



Serving the suffering church around the world



May 2007 Jun

All's Well That Ends Well

By John Clark, Mali, Africa

Sunday was a very exciting day for us. We marked the 10 year anniversary of the water well at Pastor Christophe's church in Sabalibougou. There was a big party to celebrate the occasion. The church was filled beyond capacity and several special guests were in attendance, including the chief of Sabalibougou. Pastor Christophe's message was about Living Water and focused on the theme of wells and water in the Bible. There were several special musical numbers by various choirs in the church and different youth group drama presentations, including one reenacting the well's early days.

We prepared a video clip featuring a young boy playing Pastor Christophe preaching as women come out to draw water. It was a big hit with the congregation! After church, we gathered around the well with the church leaders and the chief and his entourage to rededicate it in service to the Lord. After the dedication, the entire church was invited to stay for a wonderful meal of African rice and sauce. It was delicious.

Prior to 1997, there were few sources of water in the area. When Christophe's family and the few Christians attending his church

would go for water at a neighboring well, they were charged twice as much as other people because they were Christians. In 1997, a man named Alec Forman with Mission Aviation Fellowship (MAF) offered to dig a well for the church. Upon its completion, Pastor Christophe offered the water from his well free of charge to his neighbors. What a powerful testimony this was to Sabalibougou. The Christians were now offering their water for free despite having been charged double in the past by the same people now coming to get their water free of charge. As people began flocking to this new source of water, Pastor Christophe used the opportunity to share the Gospel and talk about Living Water, much like Jesus did in John 4 in the Bible. Because of the church's generosity and Pastor Christophe's reaching out to the people, the small church began to grow.

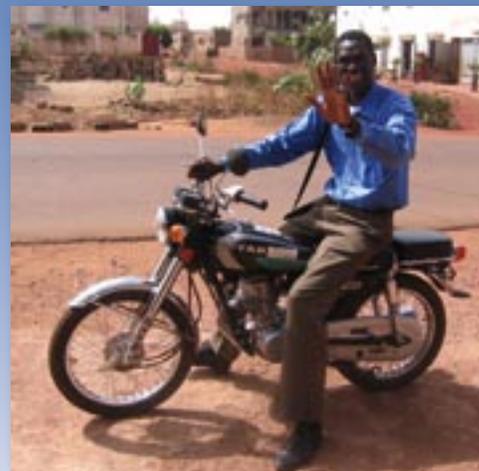
For the past 10 years, the well has been an important tool to help the church reach out to its community and shine its light throughout Sabalibougou. Even though he's a devout Muslim, the chief of Sabalibougou has been a supporter of the church and its activities. When the church began a large expansion a couple of years ago, the chief was instrumental in helping the church expand its property to

Thank you!

Here is a letter of thanks from Pastor Christophe in Mali, who has put his new motorcycle into the service of the gospel ministry, with help from the gifts given to the Raven Fund. This bike replaces one which was completely worn out.

God's great mercy to all those who provided assistance to enable us to be in the joy of this moment as we have a new motor bike to go with a bag of literature from village to village to announce the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ. This bike fits me well, and now I am able to go everywhere I need to travel with this motor bike. My family joins me to thank you sincerely. We thank you from the bottom of our hearts for your help. I will be purchasing a helmet and insurance for the bike. The whole community of my church thanks you, and prays that God blesses you!

Pasteur Christophe Dembele



make room for the growth.

The well has helped the Sabalibougou church grow from a handful of believers to a weekly congregation of over 150 people. And there's still a lot more room for growth. A new church building is now under construction that will have a capacity of up to 1000 people. What an amazing transformation it's been for us to witness the past few years.

Today, Sabalibougou has running water and electricity. Even with land space being at a premium, the well was preserved and the new church building butts right up against it. There are frequent water outages in Sabalibougou and people still come to the church well to draw water. It still serves as an important service of the church.

Please join us in praying for the chief of Sabalibougou. Although he is Muslim, he is showing interest in the church. It is obvious he's witnessing the love of Christ in the church and sensing there is something important happening here. He attended the church for the last Christmas service. The church honored his attendance. He then gave a blessing to the church and said he would like to see it outgrow its new development. Wow! That's quite a statement from a Muslim. Let's pray that he will soon become a Christian and experience the grace and love of Jesus first hand.

Opportunity to help reach The Fulani People



Pastor Guindo leading in worship.

By Richard Shaw
General
Director,
Praise, Inc.

Pastor Benjamin Guindo is a tireless evangelist and prayer warrior. He has two daughters in their early twenties, but sadly he lost his wife about four years ago. She went to be with the Lord during a prayer meeting. She was a faithful pastor's wife and a lovely Christian woman. Benjamin is one of the most faithful men among the Mali pastors. He works hard in everything he does, including farming to feed his family, pastoring a church, preaching evangelistic campaigns, and conducting a healing prayer ministry.

It has been his dream and desire for several years to take time out for further training. He is proposing a year-long course in Ghana, the total cost of which is approximately \$3,400. This covers the course, all food, accommodations and travel from Mali to Ghana and return.

He has a heart particularly burdened by the Lord for a nomadic people group called the Fulani. Benjamin is a Dogon, of which there are three groups each speaking a different dialect not understood by the other groups, so all Dogon

speak Fulani as a trade language.

Benjamin is pictured (below left) on a motorcycle leaving on an evangelist trip. (The rifle is for game in the bush, not for making converts!).

PRAISE-SPONSORED CONFERENCES IN CENTRAL AMERICA

By Jim Cardillo
Director of Special Projects

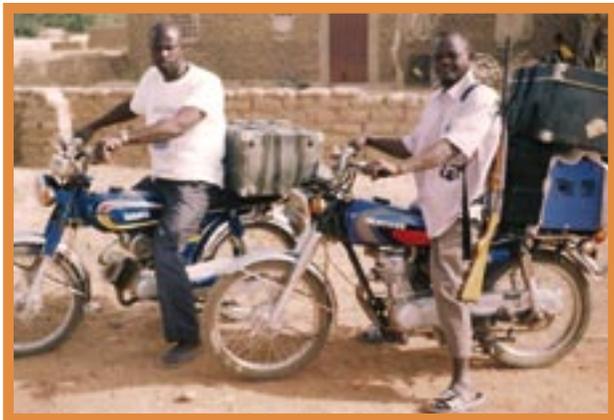
Estimated 115 Pastors
Receive Training in Honduras,
Nicaragua, and Panama

I just returned to all the comforts of home here in the States, and am once again reminded that God has blessed America. The last two weeks were filled with the blessings of opportunities to minister, and be ministered to, by our brothers and sisters in Christ in Central America. Christ's church is alive and well in the remote areas where our mission took us. I'll attempt to recap the highlights of the last couple weeks.

The focus of our Praise-sponsored trip was three-fold:

- Identify additional pastors for financial assistance
- Conduct educational conferences
- Identify areas of need and establish projects for assistance

Our team consisted of Paul Hutton, Central American Director for Mission to the Americas (Praise is partnering with MTTA on its Central American projects), and Rev. Tim Olson, pastor of Turning Point Community Church in Olympia, Washington, who was our conference teacher. Also on the team were James Nelson of Boise, Idaho and Jeff Lang of Auckland, New Zealand, who joined to observe missions teams in action, and to



See Fulani article



Erick Sanchez is pictured here with his wife Yaomi and daughter Sara. Erick is a key pastor and ministry leader in Honduras.

have a cross-cultural experience. I served as the representative of Praise and team coordinator.

We began in Honduras with Erick Sanchez who leads a team of pastors and leaders that minister to the Lencas Indians in the western mountain region of Honduras. Erick is currently financially assisted by Praise.

We held a two-day conference outside La Esperanza, and there were 47 pastors and ministry leaders in attendance. Pastor Tim did an excellent job in presenting the leadership principles from the book of Nehemiah. Besides hours spent in classroom facilitation, Pastor Tim spent much time overseeing practical work sessions, provided one-on-one seasoned pastoral insight, and held many question/answer sessions.

Erick did an outstanding job coordinating the pastors' travel (some up to 8 hours), lodging, meals and conference facility arrangements (we kidded him that the center was named "Villa Timeteo," as if it had been named in Pastor Tim's honor).

At the conference, Praise was

able to provide each pastor with a copy of Chuck Swindoll's "Hand Me Another Brick," as well as a dictionary. In addition, we provided eleven churches with additional reference materials such as Bible handbooks, commentaries, etc.

During our visit, Erick and Paul submitted to Praise five additional pastors for consideration of financial assistance. We are looking

forward to locating sponsors for these dedicated servants as they continue to minister in such a needy region of the country. It truly was a blessing for all of us on the team to have been able to fellowship with so many in full-time service and see first hand what the Lord is doing in Honduras.

The next stop was Managua, Nicaragua. We had the privilege to meet Regaberto Reyes, the local national leader of Mission to the Americas. Regaberto had assembled 50 pastors and key leaders to attend the two-day equipping conference.

He had reserved most of a hotel and conference center outside Managua-it was perfect for the event.

Pastor Tim once again presented the principles of Nehemiah, and the material was very well-received and much appreciated. Again, work sessions and question/answer times were invaluable to the group. Praise was able to provide each of these pastors also with Chuck Swindoll's book.

Our time with Regaberto in



These pastors were blessed to be part of the first pastors' conference conducted by Praise in Nicaragua, held in Managua, Nicaragua in May, 2007.

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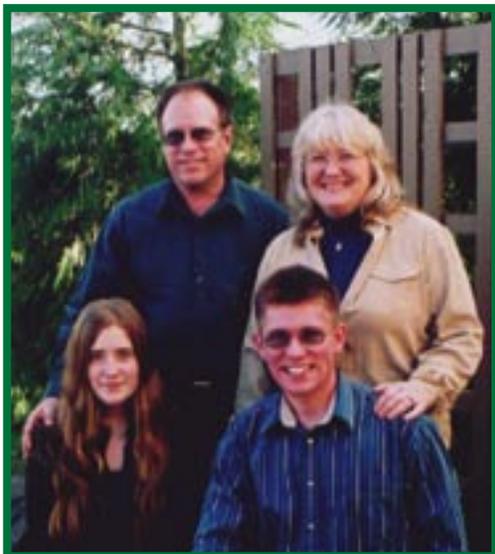
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Jeff Miller, pictured here with his family, is our new Oregon/Washington Representative. Watch for an article of introduction in our next newsletter!

Pray for these key pastors in Honduras who attended the Praise conference in May.



Managua was really special. It gave us the opportunity to fellowship with a vibrant group of believers that also attended portions of the conference. Dramatic stories of the transformed lives describe a majority of the group: former drug dealers, alcoholics and gang leaders all worship and praise the Lord together. It made for an inspiring time. We talked with many of these relatively new believers, and came away with a greater appreciation of how great our God truly is.

Regaberto has submitted to Praise eight pastors for financial assistance, each one worthy of our prayerful and financial support. Our observations of Managua, and Nicaragua in general, were that the country is slow in recovering from the natural disasters that continue to plague it (earthquakes, hurricanes, etc).

This, coupled with unstable governments, cause misery and poverty on a far-reaching scale.

The last stop on our trip was Panama. After arriving in Panama City, we drove four hours west to Santiago, where we met Luis Matuta, our MTTA / lead ministry contact in Panama.

Our original intent while in Panama was to meet local national leadership and identify pastors for

financial assistance. As it turned out, we were able to conduct a half-day conference with 21 pastors from Panama and Costa Rica. A number of pastors and leaders from Costa Rica's border area met with us, and 13 pastors were submitted for consideration for support from Panama and Costa Rica.

One of the ministry leaders that I met while in Santiago leads a prison ministry. The most amazing thing about this leader is that a year ago, he himself was an inmate at the very facility where he now ministers. When the Lord directs a plan, laws and governments are irrelevant.

This trip was rewarding from every aspect. We at Praise are very thankful that we are able to be, in a small way, a part of what the Lord is doing, not just in Central America but around world. If you would like to contribute to a future conference, or special project send your tax-deductible gift to Praise, Inc. and specify Central America. Also, there are a number of pastors in need of monthly support (\$30/mo). The average daily wage in Nicaragua is \$1.25, so \$30 greatly offsets living costs and enables the pastor to continue in ministry.

Please contact us for details of the pastor sponsorship program.