



**JULIE STONE - Missionary in Cameroon**

**AUGUST 2016**

Dear Family and Friends,

One of the constant challenges in this setting is simply contending with the fact that so many die each day. It's true that patients tend to arrive at the hospital when their diseases are very advanced. Yet, it's painful to pour time and effort into the care of a patient – only to watch him die. One often can't help wondering "Why?"

Last year an older gentleman was brought to the hospital with severe Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease. We worked steadily to try to help him. A traditional ruler, Pa Nji was steeped in the occult practices that pervade African village life. Yet this elderly traditional ruler had a devoted and believing Christian son who was very concerned for his father's spiritual welfare. At one point, we spoke very pointedly to the patient about his occult practices – insisting that all such practices must be utterly abandoned if a man is to truly follow The Lord Jesus. The patient's son pleaded with him to forsake the diabolical rites involved in African Traditional Religion – which are so repugnant to The Lord. During the course of his hospitalization, the patient surrendered his life to The Lord Jesus. We were thrilled and amazed at the news that this elderly man, whose life had been steeped in the occult, had taken such a decision. I can recall thinking that – as a new creation in Christ – Pa Nji would go back to his village and denounce the witchcraft, sorcery, and black arts which had long been part of his daily fare. As the patient was responding to medical therapy, we planned for and anticipated his discharge home. Suddenly and inexplicably, for no discernible reason, the patient's admission symptoms returned with a vengeance as he acutely decompensated and died.

His death shook me to the core. I'd thought that it was so clear what The Lord was about to do through the life of this dear man. Pa Nji's death was such a setback. Amazingly, the patient's son, Jorge, displayed a peaceful and calm demeanor at the sudden loss of his father-turned-brother. Jorge's equanimity amazed me.

Recently, many months following the death of his father, Jorge brought his mother to the hospital for a medical problem. This provided a time for us to visit, to reminisce concerning his father's hospitalization and subsequent death. On expressing my dismay and disillusionment over the death of Pa Nji, Jorge cautioned me about the sentiments I'd expressed. He recognized why The Lord had taken his father insofar as Jorge was quite certain that his father, having genuinely repented of his former way of life, would have struggled exceedingly to repudiate it. Jorge saw his father's death as a deliverance and a mercy. What a wonderful lesson this brother taught me. How can anyone ever presume to understand or anticipate what The Lord is doing? Even, and especially, when we don't understand, our response should be one of trust and thanksgiving.

*In Him, Julie*

**PRAISES**

- For The Lord's wonderful deliverance of a patient steeped in occultism
- For a valuable lesson from an African brother
- For a 13-year old boy named Eugene – the son of a physician volunteer – who caught a lizard which had spent almost a month running around my flat.

**PRAYER REQUESTS**

- For the hospital's surgical needs in the wake of a recently-departed surgeon
- For wisdom and stamina to help with the orientation and training of nine newly-graduated physicians who arrived in Bansa last month

*“For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways,’ declares The Lord.”*

**Isaiah 55:8**



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