

The Ministry of Jesus Togo

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Dear friends and supporters,

We thank you for your generous contributions, your faithful prayers and other support that are helping us plant **a church where the power of the gospel shines brighter than the power of tribalism. Tribalism one of the most destructive forces in Africa.** We discussed this topic in depth with our students during our September seminar on Galatians.

“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” Galatians 3:28

“The Ibo are like that, was the reply of one of the Ministry of Jesus workers who was justifying the Moba in Dapaong rioting and destroying the Ibo run businesses. A motorcycle taxi driver had been murdered and it was rumored that the suspect who had been arrested was an Ibo. When it turned out that the suspect was actually a Moba who had a haircut like the Ibo, **it made no difference to the prejudices of our worker, who claimed to be a Christian.** Many are aware that, at the time of the Rwandan genocide, **Rwanda was considered by many to be**

Teaching people to truly enter into God's presence in worship is one of Jayne's passions. It involves much more than practicing music. That is why Jayne asked the Kara worship team to meet with her one evening to pray for the worship during the seminars.

Gregg first noticed Vivienne at a GBU camp last spring. She is an orphan who had earned her own way to camp. In Dapaong, Gregg noticed her trying to negotiate the price of a Bible down so she could buy a bible with her last \$2. MIJ leaders decided to bring Vivienne to the Kara student center



the most Christianized country in Africa. Many are not aware that **when election violence killed over 1,000 people, (and maybe double that number) in Kenya, the two tribes most involved were the two most Christianized tribes in Kenya.** Many of our students say that their greatest fear in coming to our student centers was the fear of living with members of other tribes. Although I've read some interesting articles about the tribal nature of US political problems between the red tribe and the blue tribe, the problem is still more acute in Africa.

One of the saddest forms of tribalism here is the deep division that exists between Christian denominations. There are major denominations here which have no interest in joining in with other churches if they are not in charge or if they are not somehow benefiting. Our students are constantly tempted to use the knowledge they gain at seminars to win arguments with friends from other denominations on campus. **Our first generation of key leaders is known throughout the country for their leadership roles in local pastoral groups that cross denominational lines.** Pray that our students will be able to move forward with that same spirit.

We are convinced that only a deep understanding of our gospel identity can break the power of African tribalism. Our study of Galatians revealed how Paul was opposing a group who wanted to impose Jewish culture and Jewish law on the Galatians. Even Peter fell into this form of tribalism. Over and over again we came back to the conclusion that **our deepest identity comes from what Jesus did for us on the cross** and not from anything we have done or any group to which we belong. We asked, are you a Moba, Kabiye, Konkomba, Ewé, etc., who is a Christian, or are you a Christian who is a Moba, Kabiye, Konkomba, Ewé, etc.?

Since our return to Kara, one of our students shared with me that **the most meaningful aspect of the seminar on Genesis for him was our discussion on the implications of being created in God's image.** We discussed how Hitler's Germany only valued people for what they could contribute and ended up killing the handicapped and aged. We discussed how tribalism minimizes those outside the group and how Togolese society mistreats the poor and powerless.

Please pray that our students will be able to carry what they learned to their campuses, where they are often encouraged to divide into groups according to tribe. **Pray that, unlike the faith in Rwanda and Kenya, that the faith of the Togolese church will grow to make a major dent in the sin of tribalism.**

Serious Political Unrest

The day after we landed in Togo, there were protests in several major cities calling for the president of Togo to step down. Several people were killed in the city of Sokode. **The same family has ruled Togo for 50 years. Togo is currently the only country in West Africa that has no constitutional term limits.** There was recently an article in the Washington Post that noted that the Togolese opposition is now being advised by those who helped bring down long-standing dictators in Gambia and Burkina Faso. The internet was shut down for 6 days during one protest. During similar protests in 1993, the banks and major stores were closed for one year. **Not only are the conditions for violence great, but everyone suffers from the economic fallout, especially the poorest. Please pray for both justice and peace in Togo.**

Training Farm

In our last newsletter, we shared our vision for a training farm for rural church leaders. Our leaders felt that we should have 50 hectares (110 acres) of land and that we would need a minimum of 20 hectares. **We praise God for the generous gifts that have allowed us to surpass the minimum need and begin looking for land.** We still recognize that more land would be better and it is not too late to give as God is leading you for this project.

Website We have made many changes to our new website based on the feedback we have received. Please check out more new pictures and continue to give us your feedback. TheMinistryofJesus-Togo.org You can email us at theyarians@yahoo.com.

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 our **unity** with the Togolese church leaders as we near our goal of having a church that is able to carry out all essential functions without outside resources.
- **Pray** that the Togolese church would stand united and faithful in the current political crisis.
- **Praise God** that some of our university students are responding to the call to serve God sacrificially in the rural villages.
- **Praise God** for our students who are catching the vision to serve God with all their heart, soul, and force no matter what their profession.
- **Pray for peace and justice in Togo.** Some want peace but don't want to give justice. Some are making claims for justice but ignoring the need for peace. **God is the God of peace and justice and Togo needs both.**

Moïse: The development of a leader

2013: Moïse, photo below on the left, graduates from high school and plays for Kara in the annual Kara-Lome game during the student seminar. He plays with anger, extreme aggression, and argues constantly with the referees. (Moïse later testifies that, despite many years in a village church, **he never understood what it really meant to be a Christian until he came to Kara.**) Gregg has a talk with him after the game. 2014: Lots of improvement but still lots of anger, aggression and arguing. Gregg talks to him after the game. 2015: Just a few problems. Gregg makes a few brief comments after the game. 2016: A great effort with only a few problems. Gregg congratulates him after the game. 2017: Moïse and the Lome captain come and say they would prefer to join together and play against a team from town **in order to evangelize** the team from town by their good sportsmanship. **Moïse spends the game running around offering players from both teams a hand up, calming tempers and encouraging everyone.** Afterwards, the MIJ team shares the drinks they brought and spends time together with the other team. Moïse spends the second week of the seminars encouraging the high school students in developing their leadership skills. **THAT, is what our ministry is all about.** PS. The person who corrected Moïse went on a weekend youth retreat as part of the interview process for his first youth ministry job after seminary. He was told that all went well with the exception of his extreme competitiveness on the basketball court. **Doing ministry from a gospel perspective reminds you of who you are and of what Christ alone can do.**



"...making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth."

Ephesians 1:9-10

Thank you for uniting with us and with our Togolese brothers and sisters to realize God's wonderful plan to unite all things in Christ.

In the joyful service of the King,

Gregg and Jayne