

Only Two Bridges + Miracle for Micaiah

Praise

- Micaiah's miracle
- Women's Conference
- Zorgowee Workshop
- Property for CC Yekepa

Prayer

- Healing for Abigail; healing for Decontee's mom
- Grief in Zorgowee
- Trip to Loguatu Nov 22
- Final stretch

Women's Conference & Micaiah's Miracle

It's been two weeks since the 5-day Calvary Chapel Liberia Women's Conference, and they've been packed. I'll try to give you a bit. The trip was smooth and easy. After realizing that the invitation to join the car from Saclapea where our paths joined in Ganta didn't actually mean they had arranged a car for Saclapea, Kathi began looking for an option that could take us all the way to Johnsonville, and God's timing was perfect as that all came together. We were able to pick up the Saclapea contingent in Ganta, which turned out to be one instead of three, so we had the luxury of only two in the front (counting the driver), and three in the back instead of a full car Liberia-style, with six as well as the driver. It was a lovely stay for Rebecca and Kathi with Moses and Oretha Floe and for Richmond with Pastor Richard. We didn't have to wonder if we would wake in time for the 7am conference start with family worship and devotions beginning each day at 5:30. Sweet start to the days.



The conference was rich and wonderful. Meanwhile, Richmond was given a lot of reading and got a lot of advice and mentoring from Richard, Henry, and Moses, and they will be planning to come to Yekepa the first or second week in December to encourage the church and do some teaching. The conference finale was something I really must share. Now, there was a wonderful ending with a women's march through town in blue and gold ensembles and a meeting of the Calvary Chapel Liberia Women's Association, but that's not what I'm talking about. There was praise for God's miraculous hand on the pastor's wife from Saclapea, who survived not one but two major surgeries, no mean feat in Liberia, when so many patients around her were dying, but the greatest rejoicing came for Micaiah. This 10 or 11-year-old boy was brought by his mother from Kaiyouway Town, way out in the bush in Margibi County, where we have visited twice in past years. They are the family of Pastor Saturday Dehn, a Calvary Chapel patriarch, and Micaiah is the youngest son. He looked thin and weak. He was brought for the women to pray that last full day of the conference, and fervent intercession was made with mama hearts crying. What had happened was that, a full seven months ago, Micaiah had pumped up the soccer ball for a game that was going on and, being a kid and not thinking, held the valve from the pump in his mouth when he finished, but went back to running and playing before he put it away. Suddenly, whatever happened, it got knocked straight down his airway and right into the right mainstem bronchus where it lodged and remained in his lung. I saw the Xray. There it was, bold as can be. They had taken him to four different hospitals and gotten Xrays to confirm what they knew from the history of what happened and with him constantly coughing, losing weight, and unable to go to school. At every hospital, they quoted a cost of \$470 for the surgery to remove the valve but mostly said this was probably beyond the ability of medical care in Liberia, that it was really too dangerous, and Micaiah could die, so they really needed to take him out of the country for care. There was no way they had money for the surgery in Liberia let alone to take him elsewhere.

Well, that night after the conference closed, Henry had come over to Moses' house to visit a bit before we left for Yekepa in the morning. Micaiah and his mother were staying with him and his family because Saturday had been Henry's first pastor and mentor, and I think they were related by marriage. Just before 9 pm Henry headed home, and before he got there, he heard a blood curdling scream and then all kinds of screaming and commotion. He thought, it sounds like someone has died. But when he arrived, it was cries of joy he was hearing. Micaiah had coughed and screamed and broke out in a drenching sweat, but with this cough, after seven resistant months and with all the impossibility it entailed, out came that valve. You can see it in Henry's hand in the photo. After that, he was fine. He is getting medical follow-up, but all seems to be well.



prayer & praise



Micaiah's soccer ball valve

Abigail

Please pray for Abigail. She is Richard's daughter and just had her second baby about two months ago. I was not aware, but, apparently, she had an eclamptic seizure and severe postpartum depression after her first baby, and the same thing has happened this time with two seizures, the first two days and the second five days after giving birth. She still suffers from severe headaches, visual changes, dizziness and fatigue, and now chest pain and shortness of breath. Some of these things can sound like typhoid, but they didn't have the funds for the \$50 typhoid test to see if there was something other than the pregnancy pathology. We talked about her diet, which did sound deficient and certainly hadn't helped any. She has been seen medically several times, but all they seem to do is tell her to go home, not eat too much salt, rest, and not be stressed. This time they did give her some medication, I assume for blood pressure, but I haven't been able to find out what. It doesn't sound like it has ever been addressed adequately and is still critically severe, although, thankfully her reflexes were not hyper, so she was not imminently pre-seizure. Midwife Poandeh Bryant is staying in touch to help.

House 6 update

We began to surmise that, if the other two toilets kept flushing, there was, in fact, something more amiss with toilet #1 besides the full septic, so we kept sporadically giving it a try. At long last, it gave way and was functioning fine days before the pump truck finally showed up the Saturday of the Women's Conference. So, we now have full master bath facilities. Nice. Kathi has been remiss in prioritizing the taping of the window screen gaps and holes although she did quickly complete the repair of the kitchen screens that were shredded at the bottom and flapping in the breeze, so they are now more shiny aluminum tape than open screen in places. For some reason ABCU does not seem to be prioritizing mosquito bed nets as well, so at the guest house before leaving Monrovia, and all the time at House 1, no bed net, and typically a mosquito bite a night on average even with trying to stay completely encased in sheet. That's more than all the mosquito bites in the previous four years combined. It is not a myth but a verified scientific fact that some people are sweeter to biting insects than other people, and Kathi is one of those people. Arriving at House 6 has not resolved the need. The beautiful new, intact ceiling has left no place to attach a mosquito net. It took some time to bring the issue to the attention of those who could do something, at which point it suddenly became an urgent that-day priority. Workers came. Much discussion. More workers came. It was finally determined that we could find the metal rafters behind the ceiling and there was an easy way to make a small screw hole that would hold the hook to hang the net, but by that time it was the end of the work day. Someone was expected first thing next day, but not to be. A week passed. Request was made again. Workers came, but the one man who was trusted to make the decision was out of town for the week, and no one was willing to move forward. Well, here we are, with three weeks to go. Still no net. Another dawn bite on that knuckle that ought to have been covered and somehow made itself available. So far the malaria pills are holding. Thanking God for that.

Zorgowee

Only two bridges. Zorgowee is not nearly as far as the seven bridges to Duoplay let alone the trek almost to the Ivory Coast border coming up this next Saturday. Zorgowee is immediately after bridge number two. I just learned that there is a road directly to Zorgowee from Yekepa, although it requires one bridge that probably currently is non-existent. That road is apparently in such bad repair that nobody uses it. I wondered if there wasn't some quicker way than going all the way to Sanniquellie and then taking the hairpin turn to go back up

towards the Ivory Coast border, and there was, but the road has not been repaired or maintained since before the war, so I'm not sure if one could even find it or if it has completely gone back to the bush.

Small last-minute glitch as our scheduled car and driver from the college had to make an emergency trip to Monrovia Friday because the new faculty members from Malawi had failed to take care of required paperwork and had allowed their visas to expire. Fortunately, for not a greatly higher price tag, Cooper, our illustrious driver to the Women's Conference, was available for the round trip.

I had a niggling feeling, having not heard from or gotten in touch with Anita since Duoplay, that something more could be not quite right. When we arrived, we found that, yes, they were happy to receive us and thankful for the training, but apologetically let us know that not nearly as many people would be coming and that we would need to shorten the day. The reason was that one of their community had just died and they were all in shock and grief and dealing with this loss and needed to do what one needs to do in one's community when that occurs. The clinic midwife was quick to assure us that it was not a death in their clinic. She had referred the young woman, a 17-year-old mother, before she was in labor, because she was certain the clinic facility was not adequate, and that the young woman was not able to give birth to the large baby she was carrying. The hospital did an elective cesarean and sent the young woman home after, but when the midwife saw her, she sent her back with great concern saying she needed blood. I am not clear whether the hospital did not take it seriously, or the family did not have the money, or some of each, or whether she got any transfusion or just not enough, but apparently there was some back and forth and back and forth, and not too long after the hospital sent the young woman back home again, she died. This is Africa.

It was a sad day. No happy greeting with prolonged dancing and song. No being plied with piles of produce as a thank you. Some of the conference funds were diverted to care and feeding and condolence of family and mourners. But we did begin with one song and had another spontaneous rendition midway after a successful session. We had a great birth simulation for practicing response to complications, and the debriefing was helpful and effective. The projector and power pack worked well to show a video that introduced a number of ideas for working with labor that they valued. We had a great discussion about teamwork, valuing each other, and prioritizing ongoing practice. Our time together was appreciated by all. There were 17 who attended



including the registered midwife and officer in charge but not counting Anita and our team of three, among them another two RN students from United Methodist University who were quite astute and gratifyingly well-educated.

Lunch was provided before we departed, and I have to say it was the BEST potato green soup I've ever tasted. It was packed full of chicken feet and succulent, fatty pork knuckles and little four-inch fishes. It was tasty and full-flavored with just the right amount of hot-pepper kick. That is, until enough of it hit the stomach, where the prolonged, intense burn became a serious problem, the effects of which are still not fully recovered. It was good, though.

Calvary Chapel Yekepa

We learned there were 30 kids in Sunday School the weekend of the Conference. We're excited about the growth. Richmond has been inquiring about permission to use a nearby property for church services, but there have been a lot of bids from others to use the property for other purposes, and the person who owns the property had not been available to talk with them. They were expecting that someone else who could pay good rent would win out, but this weekend, they were able to meet with the owner (unusually not a property of the mine concession because it was deeded to the owner before the war by the previous mine company), and it was finalized that CC Yekepa would be given the right to use the property free of charge and even to build onto and expand what's there if they desire. It is only the remains of a couple of overgrown roofless buildings left from before the war. There is a lot of clean-up for the church to do, and then they will need to come up with enough funds to put on a roof at least, and eventually doors and windows, but they're very excited that the people chose that it should be for God's work and, for that, they wouldn't charge any money. The smaller building is envisioned to be for the kids for Sunday School and the main building for church.



Decontee's Mother

Please pray for the mother of Kathi's student, Decontee. She was previously hospitalized for kidney problems and finally left the country for care and got better. She became ill again and has been in the hospital not getting better. Apparently, they finally told her, this is African sickness. There is no medical problem; your lab tests are fine. Therefore, it is from witching or poisoning. You need to get country medicine. So, she was taken from the hospital to find an herbalist in Cote d'Ivoire. She has not been able to move or speak. She is a Christian. Kathi spoke with Decontee about curses not landing on Christians and our hope that a Christian herbalist is found, not one dabbling in other spirits, and how there may be medical problems that don't show if the right tests are not used to find them. We don't know what actual "poisons" are known and used here to harm others, and whether any have been used in this case, but prayer is the answer.