We strive to keep our fingers in Gods word and our eyes on his direction. We have taken up once again books such as “Celebration of Discipline” by Richard J. Foster and encourage each other to stay on track.

Its Mango season and to give you an taste of what that is like I shall replace all the fullstops from now on with [Mango] in 8pts[Mango] We have also been ploughing through 'Hot' season[Mango] We have been told this year is quite mild[Mango] For a good two weeks now we have had around 38°C+ during the day and around 33°C at night[Mango] Sweat just breaks out and drips from any part of the body including elbows and shins! Yes by now we are thoroughly used to our own BO (body odor) and each others too[Mango] Imagine Sundays in our “tin-can”, over crowded, church building[Mango] Great fellowship!

We managed a family outing to a local music, dance & wrestle festival known as Festig and sponsored by a NGO named “Iles de la Paix”[Mango] It was capturing to see the tribal dances and listen to the drummed rhythms which, to say the truth, were actually quite close to some of the “techno” beats mp3ed in to young brains in Europe[Mango] Joshua got a fright as a masked figure on stilts crashed on the ground and pretended to grab him[Mango] Anaëlle enjoyed the costumes and jingly beads some of the dancers wore[Mango]



Let me now say where we are at :

Carine has a lot of work on: Home schooling Anaëlle, distance study course, training for Aids counseling, house and accounts[Mango][Mango][Mango] She is also the most homesick of us all and would often like to be back “home”[Mango] Chocolate, church, left behind friends, view of the mountains, and “real” French would do her a world of good[Mango] For the distance study course Carine has a lot of course work and homework to complete[Mango] Most evenings are taken up with some kind of study or other[Mango] She needs to keep thoroughly rested too[Mango]



Anaëlle (8 on the 11th May) is doing very well in school and has many friends around[Mango] She is reading in both English and French[Mango] She is really good at guess spelling many words although Collins and Petit Robert would probably faint[Mango] She enjoys “play on words” and has digested a book called “Les belles lisses poires de France”[Mango] We are still on the lookout for dancing lessons so that Anaëlle could keep up her favourite pass time[Mango] A local dance and music band we found ended up being over booked and unsuitable after a couple of sessions[Mango] Next week she is on holiday for two weeks and then has only 3 more weeks of school to go to complete CE1[Mango] Wow and Whew!

Joshua (20 mths): is growing and “Dennis the Menacing” well[Mango] Children really have their very own characters and personalities[Mango] Joshua is not the same as Anaëlle[Mango] He is up early and into everything[Mango] He is oblivious to all danger and hurts rarely[Mango] Although he did manage to squash his fingers in a heavy door two weeks ago which drew a few tears[Mango] Also Joshua is quite confident and independent[Mango] He can literally just walk off if we forget to close the gate[Mango] We then find him chasing the nearest animal[Mango] We have found someone to toddler-sit him in the afternoon now and then so that we can use the time in other ways[Mango]



To conclude our first 6 months here, I handed in a survey/letter about youth work in EESIM Burkina churches to those concerned[Mango] I hope and pray this will allow the church to move forward[Mango] Please pray with me[Mango]

The challenge for me now is to map out my/our ministry with youth for the next 18 months[Mango] There are a few people in the youth part of EESIM denomination that I can and may be working with but on the whole the churches “youth program” seems to be suffering and appears to be concerned with everything bar youth[Mango][Mango][Mango] What should be done? I am convinced that the youth here need real spiritual input (worship, studies, prayer and fellowship) and definitely not a “wow doesn't it look good” youth organization that has forgotten all about them[Mango]

For now, I am meeting and “encouraging towards Christ” youth of all backgrounds, in Fada[Mango] It's like neighborhood pastoring[Mango] For some the goal is to present the gospel to them in a clear way and eventually lead them to a church[Mango] Otherwise the goal is to encourage them to attend their particular church regularly (be it EESIM AOG, Catholic[Mango] [Mango][Mango]) and to encourage them in their faith, answer questions, pour out the Grace of God[Mango]

I am also attempting to mesh youth together into small informal prayer and study groups[Mango] The message is not “You don't need a church” but rather “This is what the Christian life is about” so get on with it! Build each other up[Mango]



Recently I have been challenging myself to use every opportunity to pray with people for their needs: Welcome, acknowledge, council/give, PRAY for, send on their way[Mango] It's just so easy to miss the prayer part out of our relationship with others[Mango] In doing so we forget God and our relationships are no different to that of the world[Mango]

Carine and I are working with the (local) church youth group[Mango] We have recently planned to meet together once a week at 3pm on Sunday afternoons at our house[Mango]

Our Love to you all,
Mark, Carine and Anaëlle, Joshua[Mango]

An extra thought without the taste of mango: Our Maker is our Redeemer and our Redeemer is our King. Praise to the King!

Prayer:

-Souleymann a 26 year old student who is debating in his mind whether he should follow Christ or Muhammad needs wisdom in choosing.

-Daniel a 18 year old school goer who wonders whether God really exists and if he should submit his life to him or to worldly pleasure needs to understand the gospel message.

-Jamila a 14 girl who lost her father 4 months ago has had to give up school and is looking for a job. She is a christian.

-Ask that we might go through our doubts with the joy of the Lord. Ask that we might soon find definite direction in ministry. This could be carrying on with what we have undertaken so far.

-Please pray for the situation of youth work here and our work with the youth group.

-Praise God for our health and safety so far.

SIM missionary number: Mark & Carine Lewis 76170
markandcarine@gmail.com

burkinafaso.grenoblechurch.org/
www.grenoblechurch.org
www.sim.org