

A VOICE FROM SENEGAL

Mission Newsletter by the Ndjungus / February 2006

A medical team sojourns in Senegal

A medical team from the Trinity UMC in Wilmette, Illinois, sojourned in Senegal January 20-February 2, this year. The team was led by Dr Carol Meynen. Dr Carol is professor at the North Western University and member of the Trinity UMC in Wilmette. This is the second time Dr Carol and her team have come to Senegal. The first time was last year at the same period of the year. The team included Dr Carol and her husband Tom, two nurses: Stacey and Kathy, and two pastors: Chris and Joanne.

During their time here, the team traveled to different towns and villages of Senegal to help people with their health issues. Blood hemoglobin tests, blood pressure tests and many other medical examinations were performed to determine the health conditions of those who came to meet Dr Carol and her team. The team benefited also a strong help of Dr Aly Bashir, the so skillful medical doctor working for the UMC in Senegal; Mbwizu Ndjungu: coordinator of the Wellness Program in Senegal; Nicole Mpamy and Elise Masoya: 2 medical agents.



Dr Carol examining a patient in Kaolack

The trip around the country took them to Mbour, Nianing, Nobandane, Kaolack, Thies and Saint-Louis. Dakar was the last place to be served. Before all that, the team paid a visit to Goree Island to learn about the slavery trade history. Goree is located 2 km away from Dakar. It is believed that from this place some 6 million slaves were shipped to America.

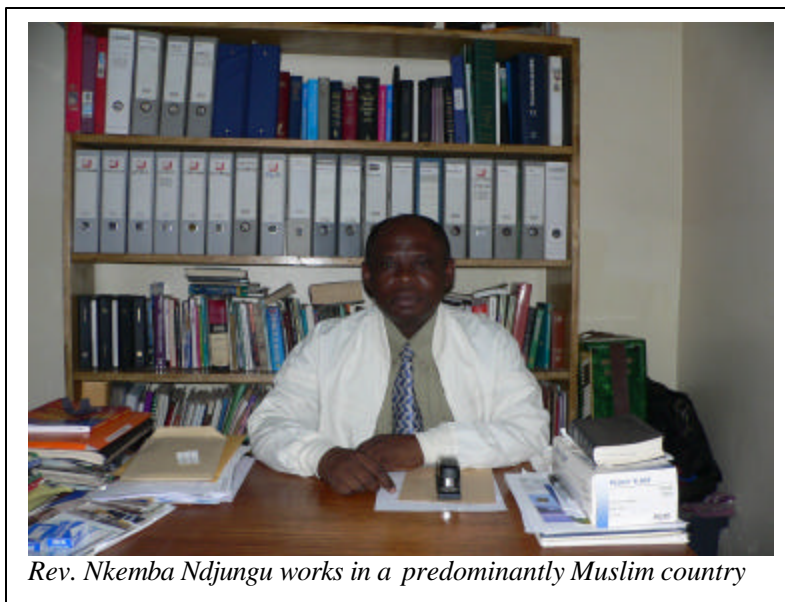
We praise the Lord for the work that the team has done in this country. Hundreds of people who ignored their sicknesses were helped and can say many thanks to the Lord for the coming of this team. Through this action our Muslim neighbors have witnessed the true meaning of "Love your neighbor as yourself". We hope that other people will join them in this great adventure next time so that "His kingdom may come and His will may be done on earth as it is in heaven."

What Dr. Carol and the team have done is worthy of being encouraged, because it is only acts like these that will change the face of this world. Most people have a negative image of America. All they know is that Americans represent 6% of the World population, but they use 59% of the World resources; so for them Americans are the true expression of greediness and selfishness. Financial and material help that the US government gives to poor countries does not benefit to the population. Most of the time, it is used by officials of those countries. But when a team like this comes and goes in villages to do what they have done, people can see another face of America and Americans. It makes a real difference.

The Methodist Hymnal Book number 423 says in its second verse this:

*Neighbors are poor and rich
Neighbors are black and white
Neighbors are near and far away.*

If Tom Colvin, the writer of this song was asked to rewrite it today, I think that he would have added this: “*Neighbors and Christians and Muslims too*”. Most terrorist acts in the world are performed in the name of religion. Since September 11, 2001 we hear speeches like: “The world is divided in two; *Believers* on one side (meaning Muslims), and *Unbelievers* on the other side (meaning Christians represented by the USA). To justify this statement, they point out to: a) Crusades where millions of Muslims were killed by Christians for the sake of the religion, b) Colonialism where countries of Asia and Africa were invaded and divided by those so-called Christian countries of Europe, c) Slavery trade where millions of human beings were sold and transported as goods to foreign lands. All those acts are put on the back of Christians. If one does not understand why some Fundamentalist Muslims (not all of them) behave they way the do, reasons of their acts are to be found in the profound meaning of those three reasons.



Rev. Nkamba Ndjungu works in a predominantly Muslim country

Islam will probably be the biggest challenge that Christians will have to face in this 21st century. Tomorrow’s world will be shaped by how we handle our relationship with Muslims today. Preaching or praying will not unfortunately erase “evil” that Christians have done in the past. Only positive acts like what this team has done will make it. Having worked for almost a decade in this predominantly Muslim country, I know that it is possible to walk toward a new era, an era of new relationship of

dialogue, tolerance and respect between Christians and Muslims through acts of “*agape*”, the divine love.

He knows Christ thanks to a woman

His name is Bâ. He is in his sixties. He is a police inspector. He was born in a Muslim family and was raised like other Muslims. He learnt from his infancy that Jesus was a true God’s “messenger”, but Christians have altered the message of the Bible by saying that Jesus is God’s son. Last year he met a United Methodist woman, Valerie Mane, his neighbor. Bâ was having high fever one evening and Valerie walked in his house and offered to pray for him. He accepted. Immediately after the prayer, he was relieved from the fever. Stricken by this power of the prayer he asked lot of questions to Valerie who took the opportunity to talk about Christ as the Savior of the whole humanity. A few weeks after that Bâ began to follow Valerie at the church. He has confessed Jesus as his personal Lord and Savior now, and we are looking forward to baptizing him very soon.

When asked about his faith journey, Bâ responds: “I regret only one thing: that I didn’t know Jesus earlier in my life. Christ brings lot of joy in my heart and my life.” His wife and children are still Muslims, but he has shared with them about his decision to follow Jesus.

Please pray for Bâ so that he may stand firm in his new faith. Conversion to Christianity in this country is regarded as a betrayal. He may have to face hostile opposition from his own family and may be at work too.

The first Senegalese woman to become a pastor

Everybody calls her Marie Agnes, but her birth certificate indicates Dibor Fatou Ndour. She has a Muslim background. She began to attend the Roman Catholic Church at one point, and then went back to Islam. In 2000, she confessed Jesus when she attended an open air crusade that we organized in a town called Mbour. Since, she demonstrated exceptional zeal and love for the Lord. We first proposed to hire her as a local evangelist in a remote area where she worked before as a literacy program teacher. Then, we sent her to a local Bible school here in Dakar in 2001.



Marie Agnes will be through her studies in June this year. She will then be on the track for ordination as a United Methodist pastor. When this will be completed, Marie Agnes will be the first Senegalese woman to be ordained as a pastor not only of the UMC in Senegal but of all other churches in this country. Senegal, being a country of strong Muslim culture, women are not allowed to play the pastoral role.

Dibor Fatou Ndour will be the first Senegalese woman to become a pastor

There are many skillful and capable Senegalese women who could serve the Lord as clergy in this country; but they have not been given the chance. Marie Agnes will be the first. A double responsibility will lie on her shoulders: if she succeeds, she will be an encouragement for others; but if she fails, she will hinder other Senegalese women to follow her way because men will find a reason to strengthen their position according to which women cannot be effective pastors. Please pray for Marie Agnes.

Note : All mission gifts to be sent to Advance number 12594A

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