

# The Ministry of Jesus Togo

Gregg and Jayne Yarian  
2017 W. Old Liberty Rd.  
Westminster, MD 21157  
443-605-4731 011 228 90995132  
Facebook: The Ministry of Jesus-Togo

[theyarians@yahoo.com](mailto:theyarians@yahoo.com)

[TheMinistryofJesus-Togo.org](http://TheMinistryofJesus-Togo.org)

The Ministry of Jesus  
c/o Oakbrook Church  
1700 Reston Pkwy.  
Reston, VA 20194  
703-437-4900

July 2017

Dear friends and supporters,

When we moved our family to Togo in 1995, my title was Director of Training. I was responsible to direct a training program for subsistence farmers in isolated rural villages. **In this issue of our newsletter we are going to discuss the problems of training and maintaining church leaders in rural villages and our plans to overcome these problems in Togo.**

There are many obstacles to training and retaining church leaders in rural village. The first is the **low level of literacy**. Many potential leaders have never attended school. Most of those with even an elementary school education **leave the village for better opportunities** in urban areas. The second major problem is that poor crops, irregular rainfall, poverty and lack of opportunities to gain the things that will lead to respect in the community **push most young men to leave the area and the country to pursue employment opportunities** in areas with better soil, rainfall and with large commercial farms which employ migrant laborers.

The model we used in the past involved seminars, Bible studies, and one-on-one discipleship. Key to the model were three pastors who were full-time employees of the mission and who rode out to the villages on motorcycles provided by the mission. We successfully trained many leaders. **But, this model is heavily dependent on outside money and is not**

*Life in a rural village is hard. Most farmers earn less than a dollar a day. This leads those with education to leave permanently and those without education to migrate during the dry season.*

*Life in the villages is especially hard for women and children. Because of the gospel influence, many village children are now staying in school. More trained leaders in the villages will mean more gospel transformation.*



**sustainable by the African church.** For many years we have had our eyes on the problems in the village churches but we were forced to concentrate on developing our student program so that the church would be able to not just survive, but to thrive without continual funding from foreign sources. **During this time, we have studied the problems of finding, training and retaining church leaders for village churches.** We are still studying and we know that we will be continually learning, but we believe we have found the best solution for our village churches.

Our basic model will be, like our sister church in Benin, **a training farm where leaders from rural villages will be able to come, with their families, to learn to be church leaders, while at the same time learning farming methods that will allow them to support their families without leaving their villages.** This program will allow trainees to learn ministry skills from many leaders with many years of experience. There will be opportunities for those who cannot read and write in French to learn to read and write so that they will be able to study the Bible and other resources themselves. There will be opportunities for spouses to receive training so that family problems due to differences in spiritual maturity can be diminished.

As part of our study, our key leaders have visited agricultural and spiritual training farms in Togo and Benin. Several decisions have already been made. **We will look for land in the Sotouboua area,** which is centrally located, and where land is plentiful and fertile. We have made a commitment that the primary focus of the farm will be spiritual and not agricultural. We have decided that we will use the many graduates from our student program in various areas of agriculture on a rotating basis rather than depend on full-time, salaried staff for the agricultural training. (One of our former-students, with a Master's degree in Agricultural Economics is now working in Sotouboua directing the agronomy department for one of Togo's largest private employers.) We have decided that agricultural fields and projects will be primarily individual rather than collective as our studies have shown that **this model is more likely to produce a self-sustaining farm and leaders who are willing to stay to complete the entire program.**

Our leaders are still working on decisions such as who will direct the program, who will be qualified to attend, how long will the training last, how much time will the trainees spend in their home villages during the training, how much will the trainees and their churches contribute, who will be the on-site director of the farm, what key leader or leaders will provide oversight to the project, and what will be in the curriculum. **Please pray for our leaders as they make their plans as they all come from a culture where looking forward and making plans is a foreign concept.**

The first phase of this project is to buy the land. **Our leaders have calculated that we need between 20 and 50 hectares of land to fully develop the training farm. The cost for this is a minimum of \$20,000.** Our study has found that we need to purchase land in a place where we can find water cheaply, and that is near transportation routes and a school for the children of those attending. **These factors make the price of the initial purchase somewhat higher but will reduce costs in the long-run.**

**Since the earliest days, one of the key vision points of The Ministry of Jesus has been to "preach the gospel where it has never been heard."** The development of the Pastoral, Agricultural training farm is key to leaving a self-sustaining church that is able to reach out to the areas where there are no churches. **Our first and second-generation leaders all come from rural villages and are passionate about continuing to reach unreached villages.**

### **News from the US**

Since our return to the US in late April, we have travelled almost 5,000 miles visiting supporting churches and individuals. One highlight of the trip was **attending the first ever Honor-Shame Conference** in Wheaton, IL. We believe that what we learned, who we met, and the

resources we found will help us tremendously in communicating the gospel in the African context. If you are interested in this subject, you might want to **check out HonorShame.com**. Between trips, we have made an effort to be as involved as possible in our home church in Maryland, Freedom Church.

Last, but not least, we have had the opportunity to spend time with our children. **Rebekah, and her husband of almost one year Mike**, are still living in the Sandtown neighborhood of Baltimore. Rebekah is still teaching at New Song Academy and Mike is taking one year off of work to be able to concentrate full-time on his seminary studies. **Angela** is working hard on learning to overcome fibromyalgia while serving God in Baltimore. **Please pray for her health** as she works on the illustrations for Jayne's children's curriculum. **Daniel and JoAnna** are at Ft. Leonard Wood, MS, where Daniel is attending the captain's course.

**Website** This technophobe from a previous millennium is finally working on a website. We would appreciate you visiting [TheMinistryofJesus-Togo.org](http://TheMinistryofJesus-Togo.org) and sending us your comments at [theyarians@yahoo.com](mailto:theyarians@yahoo.com). As I learn how to make changes to the website we will be making many improvements and your input will be very valuable.

### Prayer

- **Pray** about whether God wants you to make an extra contribution for the Training Farm and that God's Spirit will direct others to give generously to this project.
- **Pray** for Pastor Nagbandjoa's health as he studies in Ivory Coast this summer. The planning and administrative skills he is learning are vital to the future of the church.
- This year we decided to make part of the amount we give to our student program a matching fund to encourage those who have benefited from the program to invest in those who are following them. Our goal is to make this vital program sustainable without outside funds. **Pray** that those who have benefited from our Student Program will respond to the call to begin supporting the program.
- **Pray** that some of our university graduates will hear and respond to the call to serve in rural villages.
- **Praise God** for the beautiful home he provided for us to live in while we are in the US and for his guiding us safely through thousands of miles of travel since we have been here.

**Pastor Joel is holding the jar that is believed to hold one's life spirit, just before it is broken before a member's baptism. Spiritual powers in the villages are strong and will not be broken without strong leaders.**



*"I always want to tell the Good News in places where people have never heard of Christ. I do this because I don't want to build on the work that someone else has already started."*

Romans 15:20

**We thank God for your generous and faithful support as we travel this journey of following God's Spirit in the many ways he leads us in establishing a church that will glorify our Father as people respond to the gospel of Jesus, whether the context be establishing urban churches led by university graduates or village churches led by poorly educated farmers.**

In the joyful service of the King,

Gregg and Jayne