

July 2014



My dear praying friend,

Often I think of you doing the most important work a Christian can do – praying for those living in dire physical, intellectual, and spiritual darkness.

This month we will be interceding for one of the most spiritually oppressive places in the world, West Africa – a region recognized for its lack of illumination not only in an electrical sense but also in a practical, spiritual sense. I remember meeting a woman in Liberia whose husband had been a high official at the early stages of the infamous Charles Taylor's regime. When the husband perceived the direction the government was taking, including involvement in violence and other injustices against the people, he spoke up and was consequently ousted and then murdered. A price was also put on his wife's head, and she had to flee with her kids and hide in the jungle.

She told me the story during a Project Hannah meeting in which we prayed for her and her family. But as Corrie ten Boom, a Dutch survivor of the Nazi concentration camps, once said, "There is no pit so deep that the love of God isn't deeper still," that beautiful woman had experienced the redeeming and freeing power of God's love and forgiveness.

West Africa is the birthplace of Voodoo and all sorts of unholy spiritual strongholds. So we are entering fierce spiritual warfare this month. Discouragement might settle in as you read this month's prayer requests. We all are tempted sometimes to wonder how it is possible for us to handle such need and evil. Indeed, these powers cast deep shadows within these societies. But then, let's not forget that Jesus, our Redeemer, IS the "light of the world," that "where sin increased, grace abounded even more" (Romans 5:20)! Remember that when Jesus comes into the lives of these victims of doom, He gives them a new heart, a transformed mind, a new identity. The shadows are swallowed up by His power and light, making them as bright as the noonday sun. His people become the "salt and light of the world"! I witnessed this transforming power in the heart of that beautiful woman. She knew that "greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world" (1 John 4:4).

My friend, you and I can be channels of such miraculous transformation as we do this powerful exercise of prayer. Imagine! Our almighty God waits for our prayers. He loves to hear His people praying earnestly and with confidence in His power and grace. Prayer releases such miraculous intervention, for our Father of lights is listening. He will lift up the spiritual gloom of West Africa as He hears 40,000 intercessors praying through the requests during this month.

Thanks for persevering in standing in the gap for these broken and beautiful West African women.

Your sister and prayer partner,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Marli Spieker".

Marli Spieker
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Project Hannah

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Update:

In April Colleen Shoemaker, Project Hannah Canada coordinator, along with others visited TWR ministries in Mali and Ivory Coast. You can read on their blog about some of the amazing women that the visitors met: <http://thevoiceofafrica.wordpress.com/2014/04/11/reflections-of-our-first-day-in-abidjan-by-colleen-shoemaker/>

<http://thevoiceofafrica.wordpress.com/2014/04/23/their-voices-have-been-heard/>

<http://thevoiceofafrica.wordpress.com/2014/04/15/tangible-hope/>

A listener of the French *Women of Hope* program in Ivory Coast wrote:

“Thank you very much for the *Woman of Hope* program. I just listened to it, and it helped me so much. I wanted to kill my children and myself so that we could have peace in heaven. I attempted to do it last Friday, but failed. I was diagnosed as HIV-positive and am five months pregnant. I was abandoned by my husband two months ago. My children will not go to school this year. I can’t find a job because of my pregnancy. My father died 10 months ago; my mother is very sick. I can’t buy food for my children. I always pray, but my soul is contrite. Help me! Thank you.”

Sandrine tried in vain to kill herself and her unborn baby. But God had another plan. She still seemed a little dazed as she told us that the cars avoided her as she stood in that busy intersection. One after another, they swerved to miss her. Remember, it was a dark night, it was raining, and it was at a busy intersection.

But God had another plan for Sandrine’s life. He wanted to show her His love and rescue her. And He did. She later heard the *Women of Hope* program and learned that there IS hope. She contacted the office of TWR for help. The wonderful Project Hannah ladies have encouraged and prayed with her and given her assistance in practical ways.

Sandrine has since begun a small business of selling ice with the help of a nongovernmental organization (NGO). It has provided her an income with which to provide food and shelter for her small family.

She writes again:

“Good morning. I am just coming back from the bank with a lady of the NGO. They gave me the money that I needed to start my small business. Tomorrow another lady will come with me for my purchases. Thank you a lot. May the Lord remember you!”

<http://thevoiceofafrica.wordpress.com/2014/04/10/hope-speaks-from-behind-closed-doors/>

Single women in West Africa: Single women past the acceptable age of marriage (about 23) can be pressured by their families to accept almost any man who comes along – even by Christian parents. If the parents are not Christian, they obviously wouldn’t understand the girls’ stance to keep pure before marriage and to follow God’s Word in choosing a Christian husband. The parents can refuse to allow them to remain in their home, because the daughters are being too “fussy” in selecting a husband. So some courageous young women will live alone or with another single woman in a very small “home.” They may work and possibly continue their education in order to provide for themselves and in hopes of a better future.