

BANYO IS BOOMING!

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<http://www.transformationalministries.com>



Back in Michigan we used to say there are two seasons—winter and construction. Much the same can be said here in Cameroon where extreme wet and dry seasons require that all your building activities be completed before the first rains arrive in March and melt your mud blocks like butter. The section of Banyo we live in has become a bit of a “hot spot” for new homes during our absence thanks to factors such as a great hospital, friendly people and enough distance between downtown and here such that it’s like living in the “African suburbs” if such a thing can be said when you live in the bush.

But more than all this, God has been at work in this community for over a decade through various missionaries and organizations, and many fruits from those labors are starting to bare. Our colleagues have been hard at work supporting various projects that will serve to support the local Fulbe and build more bridges to reaching the Unreached in our local community.



Mud blocks have been laid for the construction of a Fulbe youth hostel



One such project is the construction of a Fulbe youth hostel that will allow Fulbe children who normally live too far away from town to attend the government school. Furthermore, they will be loved, encouraged and exposed to a Christian worldview. Tiffany and Chad hope to assist with the “afterhours curriculum” by providing hands-on training in various life skills and health education.

Plans are also underway for the startup of a FM radio station that would broadcast in the Banyo region. The programming will likely include local news, community development discussions and serve as a platform for sharing the Good News through the airwaves and in the local dialect.

And just up the hill from the Northington abode a restaurant/store co-operative is nearing its grand opening. It’s not just any old restaurant/store, though; it’s a shared venture by the local Fulbe to support themselves, their ministry to other Fulbe and those who are struggling with various trials in the “bush”. Chad hopes to contribute to this effort through the production of homegrown products such as honey, chickens and various crops. In the process, the Fulbe co-op members will receive training in these areas.

Last but not least on the list of construction projects in our neighborhood is our own home, which we are thrilled and relieved to say is complete! Besides a few water leaks and unwanted six-legged guests, all is well.

The Northington Newsletter

The Top Three...

Prayer Requests—Pray the Lord will provide...

Completion of the various ministry projects above	1
Receipt of our resident permits prior to expiration of our VISAs	2
Continued growth of the local Fulbe church	3

Prayers Answered

Completion of the construction of our home and receipt of title to the land where we have built	1
Improved physical & spiritual health of our refugee friends	2
Continued good health of all our family, especially Chloe who is now fully mobile and walking	3

Ministry Needs:

- The right staff to assist with the youth hostel and radio projects
- A director to manage the Resource Center in town once it is reopened
- Sponsors for water projects, including hand dug & drilled wells, gravity flow systems and expansion of existing systems
- A robust, mobile drill rig (DeepRock Hydradrill 700 Model)

REFUGEE ROADTRIP

It has been nearly three years since Chad and a team of nationals installed several wells in Fulbe refugee villages in eastern Cameroon. Civil unrest in the Central African Republic led to the migration of thousands of Fulbe across the border where they settled in small, scattered villages often with no more than they had managed to carry with them. The transition from a nomadic lifestyle to one based on cultivation is not an easy one for those whose families have raised cattle for untold generations.

Anxious to see how his friends had managed over the last few years, Chad recruited his colleague who had been ministering to these villages along with his short-term assistant to hit the



road for a “refugee road trip” and follow-up assessment.

It was a relief to find all the wells were still functioning. It was a greater relief to find the population of all the villages had grown in size while also experiencing improvements in their general health. Most of our time was spent greeting families from compound to compound, praying together, sharing stories and filling up on the Cameroonian staple of fofou (i.e. boiled flour or rice shaped into a ball you eat with your hands dipped in a sauce).

However, there had been some religious conflict in one of the villages, which really had its root in a political and power struggle after some members of the village refused to succumb to the demands of a self-proclaimed leader. Formal charges were brought against individuals who were singled out because of their pursuit of truth. Fortunately the charges have since been dropped, but it is certain that tensions will remain high as persecution continues.

Of course no road trip is complete without a few wild encounters, like the monkey we encountered below who had no problem posing for a few shots. I can’t say the same for the baboons we saw crossing the road, but I don’t mind staying some distance from them!



A SHORT-TERM VISITOR JOINS THE BANYO RANKS

The latest addition to the Banyo team, Jeremy, hails from Dallas, Texas and has come as a short-term missionary for several months to support the ministry efforts amongst the Fulbe. We pray for direction as he



seeks God’s will for his future on the mission field. We appreciate the energy and humor he has brought with him. As a former soldier, he brings a sense of security while traveling remote bush roads, too (:



Partners in Missions with Chad & Tiffany & Chloe! **W+M**

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If you have any problems with submitting your gift online or prefer not to do it this way, gifts can be sent to the following address: **P.O. 9691 Tampa, Florida 33674**

Thank you for partnering with us!

WHAT'S ON DECK?



With the major house projects out of the way, it's time to move on to bigger and better things in the ministry world. Numerous water project opportunities have popped up on the radar over the last month.

The Banyo gravity flow water system has continued to operate, although the dry season presents numerous challenges as the spring source wanes and water table drops. The system has also continued to age, as evidenced by the incessant battle against leaking valves and broken pipes. Our team hopes to conduct a full assessment of the system and seek grant monies to rehabilitate the system to ensure that the Muslim population in town and hos-

pital continue to have a reliable source of water well into the future.

In our neighborhood, plans are in the works to provide backup water systems for both the local missionaries as well as the hospital through the restoration of two wells installed many years ago by the former water resource engineer/missionary. Also, a new stand pipe project has been proposed to support the growing population on our side of the bush.

In town, we hope to put an old steel tank back to work by providing a reservoir for drinking water during the rainy season when water is plentiful. The lack of additional springs on the mountain to meet the demand during the dry season has forced some "out

of the box" thinking that will make the most out of existing resources while providing the maximum supply. Such activities will go a long way to improving "community relations" and insuring we are welcome by the local leaders.

Several Peace Corps volunteers have also been seeking assistance with water projects in their respective villages, which could open doors to new opportunities and Unreached peoples.

The Resource Center in town is currently closed with hopes of reopening in the near future.

Tiffany has been gradually blending her motherly duties with visits to "bush Fulbe" in need of health assessments and medicine.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Every morning the Fulbe believers and missionary folk get together for daily devotionals. Lately we've been working through the book of Acts and came across a verse that roused a question out of me that seemed simple enough at first. I asked the Fulbe believers how they referred to themselves in Fulfulde, their native tongue. We had just read in the Fulfulde bible Acts 11:26, which used the word *Masiihinko'en* to describe Fulbe Christians.

I asked if this was a word they used to describe themselves, and a discussion ensued regarding what name they actually employed to describe themselves. It became apparent that there was no hard and fast answer to the question, and it occurred to me that the beginning of an indigenous

church among the Fulbe today was not much unlike the beginning of the church as described in the book of Acts. I remembered how many of the early believers did not even refer to themselves as Christians but instead proclaimed they were followers of "the Way". It was humbling and exciting to see the parallel between the development of the early church in the New Testament and the development of the Fulbe church taking place right before us. Over 2,000 years later people were still seeking and finding the Way, the truth and the life (John 4:16)

"The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch."

- Acts 11:26



CHLOE AND THE BIG MAN

In African society, you will find a bit of a hierarchy that includes "big men", or men who by means of position, education or resources have been "elevated" in social status and receive a higher level of respect from the population. There are numerous local government leaders who fit this description, including a man we recently hosted at our home in the process of receiving the final title to the land. He is a government official known as the *sous-prefet*,

and has authority over numerous administrative matters in the Banyo area. Chloe was a big hit with the local leader, who happily posed for the picture at right. It was an important day for us because land disputes often arise in Africa. We were reminded of this recently when we learned of some missionary friends in another African country who were struggling with potential land issues. We praise God the right people have been in our path to complete this process.



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*Reaching the Unreached one need
at a time...*

Our Mission

Our mission is to provide for the material, spiritual, and social needs of those who need it most through sustainable, transformational development. The Gospel is the source of lasting transformation and offers a plan for a holistic and integrated approach to community development and world change.



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CROSS-CULTURAL CORNER...

You're probably familiar with the expression, "You don't know what you've got 'til it's gone...". This takes on new meaning in Africa, where a lot of things are gone that we have grown accustomed to over the course of our lives in America, which can include a variety of things. Of course food is a big one here. I have never really been one to have cravings, but I sure do miss sandwiches with deli meat, chicken wings and a nice fresh salad from time-to-time. And of course there are numerous creature comforts that are lacking in the "bush". And then there are the matters of orderliness and cleanliness.

But one thing you may take for granted that we have come to realize is very cultural in nature is privacy. As Americans, we tend to put up a lot of boundaries around our private places, such as our home. If we are going to have visitors, it is typically by appointment and preceded

by a phone call or e-mail. It is not common to have neighbors frequenting your door throughout the day and evening, nor do we have random people passing by our home at any given time. These are all typical scenarios in our daily living situation in Cameroon. After some time, it can really wear you down and can make it difficult to "get things done", but that, of course, is also a very Western mentality. We live in a relational environment built first on relationships, not projects or accomplishments.

Our situation, however, is probably more difficult than that of the typical Cameroonian. There are multiple reasons for this. First, we tend to do work in the home, like computer-related tasks, reading, etc. Our Cameroonian friends consider time spent in the home as time resting; it is not a place to "get things done". This can make things like writing this newsletter a long ordeal as various visitors come to visit during my "rest". The second factor that makes this particular



issue a difficult one for us Americans is that we typically have multiple visits a day from folks seeking work, assistance or, in the case of the local children, a balloon! We often feel like we can never do enough, but we remind ourselves we are not just here to meet physical needs, and we can always offer our friends, young and old, our love, prayers and encouragement found in the faith, hope and love of our Lord and Savior.