

It is most ironic that after writing a newsletter last month talking about how we never know when the "result" of our efforts will be seen, this month an old study group came back to visit us. This group came from a village where we taught three years ago, telling the story of the Gospel from the beginning of the Bible to the end. In fact it was only the second village we had ever worked in, back at the beginning of our ministry in this region. At the end of the time of learning the chronological Bible stories not one person became a believer, no one asked for further teaching - in short, there were no results. But out of the blue (shortly after I had written that last newsletter, in fact) a man from the village came asking if we could start up studies there again. The literacy group had reformed with a new teacher and started 3 months of classes to show that they were serious before approaching us.

The new teacher happens to be someone who has traveled widely around this region of Guinea and into Mali. During his travels he stumbled upon a cassette of chronological Bible storying that has interested him greatly, and he has always wanted to learn more.

When he reorganized the group there were only 3 people from our old group who were a part. However, they mentioned what we used to do there, and so he came to us asking for more teaching. We could hardly believe our ears when we heard that they wanted us to come out again, much less that there was a man who had had contact with the Gospel and wanted to learn more. This time there are many new people in the group, and they are taking the studies far more seriously than the previous group did. The literacy teacher is also someone who is very close (as Jesus said) to the kingdom of God. With his travels, and many contacts throughout the area, he would make an excellent evangelist.

But of course it's not enough for us to only announce the Good News; a person who has just started the faith journey needs a lot of encouragement, teaching, and admonishing to grow into a mature disciple.

This is what has also taken much of our time lately. We are aided in this work by Abdurahmane Sano who came from Kankan recently. By the grace of God some people have repented of their sins and turned to Jesus Christ for salvation and a new life. But they all need much encouragement to continue walking with the LORD. Most all of these new disciples are alone in the sense that no one in their yards, homes, or villages is also a believer. They face many trials and temptations every day. Added to that is the grinding poverty, which results in people seeking for the quickest and easiest solution to become financially sound, and this can lead to all sorts of deception, and losing of one's way. It is an uphill struggle, and to report on all the trials would fill 10 newsletters, but we don't lose hope, and by God's grace we can see growth.

Now that the rains are tapering off, we are also planning to return to the area around village "L" where there is a small community of believers. We are planning on responding to two invitations where we have been asked to teach literacy using the Bible stories. Since we now have two teachers we can respond to both places at once. Both of these places have never had any contact with the Gospel before. We covet your prayers so that people in these areas will listen attentively to God's Word and be pierced by it as those hearers were on Pentecost.

Please join us in praising God for the following:

- a new beginning in village "F" after a three year absence.
- the curiosity and receptiveness of the group leader, "K.B.", that he would be transformed by God's Word.

Please pray for:

- all those who are young in the faith, that they would stand firm and continue to mature even in the face of many temptations.
- villages "K.D." and "B.D." that the LORD would open their ears to the Gospel.
- for safe travel for the two evangelists and myself as we reach these villages, as even in the dry season getting to this area is very difficult.

In Christ,

Tim, Heidi, Philip & Leslie Norton

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