

Dear Friends in Christ,

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These past couple of months have been an eventful time for us, thus the delay in newsletter writing. Early in the month of May we took a two week vacation to get away from the hottest time of the year here. As soon as we returned we were troubled to learn of more unrest in Guinea. The soldiers were demanding back-pay dating from 11 years and were firing their weapons into the air causing injuries and deaths. The president bowed to pressure from the lower ranks and many of the military leaders were fired, leaving a power vacuum at a precarious time. There was also some looting done by soldiers in Conakry. Our team decided to leave before things got too bad, although our town was still calm. Thanks be to God the unrest did not escalate any further and an accord was reached between the soldiers and the government.

While this was going on, the family and our teammate Andrea stayed in Bamako, Mali and I returned to Guinea to visit with our evangelist Sacko who is continuing his work in village "L". As you may recall 7 people were baptized from that place at the end of last year, of course the faith journey doesn't end at baptism, rather it begins, so Sacko is there to encourage the new believers and help them along in their walk of faith.

He is also teaching them how to evangelize so that they can share the good news with the many people in that area who have not heard. Praise God the work is going on well. One of the men in training has led many of the evangelism teaching times. Sacko's family is also out there so he is able to witness to the faith he has in Jesus not only during teaching times, but in every day life as well. He is planning on being there for another month. Please continue to pray for him and pray for the new believers as they assume more of the responsibilities he is currently doing.

After this visit I returned to Bamako and finished the printing of our first published book! In fact, it's a booklet written by fellow missionary Delano Meyer serving as agricultural consultant for Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea. It's called "Care of the Soil" and we had it translated into the local N'ko script. The finished product has some glitches, due to the direction of the script (N'ko, like Arabic, reads right to left) but still it will be a valuable resource to people here in terms of assuring food security by using locally available methods to care for the soil and increase harvests. We also hope that we may be able to begin to translate the more difficult theological education materials, now that we've broken ground with this work.

After that I continued on to Dapaong, Togo to the "Centre Luthérien des Études Théologiques" (Lutheran Center for Theological Studies or better known by it's French acronym C.L.E.T.) to lead a course in Muslim evangelism. I had three students from Togo, Côte d'Ivoire, and the Democratic Republic of Congo, all of whom, although they had rubbed shoulders with Muslims, had never attempted to share the Gospel with them. We spent a week talking about theory (history of Islam, theology, current practices, etc...) and another week in practice. Thank the LORD that they all grew both in their understanding and capacity to share the good news with their neighbors of another background. One of the students wrote in his final paper "I was first afraid of talking to Muslims, but now I see that they are also in need of salvation and not so hard to reach." The teaching time was rewarding as well as meeting up with old friends, and seeing the three students from the forest region of Guinea (who were studying in the pastoral program, my class was in the novitiate program).

Next month we are heading on to the US to participate in the mission-wide Ablaze! conference in Houston, Texas and then taking the last part of our vacation to visit family, so our next newsletter will be in August.

Please continue to keep these things in your prayers.

-Thanksgiving for the good work of Sacko in "L", that God would continue to open doors for the Gospel, and that the young believers there would continue to grow in their capacity to evangelize.

-Thanksgiving for end of unrest in Guinea, and continued prayers for peace.

-Thanksgiving for the publication of our first book, and prayers that the LORD would use it to His glory, to help people suffering from food shortages.

-Thanksgiving for the leaders from French speaking African churches at the CLET in Togo, pray for the continued ministry of the center, and for the leaders as they return to their homes.

In Christ,

Tim, Heidi, Philip & Leslie Norton

LCMS World Mission

Guinea, West Africa