

A Prayer for Our Children

This past week has been an exciting one for Bonnie, me, our family, and ACSI! As I pen these words, Bonnie and I are completing a week as representatives of ACSI in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), where we have just established our newest ACSI Global office.

Yesterday, our youngest daughter, Aubrey, celebrated her golden birthday—she turned 20 on January 20. We expressed our love to her via Skype. We were pleasantly surprised that our Internet connection and our electricity stayed on long enough for us to talk to Aubrey even though we were separated by thousands of miles.

Two days before her birthday, our ACSI membership *tripled* as we added 291 Congolese Christian preschools, 11,707 elementary schools, and 5,833 secondary schools! More children in the DRC attend Christian schools than public schools. (For instance, about 34 percent of the elementary schools are served by our ACSI DRC office. In fact, the ACSI coalition of schools educates the most students in the country!) In this arena of Christian school education, children and parents of the DRC have more freedom than children and parents in other countries around the world.

Contrast this with the United States, for example, where only about 1.2 percent of the nation's children attend ACSI Christian schools. In the United States, parents have to pay twice (property taxes and tuition) for their children to attend Christian schools. Wouldn't it be wonderful if new U.S. laws allowing the tax money of parents to follow their child to the school of their choice were passed?

Following the signing of the official documents establishing our new office—ACSI DRC Central Africa Office—Bonnie and I visited an all-girls Christian school where I spoke to 1,500 students. I spoke about our 2010/2011 theme—First Things First. Our theme comes from my life's verse, Matthew 6:33 (KJV): "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." I told the girls that God loves them very much and that He created each one of them with a very special purpose in mind.


As is the custom in Africa, I entertained a few questions from the students after my address to them. One of the Congolese girls boldly asked, "So why should our school join ACSI?" I was happy for her question, and I responded that ACSI exists to enable Christian schools and Christian teachers to effectively prepare students for life. I then explained to the girls that our prayer for them is that they will put their faith and trust in Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Savior and that they will be thoroughly prepared to fulfill the purpose for which God created each of them.

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As I spoke, it occurred to me that my desire for these girls is the same desire I have for my own children. I trust that this is your desire for your children too, for Christian schools offer to parents one of the very best means available today to prepare our children for life—this life and the life to come.

The leaders I met this week certainly understand this value! They firmly believe that one of the best ways to help children love what Jesus loves and hate what He hates is to provide for them an education founded on the Word of God and focused on His Son. They further believe that as individual children's lives are changed, Kinshasa, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Africa, and the world can be changed for the good of all people and the glory of God. That is why earlier this year 62 DRC denominations joined together and voted unanimously to partner with ACSI to provide an effective Christian education to every student in all of their Christian schools.

My prayer for your children, those in the DRC, and my own four, is that each one will grow to be thoroughly prepared, sold-out, full-throttle disciples of Jesus Christ! At ACSI, we are committed to all parents, leaders, schools, and teachers around the world with whom we share this all-important goal, which is dear to the heart of God.


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