

# the NICOLSight

M Term 1, Volume 6

May 2009

## The Tin Baby

Yíi kéné! Á di gbó hin? À bisháan-kpènglî we? (Hello! How is your family? Where is the newborn?) greeted a group of women at my door early the first morning we were in the village. They eagerly took our baby in their arms, laughing as they passed her around. They carefully examined this new *white!* baby newly arrived in Tin as they plied me with questions.

“Is it a girl or a boy?”

“A girl.” I replied. (*Can't you tell by her pretty pink dress?*)

“When was she born?”

“April 2. She is now six weeks old.”

“She doesn't have her ears pierced! Why don't you pierce her ears?” A girl not having pierced ears in this culture is like a boy wearing a frilly pink dress in North American culture; both are significant clues as to determining the gender of a child.

“I just haven't done it yet. I have metal allergies and maybe she does too.” I explained lamely, stumbling over the explanation of allergies in Siamou and holding back my personal feelings about earrings.

“What's her name?”

“She doesn't have a name yet. We will have the baby naming on Saturday. But her 'French' name is Nadine Ruth” (We used the middle names of her mother and her paternal grandmother).

“No, her name is Tinyéé,” a woman stated. I felt honoured by the willingness of these women to welcome this child wholeheartedly into their lives. Yéé means firstborn daughter. By suffixing Yéé with the name of the village, Tin, the women indicated that our baby belongs to their village and family.

Finally, their curiosity satisfied, the women handed my child back to me with a string of blessings. “May God care for the child. May the milk taste good in the child's mouth. May God give the child a long life.



Introducing the new 'Tin baby'.



Nadine ready to come home from the hospital. The orange around her eyes is antiseptic drops.



Family photo: April 3, 2009

## The Baby Naming

Traditionally babies are born in their courtyard and stay unnamed in the house where they were born for seven days. On the seventh day a young ram is slaughtered, a sack or more of rice is cooked and kola nuts, dates and candy are prepared to hand out to the visitors who come to greet. Since this is a Muslim village, the Imam is called and he chooses three names according to the date and day the child was born and then the parents choose which one they will give their child. The child is then carried out of the house and introduced to all the visitors.

Our baby naming celebration couldn't be arranged like this as Nadine was already a month old but we did prepare the feast and the last girl to get married in our courtyard tied our baby on her back and carried her around introducing her to the visitors.

“Her name is Tinyéé Djelika.”\*

\*Djelika is the Jula name we chose.

## What is happening now

**W**e moved back to the village on May 7 and were welcomed by an evening of refreshing rain which washed all of the dust and heat of Ouaga off of us. As shown in the main story, the villagers welcomed us back with open arms and excitement. It is good to be home. Since then, I have been adapting to caring for a child and working on Bible Translation. Solo is commuting from Orodara three days a week so we can work together and the other days we work on our own. We have finished the corrections which were discussed during the checking session in February on the Abraham and Jacob stories. We hope to start with selections from the first six chapters in Exodus next.

Norm has been working in Orodara three days a week trying to get the studio in working order. This involved tearing down the ceiling and filling in the holes between the tin and the ceiling in the attic to keep out unwanted guests. He also has been busy getting anti-virus software on computers and solving other technical and mechanical problems. During his days in Tin he works on electricity problems, carpentry for the house and cement work. He hopes to reinforce the well with cement blocks to prevent it from silting in all the time.

## Baby Tidbits (one time substitute for Translation Tidbits)

**V**illage babies spend the first two years of their lives on their mother's back. Tying Nadine on one's back is the fastest way to get her to fall asleep if she is cranky and refuses to be comforted. Norm says it is like the 'Vulcan neck pinch' from Star Trek.



*Fanta has adopted Nadine as her grandchild.*

## Praise Items—I am thankful for:

- a relatively easy birth and quick recovery.
- **a healthy, beautiful girl.**
- Sali who gives me efficient and affordable diaper laundry service (25 cents/5 diapers).
- Fanta who is willing to "momo" Nadine while I work in the office (tie her on her back—she has her longest naps this way).
- the doctors at the local clinic who helped Nadine through her 2nd month shots and a resulting fever of 101.6 Fahr. and an attack of malaria.
- Norm who helped me through a difficult attack of malaria.
- being back at Bible Translation.

## Prayer Concerns

- I desperately need house help. My house is a mess and I can not keep up and work even part-time. The girl who I hoped could help didn't work out as she is newly married and pregnant.
- Pray for good health for the three of us. Mosquito season is here and we still haven't found an acceptable prophylaxis for nursing mothers and infants.
- Norm still needs to find/make time for concentrated language study.

- Pray that our relationships in the courtyard can continue to deepen through our new addition to the family.



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## Addresses

The opportunity to align with God's work in Burkina Faso is made possible through the prayer and financial support you give. Your notes of encouragement and gifts of finances are greatly appreciated. If you would like to express your support of the ministry in Burkina Faso with a donation, you may send it to:

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