

Tom Board

From: ndjungu [ndjungu@sentoo.sn]
Sent: Monday, October 31, 2005 2:02 PM
To: martymission@wisconsinumc.org
Cc: guse@wisconsinumc.org; missionbillie@wisconsinUMC.org; ny1981@hotmail.com; mukazu@hotmail.com; mufukan@yahoo.com; nkemban@hotmail.com; revncarmichael@yahoo.com; deanewilliams@sbcglobal.net; slippery_slim@hotmail.com; Zipmon@aol.com; mdietz2@new.rr.com; Aspurg@aol.com; James Skomer; amyzent2000@netzero.net; dmiller@kingsway-umc.org; c-meynen@northwestern.edu; teb@alumni.northwestern.edu; Bofagin@aol.com; tsfuller@palacenet.net; Gcoulson@gbgm-umc.org; Dwu@gbgm-umc.org; SDixon@gbgm-umc.org; jeanb@faumc.org; calumcps@execpc.com; billbache@earthlink.net; revmonk@hotmail.com; rjpdn@earthlink.net; chatsplas@sbcglobal.net; humc@internetni.com; puzisha@verizon.net; amyzent@yahoo.com; David McNaughton; bill wigham; Everett Woodcock; golfandpreach@juno.com
Subject: Mission Newsletter of October 2005

A VOICE FROM SENEGAL

Mission Newsletter of November 2005 by the Ndjungus

Empowering Local People

One of our duties as missionaries of GBGM in Senegal is to identify and train Senegalese who will become some day leaders of this church. **Prudence Nicole Mpamy** is one of them.



Nicole Mpamy

Prudence

Nicole (that's how she is well known) works for the Wellness Program as a "Community Health Agent". She underwent a special training for this end that was conducted by Dr Aly Bashir some 3 years ago. This year, she and her colleague, **Valerie Mane**, are attending a Nursing School here in Dakar where they will get an official nursing qualification. Nicole is one of those people who have a great potential of leading the destiny of the future of the United Methodist Church in Senegal. We ought to grant her all

the support she needs. Her training as a nurse will cost 1000 \$ each year for two years.

Nicole is 39 years old. She is a widow. Her husband died on December 23, 2004 of a sudden heart attack leaving her with six children: five boys and one girl.

When her husband died everyone thought that **Nicole** would never survive. But her faith in the Lord Jesus has helped her to keep life going.

When asked of how she feels leaving without her husband she loved so much, she answers: "The Lord has given me a husband, and the Lord has taken him away from me. Praised be His name! I must live for the Lord and for my children."

In respect for the Mankagnes tribal culture where her husband belongs, **Nicole** had to dress herself in black clothes from the day of her husband's death until the end of the mourning period that was celebrated on September 6, this year. During this period her head was also covered with a black scarf. During this period also, she had to observe many other interdictions such as not to eat any beef meat, not to shake any male's hand, etc.

On September 6, a special ritual was conducted by her husband's family at her expenses to set her free from all the cultural bounds related to her husband's death. This included her taking a special meal to the cemetery. According to the belief of Mankagnes, if she was unfaithful during this mourning period by having sexual relationship with other men, she would die there and never come back home. Now, Nicole is back to normal life. How wonderful it is to see her smile and praise the name of the Lord for what He has done for her. Please pray for Nicole.

Discovering another aspect of Senegal with "Bissap"

Bissap is the Wolof name of hibiscus plant. In Egypt it is called "Kankadi". Hibiscus originally is from India. It has rapidly proliferated through the Sahara area. Alike okra, this plant grows well under hot temperatures.



The kinds are eaten as food. But the one we talk about is mostly known for its red color. It is not the plant that is red, but its fruit. The plant has almost a height of 2 meters.

In Senegal, it is sowed in June and reaped in October through November. Its fruit is dried and exported to Europe (France, Italy and Germany) where it is used to add a natural color in some meals. But, there is still a reasonable quantity left in Senegal to be used for many purposes because it contains vitamin C, and it can relieve digestion problems.

“Bissap” in this country means mostly “soft drink”. It is found everywhere: in the market place and even alongside the streets. A small plastic container of ½ liter costs 0.125 \$, and that’s enough to quench your thirst. With only 1 \$, you can have 8 of them. All over Senegal “Bissap” is the “National Soft Drink”. Don’t forget to ask for “Bissap” when you visit Senegal!

Pastors’ Training

From October 17 – November 5, our local pastors in Senegal have undertaken a three week training session. This is the second of several modules leading them to ordination.

The United Methodist Church does not have a theological school in this country. All our pastors are trained in schools belonging to other denominations. This is why we need to complete their curriculum with some purely traditional Methodist courses before their ordination. In the first module, held March 8 – 26, 2004, they learned about the following subjects:

1. The life and work of John Wesley
2. Writing and delivering sermons
3. The Methodist Family: an understanding of all denominations that claim to belong to John Wesley.

Three qualified people were invited as facilitators: Dr. Kongolo Chijika, professor at the United Methodist University in Katanga, DRC; Rev. Keith Rae, Executive Secretary of Evangelization and Church Growth at the GBGM office in New York; and Freddy Schmid, former Mission Secretary of the UM Swiss board.

This year, we have two lecturers: Dr. Kongolo and a Roman Catholic priest. Dr Kongolo’s teachings stress two critical subjects in the eyes of Africans: 1) Contextualization and 2) African Theology. Africans think that “the Gospel is a gift wrapped in some material”. It came to us wrapped in the European or the American culture. How do we unwrap it and make it recognizable by Africans? This is the aim of those two subjects.





United

Methodist Pastors in training in Senegal. From left to right: Front: Emmanuel Diouf, Dembo Diatta, Daniel Norcor, Antoine Ndecky, Dibor Fatou Ndour and Etienne Dione; Back: Valentin Iloga, Jean Mendy, Léon Mbu, Dr Kongolo Chijika (facilitator), Jérôme Bako, Joseph Bleck and Jean Pierre Ndour.

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The Catholic priest, Leonard Kapya is giving our pastors a global scope of “Understanding some aspects of the Roman Catholic faith”. Catholic Church is seen differently in this country. To some extent, some even think that Catholic believers are not “**born again**”. As we work in this country where the majority of people are Muslims, it is critical that those who claim the name of Jesus understand each other and find ways to work together. In fact, it is senseless to talk about “**Christian-Muslim dialogue**” if we don’t know ourselves. We hope that this is the beginning of a new era and a bright future of comprehension and cooperation between all the children of God in this country.

All mission gifts to be sent to Advance number 12594A

Note: Please send us your church email address to let us communicate with you better.

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Nkemba Ndjungu
Mbwizu Ndjungu
Eglise Méthodiste Unie
BP 15487 Dakar-Fann
Senegal
Email: ndjungu@sentoo.sn