



The Ministry of Jesus Togo

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*...he has filled the hungry with good things,
and the rich he has sent away empty.*

Luke 1:53

Dear Friends and Supporters,

One of the biggest challenges of the Christmas season is to not allow the programs and activities to push out the people in our lives. Thus, in this newsletter, we have chosen to highlight the lives of 2 first year university students rather than our programs and activities. **These are people whose lives were changed because they were hungry for our Savior, Jesus, and responded to the wonderful Gospel that brings life.** We thank you for your part in helping us bring the transforming power of the gospel into the lives of the hungry.

Viviane

Viviane, a member of the Konkomba tribe, was born on October 1, 1998 in the village of Gbangbale. When Viviane was only 2 months old, her father died, leaving her widowed mother to raise 5 children by collecting and selling firewood. **Their staple food was made out of the flour that fell to the floor when other people ground their corn at the mill.** Her mother remarried an abusive man with multiple wives. He allowed the children to go to church but would not allow the mother to go. Finally, one of Viviane's older brothers made enough money working as a laborer in Nigeria to build a small house to move the family away from the abusive father.

Viviane



Matthieu



Although none of the other children went to school, **Viviane went and talked to the principal and convinced him to allow her to go to school without paying the required tuition.** When some of the teachers heard her story, they paid for her books and school uniform. In later years, after the brother returned from Nigeria, Viviane's mother was able to use some of the money she made selling wood to pay for Vivianne's school expenses.

When Viviane was in 8th grade, the Groupe Biblique Universitaire, (GBU, Intervarsity Christian Fellowship,) came to her school. She was able to attend the GBU camp at the end of the year due to a scholarship from The Ministry of Jesus. The following year, Viviane's mother died. This was a devastating blow and **it was the continual love, support, and encouragement of her GBU friends that enabled Vivianne to pick up her life and go on.** At the end of the following school year, she was faced with a terrible choice: attend the final funeral ceremony for her mother, (yes, there are multiple pagan ceremonies over several years required here) or go to the GBU camp. To her family's horror, she chose to go to the camp. When Viviane returned, the family refused to let her into the house. After **she had slept outside for 2 nights**, an uncle forced the others to let her back into the house, but they refused to help her continue school. **The family wanted to exchange her in marriage to get a wife for the brother.** Instead, Viviane worked in the market every week after church from 1 pm until midnight to earn enough to go to school.

Gregg heard Viviane's testimony at a GBU camp. At the time, he had no idea that she was a member of our church or that she was a person who had attended many GBU camps on Ministry of Jesus scholarships. He was **blown away by the dedication of someone who would attend a camp and miss the funeral ceremonies for her mother.** That requires an incredible degree of faith. At the following year's youth seminars in Dapaong, Viviane and some of the university students approached Gregg about bringing Viviane to the Kara student center to continue high school even though the center is for university students. After consulting with the African church leaders, Gregg agreed.

When Viviane packed her bags to come to Kara, her uncle, the village chief, came and took away all her luggage. She went and got in the taxi anyway, willing to leave with nothing. When the family saw her resolution, they gave her back her luggage. Viviane completed her last two years of high school in Kara. **She has progressed in leadership side-by-side with the university students and is passionate about sharing her faith.** She is now Gregg's key assistant in leading the youth group. It was no surprise when it was announced that Vivianne passed her exam for her BAC this year. After the results were announced, she immediately went to spend 2 weeks in the village of Kpatchangbane with Jeremie and Immaculee Y. Viviane **wanted to know what the life of a missionary in the villages was like as she considers God's call on her life.**

On her return to her village after the seminars, she was urged to leave the village because the chief wanted to use voodoo to kill her. He was jealous because she, an orphan girl, got her BAC, whereas none of his own daughters had done so. **Viviane refused to flee the village, saying that if Jesus had protected her so far, he would continue to protect her.**

Matthieu

The Ministry of Jesus has had a church in the village of Kpatchangbane since 1994, and Matthieu is **the first person in the cluster of 3 churches to graduate from high school.** When Matthieu was in early junior high school, his mother died. Pastor Nakpergou visited him in the town where he was attending junior high and comforted him. He also advised him to avoid going back to the village on weekends as much as possible because **the people there would discourage him from continuing in school.** When Matthieu was in his last year of junior high school, he wanted to drop out of school, but **Augustin**, the son of the sector pastor, (who is now getting his master's degree in Burkina Faso), **encouraged him to stay in school.** When Matthieu completed junior high school, pastor Nakpergou brought him to live at the center in Dapaong during his time in high school. **Every time he was tempted to quit, a pastor or a university student encouraged him to continue.** As the time of the BAC exam approached, **Jeremie Y discerned that there were spiritual powers at work that didn't want anyone from Kpatchangbane to get their BAC.** Jeremie, Immaculee, and others began to pray and to do battle in the heavenlies. There was a great celebration when it was announced that Matthieu had passed the exam.

Cherita, a second-year midwife/nursing student, has the compassion of Jesus. Togo needs more people like Cherita.



Our annual rooftop dinner helps our students understand our vision of producing church leaders.



Who will steal the show at the upcoming wedding, world's cutest grandchild, Titus, or world's craziest aunt, Angela,



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When you have a breakdown in the middle of nowhere, it helps to have one of your former students as the police commissioner in the nearest town. We praise God that our students are beginning to move into positions where they can change the world.



During our recent 2-day seminar in Kpatchangbane, the mostly unschooled church leaders were able to memorize a chronology of the Old Testament and two methods of sharing the gospel. They are now ready to join Pastor Jeremie in repeating the seminar in each of the 4 churches represented.

Even after receiving his BAC, Matthieu continued to experience trials. He traveled to Ghana to earn money to pay for his university tuition. On his way home, his money disappeared, and he returned home with nothing. Again, leaders and older brothers from the church encouraged Matthieu and helped him out with small sums of money. **Matthieu is now in Kara, where he joins many other students who have no money in their pockets, but who encourage each other to continue, living by faith that God will provide.**

Finances

This Fall has been the tightest time financially of our 25 years in Togo. We have avoided taking reimbursements we are owed in order to have enough to keep all our programs going. Because of the high number of key student leaders in graduate programs, we were forced to cut scholarships for undergraduates by \$2,000. **People like Viviane and Matthieu represent not only the many people whose lives are being transformed, but they represent villages that are being transformed, and people whose lives will be changed down the road because these lives have been changed.** I recently heard a story of one of our ex-students, a nurse. At the end of his shift, there was a man waiting with his child. All of the other nurses chose to ignore them and go home. But Clement stayed and followed through until he found the life-saving care necessary. Now, the father comes back regularly and thanks Clement for saving his child's life. **Would you prayerfully consider an extra donation this Christmas that will change lives now and well into the future?**

We are now building the directors house and have funds for his training in the coming year. **We still need funds to build one more dorm, a classroom, a bathroom and shower, and to equip the farm to start with our first class in January 2021**

Prayer

- **Praise** God that the director's house is going up at the training farm. **Pray** that all the funds and planning will happen in order for the first class of pastoral trainees to come in January 2021.
- **Pray** for Matthieu, Viviane and many other dedicated student leaders to successfully complete their degrees and get jobs.
- **Pray** for the health and safety of our church leaders. (And us too.)
- **Pray** for Angela and Dan to have a wonderful, God honoring wedding.
- **Praise God** for Daniel G, Jeremie B. and Jeremie Y., the first university graduates to answer the call to go back to the villages. **Pray** that many others will follow their example.
- **Pray** for wisdom for the MIJ leaders as they allocate too few leaders to too many posts.

Daniel G, and his wife, Justine, are the third educated couple who have responded to the call to serve in the villages. Daniel is now in charge of all the Konkomba churches.



1 Samuel 7:16

"And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever."

In the darkest moments of Israel's history, many doubted God's promise to David, but now, we celebrate the birth of that promised King! We are thankful for our faithful God and also for our faithful prayer warriors, supporters and friends.

In the joyful service of the King,

Gregg and Jayne