

## ♥♥ Heart Ties ♥♥

*It is right for us to feel this way about all of you,  
Since we have you in our hearts . . .  
- Philippians 1:7 -  
February 2015*

*This past month hasn't been an easy one.* I'd had a cough for about six weeks, so in mid-January I finally went to the doctor when I realized it own any time soon. I did so, and better, I came down with a continued until now, leaving me better, but this flu doesn't want I was helping a missionary my thigh with an angle grinder. skin rather than going in deeply, diameter of a basketball. It really jeans (which had an extra layer pretty tough stuff. I praise the leg instead. It is healing without any problems.



wasn't going to go away on its just when I seemed to be getting coughing flu, which has feel weak and lousy. I feel to give up! Before I got the flu, colleague and in the process cut Fortunately, it just scraped my leaving a bruise almost the tore up a brand new pair of of flannel inside), which are Lord because it could've been my

*Being cooped up in the house and feeling too bad* to be able to do hardly anything (even reading) makes me appreciate good health and also sympathize with those who suffer long-term illness, like my good friend **Joël**. I helped him and his wife move to their new home (an apartment a bit further across town), but my sickness has limited our regular meetings. We did meet once to read & discuss another chapter of *Knowledge of the Holy*. I plan to see him again in a couple days. He is now well enough to attend services. It is so good to see him back at church! I'll relay a prayer request he gave to me; he needs to find again his place and ministry in the church. It's been over two years since he was well enough to come, and he feels that meanwhile the church has changed (among other things, there are many new people and others who have left to be a part of two new church plants). He doesn't sense he can just pick up where he left off.

*I like to give you an update on Tanou* of whom I wrote last month. Joy & I enjoyed getting to know him better as

we ate and conversed around the dinner table along with Gadry. After a while, I began asking Tanou what he understood about the Gospel and he replied that he didn't understand much. I explained the Gospel and he was very attentive. He grew up Muslim, but does not accept it for himself. As the conversation progressed, Gadry joined in and explained a number of things as well. I was glad that he did for one, because he is also an African of the Pehl (Fulani) people group, but also because he demonstrated that he himself has a good grasp of the Gospel and already has skill in communicating it to others. A couple of months ago, Gadry asked if we could meet because he had some questions about his own



After our dinner together (Tanou on left, Gadry on right)

practice of sharing the Gospel, which he does regularly. His question related to the milieu in which he was sharing the Gospel (bars, where he would drink a beer with the person) and if this was acceptable to God. That showed me his sensitivity to pleasing the Lord, which was also encouraging. In the conversation with Tanou, I learned that although he is 24, he has not yet finished high school. **Please continue**

to pray for both Tanou & Gadry. For Gadry that he may continue to grow, and also for the Lord's direction in his life. He has a college degree, but is currently only working for a temporary agency cleaning industrial buildings at night. He is capable of far more and I think desires to serve the Lord according to his full capabilities. He is thinking of returning to Africa, which I consider to be a good idea, since there are few Pehls who know the Lord, so he could be an evangelist to his own people group. Pray for Tanou that the Gospel message would become clear to him, that he'd understand the greatness and goodness of God and turn to him. He has no papers to live in France, so he also needs to receive these to be able to finish high school and have a settled situation.

**Here in Lyon on Jan. 11-14 was the conference** for the missionaries of the Church Equipping Network of Encompass. Joy & I were able to host our good friends John & Becky Pappas and Dave Manduka at our home, which was a rare opportunity for all of us to be in one of our homes together. The new structure is attempting to gather Encompass missionaries together who have the same general ministry & gifting, rather than forming teams simply based on geography. This allows us to concentrate on issues that are particularly relevant to all involved. Toward the end of the conference, I met with Florent Varak, the director of the Church Equipping Network, Dave Guiles, the Director of Encompass, and Frank Puhl, the Director of Africa. I presented my proposal for an alternate program for leadership training for our African churches. They liked my proposal, but it did bring up some issues regarding its implementation. I have since discussed it further (on skype) with Frank Puhl where we agreed on a modification and now I am awaiting a final response. **Please continue to pray for God's guidance, since my future ministry will be strongly impacted by the decisions made.**

**Quicktakes . . .**

- **Gabriel & Jess have set August 1<sup>st</sup> as their wedding date.** They will be married at South Apalachin Baptist Church, near Binghamton, NY. It is the same church in which Joy & I were married a few years ago (well, maybe more than a few!).

- **Since we will be in the States this summer,** we decided to visit half of our churches, so some of you will be contacted soon regarding our time together.

- **Please continue to pray for the salvation of Yves & Eliane.**

**Mark & Joy**

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