

The Ministry of Jesus Togo

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Dear Friends and Supporters,

“Don’t you have any other children? You should go home and concentrate on your other children,” said the hospital personnel to one of our pastors from Guerin-Kouka and his wife as the doctors did nothing for three weeks while their daughter wasted away. How easy it is to take for granted how much the doctrine of all people being created in the image of God has had on Western culture! **When we teach, we try to get to the level of worldview change. It is difficult and takes years. But, only this kind of teaching will bring about gospel transformation.**

Annual student seminars

In Togo, just getting a university diploma does not guarantee economic success. Our 23 years of experience here have confirmed what many other missionaries have discovered: **The road out of poverty comes through internalizing a biblical worldview. Internalizing a biblical worldview comes through regular exposure to God’s Word taught in a way that directly confronts the worldview issues.** That is why the theme our first week of seminars with over 120 university students was ***What The Bible Teaches About Money***. When I asked one of our students what was the most important thing he learned, he replied, “That wealth is acquired step-by-step, a little bit at a time.” He went on to explain how he regrets that he did not learn earlier to save a little bit each day or each week from his motorcycle taxi business. If he had, he would have the resources now to establish a

Worship is an important part of all of our seminars. Often the true meaning of the gospel is understood better through songs than through teaching. Jayne working hard on training up leaders to take her place.

Pastor Nadge and his wife brought their daughter to the hospital in Kara, where she spent 3 weeks without help for an intestinal blockage. Within 5 hours of our arrival at the Christian hospital in Mango, a successful surgery was performed.



more solid business.

Week 2, we were joined by high school students from all over Togo and taught on marriage. Over the years we have taught many marriage seminars. One of the main things we changed this year was to make it much more gospel centered. **We have concluded that it is useless to try to get people to try and follow the biblical instructions for marriage if they are not ready to submit themselves to Jesus and to God's Word.** One of the highlights of the week was watching the reaction of the girls when we separated them from the boys to teach them about the roles of husbands and wives and about sex. Girls who were quiet all week opened up and all of the small groups continued to work on their discussion questions for an hour past the allotted time.

Back to the villages – Answering the call

The origins of The Ministry of Jesus' work in Togo is in the villages. **One of the core points of our vision has always been, "Preaching the gospel where it has never been heard."** Many years ago, we realized that there would never be a truly independent national church made up of only village churches. There needed to be a base of educated people with jobs in order to provide the leadership that would be able to avoid the many doctrinal errors that seem to plague the African church, and to provide the financial base necessary to operate without outside support. When we began to emphasize the work with students, it was with the goal of resolving these problems so that we could go back to emphasizing reaching the unreached villages.

For the last couple of years, we have been sensing that the time has come for us to begin a new strategy for reaching the villages. Our recently purchased **training farm, where we will train rural pastors** while teaching them how to make a living in the villages is one part of this strategy. Another part is **encouraging our students to consider the call to serve as pastors in the rural villages.** You may be wondering why it is so hard for young people who came from the villages to go back. Recently, when we attended a meeting of university students who were discussing the issue of Africans who were trying to migrate to Europe being sold in the slave markets of Libya, we finally understood the depth of sacrifice that would be involved. These students shared that they would rather face the risk of slavery and death than face the shame that they would bear if they returned to their villages without a job commensurate with their education level. Not being from an honor-shame culture, it is hard for us to fathom what a powerful force the fear of shame can be. It helped us to understand why students who have graduated but have not found jobs are reluctant even to visit their villages.

In this context, we are celebrating the decision of Jeremie Youmanle to be the first MIJ student with a university degree to answer the call to go back to the villages as a pastor. In April of 2017, on our way out of the country, we crossed paths with Jeremie in Lome. He was on his way back from four months at the Calvary Chapel Training Center in Ghana. Knowing Jeremie's heart and giftings, **I asked him to pray about possibly serving in the villages. He immediately responded that God had been speaking the same thing to him.** In March, Jeremie married Immaculee, a young woman who came to Christ through the ministry of the Kara church in 2012. In July, they began the Youth With A Mission school of pioneer church planting. We just returned from a four-day trip to attend the ceremony of the completion of the classroom part of their training. They will be doing most of the practical part of their training serving in their eventual post in the village of Kpatchangbane. They will be working with 2 other members of their graduating class for 6 weeks and then will stay to continue their work. **The board of Ministère International de Jésus has set a goal of planting 30 new churches by 2022.** We are convinced that Jeremie and Immaculee have the heart and the training to motivate the churches in their sector to plant at least 6 of these churches. **Please pray that God will give Jeremie and Immaculee good health, spiritual protection and wisdom as they begin their work in Kpatchangbane. Also pray that others will be motivated to follow their example.**

The big news in our family is the birth of **our first grandchild, Titus Benjamin Roach** on July 7.



Jeremie and Immaculee were one of three couples to get married the week before we left last Spring. All three couples are now expecting their first child.



Jeremie, white shirt on the right, and Immaculee, blue dress on the left, are commissioned by the staff of Youth With A Mission to the work of pioneer church planting.



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The big event our first weekend in Dapaong was the wedding of Sibti and Blessing. Sibti is a graduate of our student program. He has worked as a volunteer with handicapped children for many years. In a society where the handicapped are considered expendable, he is now interviewing for positions as a special education specialist. Blessing is in her third year at the university. Both will be church leaders for many years to come.



We are praising God for answered prayer in the life of Bodjana, a beloved student leader. Last December he was at death's door with a non-functioning liver due to hepatitis, and doctors had nothing further to offer. We were overjoyed that he was still alive in February and able to come to the pastors' conference (where we are praying for him in this photo.) Today, Bodjana is fully healed. He is now leading a church plant in the village of Adjendgre, not far from Sotoubuoa. Everyone knows he is only alive by the intervention of our loving and powerful God.

Finances

In accordance with our 10-year plan to eliminate dependence on outside funding, 2019 will be the last year that MIJ receives any money for the essential operations of the church. However, **this does not mean that our expenses are going down.** In fact, the opposite is true. Educating the students who will support the work costs way more than the sums we used to pay pastors. Creating a **self-sustaining farm** is an enormous project. Not only do we need to construct all the buildings and equipment, but **we also plan to invest heavily in training the director of the farm and developing the training materials.**

We also feel called to continue to support MIJ in other areas that do not lead to dependence. This especially includes **leadership training.** As the number of churches grows, the costs of seminars are increasing. We also have increased spending to send key leaders for outside training.

Last December we shared with you the high cost of **educating key leaders who are now at the masters and doctoral level of their studies.** Dale is in year two of his doctoral studies and should soon be a university professor. Augustin is finishing up year one of his masters in translation. He wants to specialize in the vocabulary of religion and theology so that he will be **able to translate quality Christian books that are now only available in English.** We have at least three very key student leaders who will be starting masters level studies this year.

Soon, many of the students who started their hepatitis B treatments will be finishing their treatments and will need to travel to Lome to be retested. We will also begin testing the new students who enter our centers this year. We are still trying to catch up from the unexpected sum that we spent on this program last year. **If God is leading you to contribute to any of these needs, or to give an undesignated gift for our ongoing needs, your contribution will be a blessing to many.**

Prayer

- **Praise God** for extraordinary leaders like Nakordja, Nakpergou and Damigou, who were chosen by their peers for a special program that sends pastors to Israel. We praise God for their many years of sacrificial ministry and wisdom that has led to this honor.
- **Pray** that the leaders of MIJ will find a way to guide the many university graduates who are now looking towards bi-vocational ministry.
- **Praise God** that we have received a gift of \$4,000 to begin to develop the training farm. This will allow us to build the first dormitory building.
- **Pray** for us to have the health and strength to continue to serve God in Togo.
- **Praise God** that the political crisis has cooled off somewhat. **Continue to pray for the peace of Togo**

Essodesam (r), and Jean, our neighbor, add lots of joy to our lives while stretching our patience and wisdom. Essodesam has now been living with us for one year.

*O Lord, if you heal me, I will be truly healed; if you save me, I will be truly saved. My praises are for you alone!
Jeremiah 17:14*



We praise God for the part that you play in bringing God's salvation and healing to Togo.

In the joyful service of the King,

Gregg and Jayne