

# 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

March 2019

Dear Friends and Supporters,

I read recently that the company that made the little candy Valentine's hearts was bought out and that the candy hearts will no longer be made. We probably won't miss those candy Valentine's hearts, but, **when a society without Jesus lacks a heart of compassion, the suffering that results hits hard.** We are so appreciative of all of you who have allowed God to touch your hearts to join us in prayer and financial support as we work with God to bring changed hearts to the people of Togo.

## Hearts of stone

Every time I read the Psalms I notice how God's people are continually calling on God to act as they live in the midst of a very unjust world that is full of suffering. **Here in Togo we get to see a lot of suffering up close. What is often the hardest to take is when the suffering is caused by a total lack of compassion by people who are supposed to be helping to alleviate suffering.** We see this in every domain of life: education, armed services, and especially in the health system.

Albert is a young man from the Konkomba tribe. **He went from being someone you hardly noticed to a very effective leader of the church worship ministry while he was attending he university in Kara.** Albert and his young wife from the village, Claire, were among the 3 couples from the Kara church that all got married the same week last March. Their baby, Emmanuella, was born just after New Year. During the pregnancy they often stopped by to talk with us and Jayne was able to offer counsel to Claire. When the big day arrived, they went to the local clinic that had been seeing them throughout the pregnancy. After a while, it became evident that the labor was not progressing, and they were transferred to the university hospital. (Which means husband transports his wife on the motorcycle he had borrowed for the occasion.) When they arrived at the university hospital, they

***Inexpressible joy and thanksgiving!*** After 9 years of marriage, Pastor Nagbanjoa and Claire received their miracle in answer to many prayers on Jan. 29. when baby Denise was born!

*Albert, his wife Claire, and baby Emmanuella. Albert and Claire learned a lot about heartlessness and about God's care. Our prayer is that Albert will remember this as he begins his career with the police.*



waited a long time with no intervention by the hospital staff. When Albert complained, **the midwife told him to leave or she would make sure that his baby died.** Five hours later, a young midwife came on duty and realized the baby was in distress. She took steps to quickly help Claire deliver the baby. The baby had to be rushed to the neonatal unit to be revived and had to stay in the hospital for several days on antibiotics. **We could tell story after similar story of the heartlessness of the medical system here.**

The educational system is rife with abuse as well. Tani is the wife of Jeremie B., the MIJ pastor who is planting a church in Atakpame. When Tani was in high school, she scored among the top 10 in her entire region. She finished her studies at the university when she was only 20, younger than most students here start their university studies. She came to our student center in Lome when the uncle she was staying with put pressure on her to have sex with him. **In Tani's last year at the university, one of her professors, later to become the head of his department, began pressuring her for sex. When she refused, he marked her grade in his course as an 8/20 when she had really received an 18/20.** When Tani went to have her grade corrected, she was told that it would be less trouble and expense to just take the course over again. She took the course over again and successfully completed the work. This time, she did a required project with 4 other students. The official records showed she had not done the project. When she took in the record of the project with her name alongside of the other 4 who had received credit, she was once again told that it would be easier to take the course again than to change the record. **All of our students can tell horror stories of abusive treatment by teachers and administrators.**

Our son Daniel's friend, Fousseni, has been driving an intercity taxi to make a living. He told us about driving a law enforcement officer who was transporting a prisoner. The officer told Fousseni to stop and pick up a passenger alongside the road who was looking for a ride. Fousseni told him that he couldn't carry any more passengers as his taxi was full. **The officer told him that it would be okay, he would put his prisoner in the trunk** and the person could sit in his seat. Fousseni explained that he couldn't do that as he doesn't like to overload his vehicle.

We often find ourselves outraged by the lack of heart that people here show. Women, the poor and children are the most often abused. **Some would say that what is need are more Christians. It isn't as simple as that.** On a recent trip to Lome, one of our students in an advanced degree program noted that usually the Muslim professors show more compassion than the Christian professors. We were shocked. We have since asked many students, and almost all agree, that, in general, the Muslim professors show more compassion. **It is stories like these that make us passionate about raising up true Christian disciples who will be salt and light in their society.** It also makes us committed to establishing a church led by leaders who know how to share the gospel and make disciples in a way that leads to changed hearts and a changed society.

### **Training Pastors, Old and New**

Scott Johnson came with us in January 1995 to train village pastors. This year he came for his **20<sup>th</sup> visit** and his wife, Becky for her 3<sup>rd</sup> visit. Scott taught at the annual pastors' seminar on the principles of 12 Step Programs. I have long appreciated how steps 1 and 2 are actually the necessary steps to receive the gospel and to receive God's help with any besetting sin in our lives. I taught the same material on money that I taught to the students in September. Jayne spent a day teaching on the importance of children's ministry. It was a joy to spend time with Scott and Becky, to see their love for our Togolese leaders, and to see the love the Togolese leaders have for them.

**Every year we are thankful that we have mature African leaders capable of teaching.** This year, Pastor Nakordja taught on leadership and Pastor Nakpergou taught on mentoring. Perhaps the most encouraging part of the seminar was the number of young leaders who came. For years it seemed like we had the same leaders who had been with us from the 90s. In our small group times I was able to observe several really bright young leaders. **This is one of many factors that is pushing us to seek the funds to develop our training farm for rural pastors.**

*Another photo of Titus, the world's cutest and most amazing grandbaby.*



*Scott Johnson came for his 20<sup>th</sup> visit to teach our pastors on the principles of 12 Step Programs. His wife, Becky, came for her third visit.*



*Dinner on the roof of the Lome student center with Scott and Becky Johnson gave us a great time of discussion about the pressures and shame that students face from their families and villages if they don't get jobs and give to their families.*



*Jeremie and Tani Bombonkpen have spent the last two years planting a new church in the town of Atakpame. In their February meeting, the board of Ministère International de Jésus made the decision that, in July, Jeremie and Tani will begin training to lead our training farm for village church leaders.*



*During our February pastor's seminar, Jayne led worship and taught on the importance of ministering to children. A survey taken at the beginning of the seminar showed an astonishing unawareness of the needs of the children in their churches on the part of the pastors. At the end of Jayne's teaching, most of the pastors committed to being personally involved in ministering to the children of their churches. A commitment like this goes very much against the grain of the culture.*

## Finances

The university of Kara now has two campuses. All of the science, math and medical departments have moved 20 miles to the north to a new campus. Two of our key students are now at that campus. Because we believe so strongly that they need to be in our student center, we have bought motorcycles and are paying for gas and maintenance for both of them. This is not sustainable in the long-term. We need to build a second student center near the new campus. We are looking for **\$7,000 to purchase land for a new student center**. Please seek God to see if he is leading you to invest in the lives of a generation of student leaders

The MIJ board has chosen **Jeremie and Tani Bombonkpene** to lead the training farm for village church leaders. All during Jeremie's time in theological training, we kept asking him about his vision. He always talked with passion about his concern for the rural villages. Jeremie and Tani are two of the brightest and most dedicated of the younger generation of leaders. They have learned a lot through suffering as they have worked under very difficult circumstances to plant a church in Atakpame. **We are asking God for \$10,000 to build the first buildings to house those who will lead the farm**. Pray as to whether God would have you give to this vital project.

Last year we told you about our program to test, treat, and vaccinate all of the students in our student centers for hepatitis B. We also needed to treat a few key leaders who had already graduated. As we have already noted, **many of our most key leaders were among those who tested positive. The number of positive cases went far beyond what we budgeted**. We thank God that we are now beginning to see students end their treatment with all who have been tested so far showing **no trace of the virus! At this point we have a deficit of \$7,000**.

## Prayer

- **Praise God** that we now have the funds to put a well on our training farm. This is the first necessary step to begin developing the farm.
- **Pray** for the family of Lardja, one of our earliest students who fell gravely ill just as he was about to graduate as a police commissioner. His sudden death is a blow, not only to his wife, family and village, but to many of our leaders and students who knew and loved him.
- **Pray** for the people of Burkina Faso, the country on Togo's northern border, as attacks by jihadists and by former members of the presidential guard have closed schools and made travel dangerous throughout the country.
- **Pray** for Jeremie and Tani as they leave their church and prepare for their role at the Training Farm. She is newly pregnant; **pray** for a healthy baby and delivery.
- **Praise God** for his protection and health in our many travels.

Breakfast Bible studies with Jacques P. are a joy. He is a passionate evangelist and leads Bible studies at the North Campus where he majors in physics.



*And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.*  
Ezekiel 36:26

**We praise God for the part that you play in establishing a work where hearts are being changed.**

In the joyful service of the King,

Gregg and Jayne