
WEST AFRICAN MISSION UPDATE

Steve & Patricia Phillips

September 2008

Dear Friends,

Back in the States, some 9,000 kilometers have distanced Patti and I from sweltering African jungles and thrust us once again into America's hardened anodized and asphalted environment. Swaying palms and fluttering banana leaves have given way to the sighing of towering conifers and the incessant low rumble of Western Washington's I-5 corridor here near Olympia.

And we are back with our four children, who left Freetown's shores in December 2007. How we love our children! How we love our spiritual children in West Africa! How we love our brethren here!

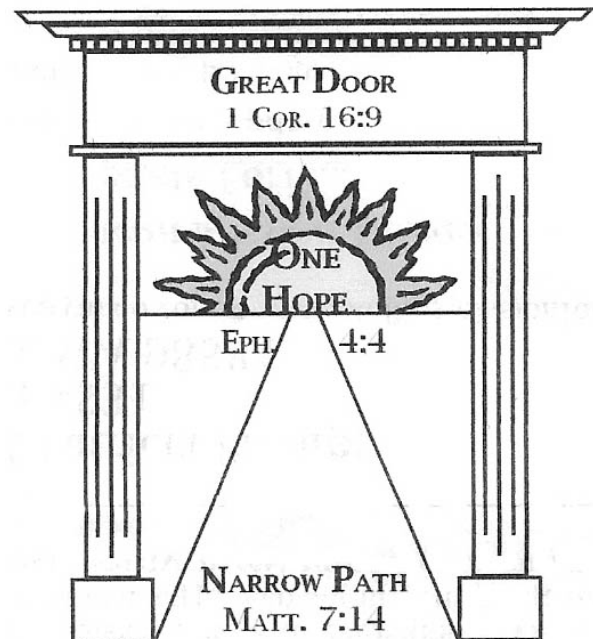
And how our hearts have been ravaged by the trials of this past year and a half! "Change and decay in all around I see; O Thou who changest not, abide with me."

Shattered and wearied, yet pursuing; perplexed and distraught, though not overcome; downtrodden and forsaken, but not by Him who pledges to never lose even one of those given to Him by His Father.

How often in these past months have the words of Paul washed over our tumultuous souls: "We give no offense in anything, that our ministry may not be blamed. But in all things we commend ourselves as servants of God: in much patience, in tribulations, in needs, in distresses... in tumults, in labors, in sleeplessness, in fastings... by honor and dishonor, by evil report and good report; as deceivers, and yet true... as dying, and behold we live... as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing" [2 Cor.6:3-10].

Without hesitation to say so, this has been the second most trying experience of our lives. Betrayal, slander, and threats are matters that plunge even the most stalwart into confusion, distress, and worse; especially when they arise from trusted associates. "For it is not an enemy who reproaches me, then I could bear it; nor is it one who hates me who has exalted himself against me, then I could hide myself from him. But it is you, a man my equal, my companion and my familiar friend; we who had sweet fellowship together walked in the house of God in the throng" [Ps.55:12-14]. And this is what we have faced and endured for the sake of the name of our Lord Jesus. Blessed be His name!

And now, we are here; to recover and refocus, to try



to console and establish our children who suffered lasting effects from the troubles we passed through.

It seems good to us and the Holy Spirit along with numerous brethren we have discussed with to remain here in the States for some time; at least for a year, perhaps longer. The Lord knows. Our desire is to return to Nigeria when it is feasible to do so.

In the meantime, I am going to begin working with my older son, Ben, once again in cabinetry and carpentry, as Paul directed "to make it your ambition to lead a quiet life and attend to your own business and work with your hands, just as we commanded you, so that you will behave properly toward outsiders and not be in any need" [1 Thess.4:11-12].

We bless the Lord for your loving concern for our family and the work of the Lord in West Africa. Do continue to pray for us during this time of transition, and most of all for our dear brethren in West Africa who are carrying on the work there.

If you wish to contact us our new address is:

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Love, Steve and Patti

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