



Easter Baptism Followed by Persecution

Some of you who heard us speak during our home assignment may remember us sharing about a certain young man here in Kaffrine who had been a strict Muslim but who was hungrily reading everything about Jesus and the Bible that he could get his hands on. This young man has continued to seek the Truth and has found it in Jesus Christ, crucified and risen. On Easter Sunday, in spite of all of his family's efforts to keep him from becoming a Christian, this believer asked our teammate to baptize him saying, "In my heart, I am already baptized." We are not using this young man's name or posting photos of his baptism in order to protect him from further persecution.

It was an incredible joy and inspiration for our small body of believers to witness this baptism, knowing the potential cost for our brother. Even that morning, after our worship service was over, the family had sent a younger sibling to see if this young man was with us; by the Lord's grace, he had already left to go home for lunch. The rest of us shared a common

lunch to celebrate Jesus' resurrection and soon afterwards our friend came back to be baptized. After the simple but significant act was over, we all went to a more private place and had a time of prayer for our friend. Our most fervent prayer was for God to use this young man to bring his dear family into the Light as well. After praying, we were all encouraged by the powerful testimony he gave. We serve an awesome God – His love and power were so evident in the story of His calling this young Senegalese believer into His family!

God first sent a young African Christian into his life to get him asking questions about Islam and Christianity, and through that brother he was connected to our teammates, and through them he began to study the Bible deeply. For a long time our friend had been haunted by bad dreams, until one night, after he had been hearing God's Word for months, Jesus Himself appeared to him in a dream. It was at that point that this young man gave his life to Christ. The next time he had a nightmare, he awoke and immediately prayed in Jesus' name and he has not had the frightening dreams again since then. His friends and family noticed many changes in him; he shared that he himself was amazed at how God changed him after he became a follower of Jesus. He said that he always used to count his sins each day, worried at how quickly they were adding up and not sure if the Muslim prayers he faithfully recited before going out to sin again would really be effective to outweigh them on Judgment Day. He recounted his utter amazement when, during the whole week following his acceptance of Jesus as Lord and Savior, he went a whole week without being aware of a single sin! He had been born again – he was a new person!

Perhaps the most exciting thing about the testimony we heard that day was the way in which he ended it – he spoke directly to the six or so people among the folks there with us that day and who have not yet accepted Jesus, encouraging them to decide to follow Christ. He assured us that in spite of the hardships his decision has caused, knowing Christ is worth it all!

In the two weeks following his baptism, although his family had still not heard about the baptism itself, the persecution escalated. It is as if the enemy has recognized that he is losing this battle and is angry. I won't go into all of the details because of limited space and because many of you have been following our regular updates on Facebook and the Prayer Log (<http://garrett.with.sim.org/prayer>) and have already been fervently praying. To put it briefly, the young man's father kicked him out the house and then over the following days and nights continued to find him and harass, insult and

threaten him. He spent a lot of time at our teammates' house and for several days and nights different waves of "friends" and family members came to the house stirring up conflict. Some came into the house and yelled and accused our teammates of stealing their son and other ugly lies. Some refused to enter or discuss things calmly, even throwing stones and threatening to kill the boy and both of our missionary families.

After many tense days, during which time we were sustained by the Lord through your prayers, things reached a breaking point

and there seemed to be no way out. (It rather reminded me of the situation with the Israelites at the Red Sea with Pharaoh's army behind...) And in an impossible situation, God provided an improbable way out. The boy passed out (from not eating and drinking well for days partly from stress, partly from fear of being poisoned, and from the shock of what he was seeing and hearing from his loved ones, and from the heat - it got up to 110 most days that week) and immediately everyone agreed to take him directly to the hospital. On the way, the police were called, and things began to

calm down. Many people were involved by this point who were trying to reestablish peace and when the boy was released from the hospital the next day he went home with his family.

Obviously the young man is living under intense pressure. This is exacerbated by the fact that the students in Kaffrine are on strike so there are no high school classes. We are praying that classes would restart so he would have a place to go each day and something to do besides try to avoid conflict with his family. He is mostly spending his time going around visiting the handful of different Christians in town. Pray for maturity beyond his years to be able to respond with blessings when he is cursed. Pray for the family to stop threatening him and to engage in open, non-hostile dialogue. Pray for wisdom for all of us as decisions are made for the future and as we try to help our friend. Pray for the Holy Spirit to fill the young man, to strengthen him, and to use all of this to bring glory to the name of Jesus Christ.

May all of us who have been saved by Christ and who are being transformed by Him, whatever our nationality and wherever we are, have the same passion to encourage others to find Him and the same depth of commitment to be willing to give up everything else for His sake. As our friend assured us, knowing Christ is worth it all.

Wolof Christian Children's Camp

At the end of each summer for the past three years, before school starts and during a lull in the harvest, a group of more than 60 Senegalese young people from different towns and villages has gathered at a rustic camp site on the beach in a town called Ngaparou. Organized by a mixed collection of Christians from different missions and nationalities, the camp has been the uncontested highlight of the year for several of the Wolof youth from the Kaffrine area and has had a significant impact on their faith and Christian walk.

When I asked the young believer who was just baptized at Easter what the best part about the camp was for him last year, his face lit up and he began excitedly talking about how everyone was split up into teams of nine, each team with a name, and how each morning chores were assigned to your team, and about how clear the Biblical teaching was...finally, he just laughed and said, "By the end of camp, it was like we were a family." He has already invited a couple of his Muslim friends with whom he has been sharing Christian literature and discussing his faith to come to camp with him in September.



Wheaton, Katie, and Corey visiting friends

This year our family will be attending the camp for the first time, and hosting a short-term team from my parents' church in Maine, Windham Baptist Church, at the same time. The team is coming to do a work project on the campsite beforehand and then to help with the camp. We are really excited about this team and their willingness to serve. And we, and all of the young people we work with here in Kaffrine, in the villages, through the Scholarship Project, in the Saturday Girls' Group, and in the Wednesday guys' Bible study group, are already getting psyched for the camp!

You can be praying for the organization of the camp, especially in terms of who the Senegalese speakers should be, and also in terms of the funds needed. The budget, based on 60 campers for four days, is \$2,680. Also be praying that each young person whom God desires to attend would be able to come and that His Spirit would work powerfully during this special time of open dialogue and truth seeking.

Journal Notes

March 10, 2009 It's funny - in some ways it all seems very normal to me now, in other ways there are things I don't think I'll ever get used to - the little pile of 8 sheep feet stacked loosely like firewood with hooves, the men running their hands along the length of the intestines stretching up taller than the men themselves, the brilliant red blood flowing in a little river on the ground, the heads sitting neatly side by side, the skin stretched out flat, the little piles of "goodies" (the liver and stomach), the meaty carcass hanging on a wall to drain, the flies swarming over it all.... but meanwhile, we women are enjoying sitting and talking, sharing the work in a spot of shade outside, not sorry for the enormous amount of potatoes, onions, and garlic that must be cut up (with a little knife in your hand - cutting boards and counter tops are unknown!) because it means time to hang out together and there is a festive atmosphere knowing that soon there will be a party! At times like this, I feel so privileged to be here...

April 5, 2009 Sunday afternoon Wolof Christian meeting on the Bonthuys' flat roof with a thatch shade. All the young guys and us and our teammates sitting around doing *ataaya* (Senegalese tea with mint) and talking and laughing. Corey and 15 year-old Keba

Signs that our 7 year-old Emma is an MK (Missionary Kid)

1. She's never heard of the Easter Bunny.
2. She doesn't have a birth certificate – she has a rainbow-colored Consular Report of Birth Abroad.
3. She prefers eating rice dishes with her hand.
4. When she sees a picture of a vacuum cleaner in our homeschooling materials, she doesn't know what it is.
5. Her natural instinct upon seeing a toilet is to squat with her feet up on the seat.
6. She has prayed for "everyone around us, even Satan, to believe in Jesus so they can be saved and go to heaven."
7. She considers frozen bissap bags and kola nuts special treats.
8. She calls the people her parents work with, who are German, Malaysian, South African, Korean and Texan, "Auntie" and "Uncle".
9. Her family plans their vacation trips around scheduled vaccinations.
10. She knows how to pull the wings off a locust without killing it.
11. She goes to three different Christian gatherings in three different languages every week, and she can sing the praise songs at all of them.

drum together, Corey teaching – the two drums challenging each other as they keep the same fast rhythm together and then one spins off and comes back, until one of them loses the beat and everyone breaks out laughing. Our own kids are playing together off to the side, cracking open local peanuts to eat the nuts and to look for pet maggots to play with! We talk and tease and share our lives. We open in prayer and dive into God's Word together, studying and discussing the application to our lives. We share praise and prayer requests and spend time praying for one another, always praying most of all for God's Kingdom to come to Kaffrine, for those whom we love to also come to know the peace and joy that we have found in Christ, that our Christian family may grow to include our neighbors and families and friends....

Praise and Prayer Requests

1. Pray for **our young believing friend who is being persecuted**. (see above)
2. Pray for **Jaël Meier**, a young Swiss-German who will be spending July and August here in Kaffrine doing a missions internship in children's ministry and whom Katie will be mentoring.
3. On **Saturdays**, continue to pray for Katie and the **Wolof girls' youth group**. They have done 18 of the 52 stories.
4. Keep praying for Corey's work in **the village of Ndiayekounda**. Pray specifically that he would be able to begin a chronological Bible storying group there soon as well as for the ongoing Community Health program.
5. Pray for the Lord to provide the **financial support** for **Etiënne and Marie Sène**, a Christian Senegalese couple who are ready to move out to Kaffrine and join in the ministry but lack the support partners to enable them to do so. (<http://sene.with.sim.org>)
6. Pray for **the Wolof Children's Christian Camp** which is planned for Sept. 22-25th this fall.

For regular updates, go to our Prayer Log at: <http://garrett.with.sim.org/prayer>

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