

November 10, 2024

Morningside Bible Church

Greetings from Hope Radio,

As the fall colors are I'm sure fading in Minnesota and the season there is getting ready for the arctic blasts that will surely descend on the north land, here in northern Togo we are also going through seasonal changes. Here we are at the tail end of the rainy season, but the rains are not going away quietly. I'd say we have had afternoon rains in 75% of the days I've been here.

There are positives and negatives to this year's rainy season. When I was here this past January water was scarce, that is not this case right now. In fact, there is too much water. The river to the east of us has more than overflowed the banks, people here don't recall the surrounding land being as flooded as it is now. That flooding is causing many problems in the fields of many Togolese farmers as they are being flooded out. Some completely, as in they will have no crops to harvest, nothing to plant next spring and worse still, no income from that. Others are partially flooded and will be able to harvest some of their crop. Of course there are others who are far enough from the river that they aren't flooded.

All of this is coming on an area that is already struggling financially. Many people take out loans so they can plant crops in the spring and then pay the loan off, (wholly or partially), with their harvest. You can see where this is heading. I know some farmers here who are facing devastation and they are already hungry because they don't have enough food for their family.

We do have a benevolence fund for our Togolese people at the radio station and others in the area. Will those funds be enough is the question I have. Would you please pray that God would intervene in these situations in a way that gives glory to Him and draws people to the Savior? I'm going to give you three names and ask you to pray for their salvation (although there are so many more): Ali, Lantaga and Beaufrer (Bo-frer).

In the background is the anticipation of when and where the Islamic terrorists will strike next. So far they have only attacked military targets...being there is a military base within a mile of the radio station, we certainly have a solid focus on our prayers in this regard. Obviously we pray for the safety of the people in Togo, no matter who they are, but I was reminded the other day that these Islamic extremists are people God loves and from whom Jesus died. Therefore, I ask you in joining us to pray for the salvation of these extremists as well as the many Muslims in our area and the many villages in this area who are steeped in spirit worship. The fields are truly white.

Let me tell you about the bright light here also. God is at work. A new church is being started in a village called Bonee and I had the privilege to visit there on the 27th. As you can see from the pictures, the church meets under a tree...for now. This is exciting to me because the gospel is changing hearts in northern Togo. There are two men in this group, Cosi and Nestor. They've been saved for a number of years and both have members of their family who are muslim. However, family members and the surrounding muslim community have noticed the difference in their lives and the blessing of God on them. Also, at the end of the service today, several people spoke up and said they wanted to begin pursuing building a church building.



I threw in this picture with the rooster in the middle of the circle of worshippers because that sort of thing just doesn't happen in our church.



Besides the new church, the Savana Bible Institute is in its second year and the enrollment is up from the first year. Evan Drake, one of the missionaries here is teaching, but so are several of the Togolese pastors who have been through our pastoral training program. To me, that is wonderful; to see these men who have been trained now training others in the Bible. If this growth continues in the institute, they are going to need to buy property and build a building of their own...no small task here in Togo.



If I could toss in more thing before Sandi jumps in: I was told the the head of Togo's version of the FCC has visited Hope Radio in the past year and is very impressed with the facility and what we are doing. He has told numerous people and radio stations that Hope Radio is the best radio station in all of Togo and if anyone wants to know how to do radio, they should pay Hope Radio a visit.

Sandi here. October 10th I left with a group of people from our church to fly to Guatemala for a medical missions trip. In the group was an eye dr., two dentists, one of which was from Alberta, Canada, five nurses, a surgical tech and a few other people. We also had a Guatemalan dr. and dentist join us as well. In total, there were 18 of us. Thursday night I had three hours of sleep, no naps while traveling and arrived in HueHuetenango 19 hours later. It was a long day but was fun seeing new sights. Saturday we prepped for the clinic and presented in a church service. We presented twice on Sunday. Monday we took off for our first clinic, approx. 1 3/4 hours away. I started out making pill packages in the AM, but switched for helping with eye classes in the afternoon and for the rest of the week. I had a blast giving instructions in Spanish and when I didn't know a word, there were translators to help. The clinic had 1,225 pairs of glasses cataloged and a computer program and in labeled boxes available, so once I was told the number to look for, I helped fit the glasses and helped the person decide if they liked the glasses or not. We had lots of reader glasses and Elisha helped pick out glasses she thought the person would like. I had so much fun fussing over people and enjoying them being able to read/see in the distance. There were no eye glass options for 11 people, so I helped them pick out a frame and their glasses will be made in the States and brought back to Guatemala in approx. 3 months.

A very sad part of the trip was when one of the three ladies that made our breakfasts and suppers was murdered while she was on her way to pick up her sister and the third lady. Emily's husband was driving and was not hurt. Gangs had moved back into her neighborhood and it is believed the murder was gang related, proving the shooter was worthy of belonging in the gang. It took 6 of us to do the work that those three ladies did! I have no idea why God allowed this to happen, but I was so thankful our group was there at that time so our church could be contacted to send finances to help the family. Think of feeding your neighborhood, family and church family for the wake. This starts around 8:30 PM and runs until around 6 AM. The usual food in Honduras was chicken, rice, beans, chips, salad, cake, Coke, other pops, and coffee. There is no embalming available in Guatemala, so the body has to be in the ground in 24 - 48 hours. Because this was a murder, more costs were involved, and think of needing to buy a casket in a hurry. Emily had two teenage daughters.

Thanks to those who prayed regarding motion sickness for me! I was armed w/pressure bracelets, ginger capsules, tea, and was also given ginger chews. I felt like I was fighting off motion sickness off and on, but never got "sick". I did struggle with altitude sickness, but kept popping Roloids. Three or four times I caught myself drifting to the left as I walked.

The head of the ministry in Guatemala has asked if I would be willing to come back and help with Women of Faith conferences. Women in Guatemala are not treated with respect and the conferences help the women see how valuable God sees them. We are asking the Lord if this is something He wants me to be involved in.

This update was a little longer than usual, but as you read this, I'm sure you noticed that both of these trips were wonderful and highly fulfilling. Thanks very much for your prayers. In the next update, I will have a couple of videos about the Bible institute and the new church plant.

In Christ,
The Silseths

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