

JUST AN ORDINARY DAY

Life on the mission field can be trying even during the best of times. Imagine a day without electricity, water, or internet service. We don't have to imagine! It's the norm in Nigeria, West Africa. I used to plead, "God, could we please have all three of the aforementioned services for one day?" When that didn't happen I lowered my expectations and bargained, "God, how about two out of three?" Lately it has been, "How about one out of three?" The questions have surely crossed our minds, "Why stay? Why live like this when you have a home in the USA with unlimited access to the essentials and luxuries of life?"

Arriving at the Bible school one Tuesday morning, I was met with another frustration. The zipper on my computer bag broke. To be sure, a minor irritant, but at that moment enough was enough. One of the Bible school students, Timothy Ugwu, saw me struggling with the zipper and made every attempt to "fix the zip." Unsuccessful, he exited the office only to reappear moments later with another zippered bag. Well worn, but still functional, Timothy had gone to the hostel, emptied his bag, and brought it to me. He presented it as a gift to replace my own. Consider, Timothy lives on less than one dollar a day and knows what it is to feel hunger every day. I was as humbled as he was insistent that I take the bag. In the end I did not take the bag, but the offering of it was a visual and touching reminder of God moving in the lives of His people. Just an ordinary day on the mission field.

Hurrying off to morning devotions, a middle aged student was invited to the pulpit. Since we had just returned from deputation, I didn't know Sunday Chukwubueze. Before he launched into his sermon, he left a brief testimony. He thanked God for the Bible school and for "removing the veil of blindness" from his spiritual eyes. Upon coming to a knowledge of One God and baptism in Jesus Name, Sunday related how he went right to the principal and asked him to re-baptize him the Bible way. The principal, Darlynton Jakin, gladly baptized Sunday in the saving Name of Jesus Christ. In turn, Sunday, who oversees Divine Evangelical Intercessory Church and its 9 branches, shared this truth with the nine pastors under him and then proceeded to baptize them in Jesus Name. He then stated that they had already re-baptized 178 of their members in the matchless Name of Jesus. Wow! I almost fell off my chair. I didn't know any of this. Just an ordinary day on the mission field.

Solomon Igwe, another student, was returning to school after a weekend break. His mode of transportation was a "yellow bus," a shell of a van with bolted in wooden seats, that are so common in West Africa. He ended up sitting next to a young woman whom he had never met. The Lord impressed Solomon to share Isaiah 10:11 with the woman. "As I have done to Samaria and her idols, Shall I not do also to Jerusalem and her idols?" Not exactly an uplifting word of encouragement! He tried to block out the prompting of the Lord by closing his eyes and reminding himself to mind his own business. The Lord then gave Solomon a vision of the woman lying in a coffin. God spoke to him and told him that she was recently impregnated outside of wedlock and that she was in route to get an abortion. God told Solomon that if she went through with the abortion, she would die. Under the circumstances, Solomon could not hold his tongue.

When Solomon shared with the young woman what God had revealed to him, she wept, "It is true." She continued sobbing, "I am too embarrassed to tell my parents about the pregnancy and my boyfriend doesn't want to marry me." In her mind her only option was an abortion. But Solomon patiently witnessed to her and while doing so they inadvertently passed the girls bus stop. They continued on to the Bible school. Once there the principal, Darlynton Jakin, reiterated much of what Solomon had already shared with the young woman and she was baptized in Jesus Name. She left rejoicing and vowed not to abort her baby. Two lives saved! Just an ordinary day on the mission field.

The writer of the Book of Hebrews, while proclaiming that Jesus is the Author and Finisher of our faith, did not fail to mention that Jesus endured the Cross and despised the shame. Further, Jesus endured the hostility of sinners. In no way would I compare my experience to that of Christ, but we can say that

there are some things we endure as missionaries. There are some things we despise as missionaries. And yes, a missionary often feels the hostility of sinners in a strange land. But like Jesus, for the joy of souls won, it is worth it all. And even an "ordinary day" on the mission field yields eternal rewards.