

Tin Tacks Feb 2011 (Sim family Prayer notes)

"Overwhelming" would have to be the word of the moment. Why do I say that? For many weeks now we have all been following the news from around the world and it would seem that it is one overwhelming situation after another.

Internationally countries have been reeling from upheaval and chaos, with the country close to our Benin, the Ivory Coast, seeming to start the series of upheavals only to be overshadowed by events in North Africa and finally Egypt. By the way, the Ivory Coast even if not on the news much at the moment is sinking further and further into overwhelming anarchy.

At home, there have been floods, cyclones and bushfires. Areas that Lisa & I were brought up in have been receiving a year's worth of rain in a couple of days. What makes it so crazy is that it is the middle of summer! The destruction in Queensland due to the cyclone is indescribable.



Here in Parakou, Benin we cannot say that we are suffering overwhelming disasters or political chaos, but I must say that our SIM Benin team is facing some seemingly overwhelming personnel shortages in the next few months. Last year saw the unexpected early departure of three missionaries, two of which were involved in Administration. Then in the past week we learned that another couple, both involved in Administration, but presently on Home Assignment, would not be returning to Benin due to the schooling of their children.

Our family is set to leave Benin the 22nd July this year, after 9 years of ministry here. Lisa is presently the interim treasurer and Guest house coordinator, and I fill the roles of the director's right hand man and the Projects Coordinator. To be honest it is hard to follow through with our plans when we know that it will leave our very good friends and team mates (missionary and Beninese) with a huge load to bear. In reality we are not able to change our plans and we have not sensed the Lord's leading to do so.

It is overwhelming to consider the changes that lie ahead for our family. Lisa & I are seriously

considering and praying about possible ongoing ministry with SIM Australia: Lisa as a coordinator for associates (short term workers) and myself in projects promotion. Another key prayer point is the need to consider the schooling opportunities for our children, something we need to start doing now. Please pray that we will have God's wisdom.

Lisa & I would really appreciate your prayer re our personnel situation in SIM Benin. Right now we need someone to take over Personnel. Come July we need someone for the Guesthouse, Treasury and Projects. We do praise the Lord for Sil Ruddle (Australia) who

is presently raising support to take on the Projects Coordinator role mid 2012 after language study, and the very recent news that a young couple in Europe are looking seriously into coming out long term from mid 2012; the husband is an accountant, and the wife a teacher.

This all comes at a time when SIM Benin is re-evaluating its vision and purpose for the future, and naturally we are praying that if God is trying to speak to us through what we see as "overwhelming circumstances" that we would be attentive and teachable. Please pray too for Clara, our Director, as she investigates creative ways to fill the void from July 2011 till June 2012 in the ministry areas I have mentioned above. Our "Country Review" of SIM Benin in 2009 showed clearly that SIM still has a role to play in mission in this country, pray that the Lord would show us how and with the resources he gives us.

Why do we share all this? Life as you know is full of overwhelming situations and one only has to read the Scriptures to see that what I have just shared above is quite tame compared to what others before us have endured. One theme though that shines through in God's Word is that if we are willing to trust the Lord, despite life's circumstances, we need not be overwhelmed. Why? Because the Lord is with us even in the midst of the most impossible situations. I don't really need to share verses with you on this, I'm sure many of you have verses popping into your mind right now! Please pray that we will trust the Lord.

Blessings, Neil & Lisa