



“THE NOISE OUTSIDE MY GATE”

It was not the heat nor the continuous crowing of African roosters which kept me awake for much of the night. Nor was it the shuffling steps of the night guard that troubled my sleep. It was that noise outside my gate.

The sound coincided with our recent arrival in the country of Ivory Coast and had become even more persistent since setting up our residence in Daloa near the Assemblies of God Bible Institute.

A letter I had received earlier that day made me think of the troubled sleeper in Luke's gospel. This man was awakened by noises around midnight. The problem...an unavailable resource. A friend had come asking for loaves of bread and he apparently made it clear he wasn't leaving till he got what was needed. And so began the reluctant stirring of the household. Lights coming on, the search through the pantry, the noise of doors, extra voices, and the lockbolt, then, children asking who was at the door.

The letter I had received was from a church explaining the shortage of available resources for continuing to support all their missionaries. I was laying upon my bed thinking that the needs on the field will always far outweigh available resources. It's a never ending struggle. Local pastors cry for help, the sick cry at your gate, beggars race to your car door before you have a chance to get out and local merchants tell you if you don't buy from them they'll not eat that day.

Then as I lay there, there it was again. There was that noise outside my gate. It was the sound of caring people and the yet unmet needs of the hungry, the sick, the lost and the dying. It was the sound of caring pastors on foot while distant villages go on needing the bread of life. It was the sound of caring churches amidst thousands of refugee families. Caring mothers holding lifeless bundles because needed medicines were unavailable or arrived too late.

I don't know how well you've been sleeping lately but I'd like to issue you a wake up call. You see the hour is getting late, I'm getting tired and there's such a great need here. Perhaps in time I'll adjust to the many different sounds of an African night, but there is one sound I don't think I'll ever get used to. I'll never get used to the noise outside my gate! I'm wanting you to hear it with me.

FOR A FRIEND OF MINE HAS COME TO ME...AND I HAVE NOTHING TO SET BEFORE HIM: AND FROM INSIDE HE SHALL ANSWER AND SAY "DO NOT BOTHER ME: THE DOOR HAS ALREADY BEEN SHUT AND MY CHILDREN AND I ARE IN BED: I CANNOT GET UP AND GIVE YOU ANYTHING"...YET BECAUSE OF HIS PERSISTENCE HE WILL GET UP AND GIVE HIM AS MUCH AS HE NEEDS. LUKE 11:7,8

At this Christmas season we are wanting to thank all of you for helping to meet so many needs in Ivory Coast. Because of your prayers and faithful support we are able to make God's love abound to many.

WISHING YOU A JOYFUL AND PRAYERFUL CHRISTMAS!!!

Paul, Julie, Jonathan & Emily