

A TIME TO SOW, A TIME TO HARVEST

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WORLD TRANSFORMATIONAL MINISTRIES

The Northington Newsletter

Living in a place where agriculture dominates the ebb and flow of life, everything seems to take on a cyclical feel. We now find ourselves reaching the end of the wet and lush rainy season and preparing to enter the dusty and parched dry season. This is a time of harvest as community members pick their corn and grind it in hopes that it will sustain them for the next 12 months. Much like the rest of the world this year, the weather has been unusual and unkind to this year's crops. Yields are down as well as the hope that there will be enough food to weather the months ahead.

This agrarian picture also seems to reflect our sentiments during this particular season of our lives. Many seeds were planted this year in the form of various ministry projects in partnership with our colleagues, including a youth hostel, a resource center to teach technology and health, and various microfinance startups across Cameroon. However, planting is only the beginning of a long season of nurturing and cultivating a good crop. Some things can be managed, like resources. Other factors, though, are more unpredictable, just as the weather is always an unknown when one plants a crop. With this type of crop, though, it's the behavior, attitude and actions of the people involved that become the unknown element.



The recently constructed youth hostel took on its first students last month in an effort to provide a home for Fulbe children in the bush that want to attend school but live too far away normally.



The first class at our Resource Center in town, where students learn about technology and health.

The results of this year's "planting" have been mixed. If projects were our goal, then we would probably consider the work done thus far a success. However, projects are not our goal—transformation is our goal. Projects are simply the vehicle by which lives and hearts are transformed as people encounter the Gospel message in real and practical ways.

Using that as our standard of measure, this year has been a challenging one. Transformation is a process that plays out in our daily lives as we encounter decisions that reveal our motives and character. Sometimes it is a messy process, but we continue to seek God's grace, wisdom and mercy in the midst of our failings and sin. We continue to learn the meaning of forgiveness and "loving our neighbor" as we have witnessed numerous instances where culture and Christianity collide (more on this in the Cross Cultural Corner on page 4).

Yet despite the "bumps in the road", we continue to run the race marked before us. We remain encouraged by the progress that is being made in the growth of the Fulbe church and its members as it begins to take shape and mature through a process of refinement. Pray for an abundant harvest!

The Top Three...

Prayer Requests—Keep praying for...

Peace during this week's national elections. Rumors abound of protests and discontent.

Continued growth of the Fulbe church, not just in numbers but in spiritual maturity as well

Arrival of our drill rig in Doula and minimal customs fees

Prayers Answered—Thank the Lord for...

Opening of the Resource Center in town, which will serve as an opportunity to build relationships

Funding to purchase the mobile drill rig that will open doors to new ministry opportunities

Continued support from our partners despite the difficult and uncertain economic times

Ministry Needs:

- We are seeking additional support to pay the customs for a portable drill rig that will be arriving this year.
- "Pick-a-Project" sponsors for items we have in our Resource Center, like biosand filters, fuel-efficient cook stoves, solar lights and Kenya Top Bar beehives. And we're always looking for water project sponsors!

SPECIAL THANKS...to those of you who have contributed to the procurement of a mobile drill rig, especially FOCC and River of Life. We continued to be humbled by the generosity of our supporters and faithfulness of our God. Pray customs will be merciful!

ASDAT Opens...Again!

During our first term in Cameroon in 2008, we opened a small "Resource Center" to provide training and materials in the areas of appropriate technology, health, agroforestry, animal husbandry and water treatment/supply. Besides attempting to improve the physical condition of the inhabitants in Banyo, it was also our desire to build new relationships in the community and demonstrate the love of Christ in action. Complications during our absence led to the closing of the center but not the vision.

This week we re-opened the Association for Sustainable Development and Transformation (i.e. ASDAT) in a small boutique located in town (see pic on the right). Cameroonians love long acronyms (:= The 6'x12' space is barely enough for our beginning class of 6 students, but it is a start to something we hope will continue to grow in size, number and influence as new concepts are introduced and knowledge is shared freely.

The idea of the free exchange of knowledge is a rather foreign idea in Cameroon and one we perhaps take for granted in America. There is an underlying fear by many Cameroonians that sharing the skills they have with others could endanger their own opportunities for work. Consequently, information is difficult to obtain for many and coveted by those who possess it. We hope to demonstrate that the open dissemination of information actually has the oppo-



site effect by empowering all people to improve their own lives and communities without hindering the progress of others.

Besides just teaching about various technologies and health subjects, ASDAT also offers the materials for sale at the center. For members, the cost is only the amount we paid for the item. We are also going to attempt a new idea here in Cameroon—Rent-to-Own! It's a risky venture in that there are no guarantees that equipment will not be destroyed and that payments will be made, but it make things more accessible to those who normally may not have the means.

The idea is a modified version of the U.S. system. Like in the U.S., monthly "rent" pay-

ments are made until the value of the item is paid off and then it is owned. However, if a month goes by where the payment cannot be made, the item can be brought back until the member is ready to continue payments and they keep the credit up to that point to apply in the future. This system will be tested on our biosand filters, fuel-efficient cook stoves, solar lights, beehives and beekeeping suits.

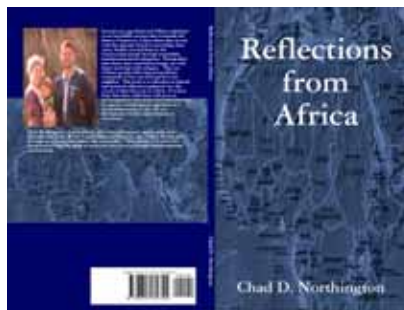
Tiffany will be teaching on subjects such as nutrition, hygiene, prevention of malaria and HIV/AIDS and family planning. In conjunction with her teachings, items like mosquito nets will be offered to the members to promote good health and disease prevention.

It is our hope that ASDAT will only be the beginning of an idea that could be "transplanted" in other communities and towns across Cameroon and perhaps even beyond. The concept of "appropriate technology" will vary by region, resources, goals, and knowledge, but the concept remains the same—openly share knowledge and the love of Christ through practical demonstrations while providing access to the materials needed to improve the quality of life.

Please pray for a positive response to ASDAT, especially from community leaders.

REFLECTIONS FROM AFRICA

After nearly 3 years, Chad has finally gotten around to officially publishing a small collection of cultural and spiritual insights from their 1st year in Cameroon in a book titled *Reflections from Africa*. It is our hope that it will serve as a sort of guide for those considering a role in missions in Africa as well as entertainment for those wishing to experience Africa vicariously through the eyes and words of someone else.



The spiritual reflections and journal-like format also offer an opportunity for small groups to explore missions with a practical emphasis on cross-cultural living. *Reflections from Africa* is now available online at www.lulu.com or click on the link on our web site under the "What's New?" section on the left. We hope you enjoy reading it as much as Chad enjoyed writing it, and we welcome any feedback.

Partners in Missions with Chad & Tiffany & Chloe!



We are in need of both monthly supporters as well as project-related gifts.

One-time contributions or monthly "subscriptions" for various gift amounts can be done securely through PayPal on our web page. A receipt is generated electronically for your tax-deductible gift when done in this matter. Visit our home page at www.transformationalministries.com and click on the "Donate" tab at the top.

If you would like to support a specific project or missionary need, please peruse our "Pick a Project" page with descriptions of specific projects, their geographic location, people group and required funding amount.

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!

WORLD TEAM AFRICA CONFERENCE



You may recall that WTM is now officially partnered with another organization that shares our passion to reach the Unreached, World Team. It was our privilege last month to attend their Africa Conference in the Cameroonian city of Bamenda. The conference focused on the themes of community and vision as the organization looked forward

to the future and explored the concept of community in all its forms, including integration of nationals and other organizations into the larger network across the globe working together as the body of Christ.

As you can see from the picture on the left, Chloe had the opportunity to make her big stage debut as part of the kid's program. A special thanks goes to Tychicus Ministries from the U.S. They came to Cameroon to serve missionaries and act as a support ministry who strive to keep the missionary strong and healthy physically, emotionally and spiritually. For us, they helped keep us sane by entertaining Chloe for a few hours each day while we were able to focus on discussions, worship and fellowship with our colleagues. Thank you Tychicus!



Chloe's big stage debut!



A group shot with our World Team colleagues

A great deal of work is underway by World Team missionaries in Cameroon in the areas of translation and literacy. Please pray for their work on these long-term ministry projects.

DRILLING AND LIVING WATER

It is with extreme joy that we are able to announce that a mobile, mud rotary drill rig has officially been ordered from the States and should arrive by the end of the year. The rig is similar to that pictured to the one pictured to the right that we used for test drilling during our first term in 2008. Procurement of a new, more robust drill rig will open doors to new opportunities throughout Cameroon.

Our first drilling projects will be conducted right in our neighborhood where we would like to install a well at the new youth hostel to ensure a steady supply of drinking water to the children during the long and difficult dry season. For the same reason, we also hope to install a well at our own home after

suffering through numerous water shortages last year despite the presence of a gravity flow system on the mountain.

Inadequate recharge of the aquifer has resulted in a decreased water supply the last couple of years, and the impact has been especially felt by Banyo's residents in town. We are considering a water campaign for our next term to install at least one well in each local community in Banyo to serve as a secondary source of water and ensure that safe, potable water will no longer be a concern for our neighbors. If you would like to learn more how you can help support drilled water projects, please contact us. Please pray we will not encounter difficulties with customs upon arrival of the equipment.

"Jesus answered her, 'If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water.'"
- John 4:10



FULBE AND AJAMI

We recently hosted a "mini conference" in Banyo led by a colleague who is doing a great deal of work to provide materials in Ajami, or Arabic, script to those who are already able to read and write it. This method avoids the long and difficult task of literacy training that is often necessary to teach people how to read and write the Roman script you are currently reading.

Many Fulbe in this region of Cameroon and throughout Africa have already been trained in



Arabic script as a part of earlier Koranic studies. Rather than "unlearning" this knowledge, the logical approach is to use what they already know. Of course this creates a bigger challenge for the translator, but the end result is greater accessibility of Scripture to a broader audience that otherwise may never have had the opportunity to hear and read the Word of God. This is an important work that we were proud to witness and pray will continue unhindered as a great translation task lies ahead.

TRANSFORMATIONAL MINISTRIES

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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.



We're on the web!

<http://www.transformationalministries.com>

CROSS-CULTURAL CORNER—Christian Culture

Wife beating, embezzlement, polygamy, betrayal...sounds like the most recent hit reality show, doesn't it? Well, welcome to our reality these past few months. At a time when the infant Fulbe church seems ready to move from crawling to walking, one event after another seem to be obstacles to progress. These obstacles are often blamed on cultural differences that we wouldn't or couldn't possibly understand according to some. Perhaps there is some truth to this as we also know there are aspects of our own culture that our African brethren also would fail to understand having never been submersed in a Western living situation.

However, understanding or not understanding a cultural nuance does not qualify it as right or wrong. It is in those moments when we want to turn to our cultural "norm" that we must turn to our Bibles. Then, and only then, does the veil of cultural blindness fall off to reveal the true nature of a behavior or tradition and the wrongness or rightness of it.

Let me explain what I mean first by taking an example from our own culture and then demonstrate how it plays out in our African ministry. Take divorce, for example. It certainly

is not uncommon in American culture and is readily accepted by nearly half of the population, where approximately 50% of marriages end in this way. The statistics for married couples in the American church don't show much of a distinction between the secular and non-secular viewpoint. The Bible, however, clearly identifies divorce as an unacceptable solution to marital problems accept in the case of adultery, and even then forgiveness is still an appropriate Christian response.

In our current cultural context here in Cameroon, there are many things that happen on a regular basis that are most certainly not acceptable or even lawful in American society. Spouse abuse is an unfortunate example of such an activity that occurs on an all-too-frequent basis, including amongst the group of believers in our community. Another member of the church abandoned his claim to be a Christian in order to pursue a second wife since polygamy is a commonly accepted practice outside the church.

Views on money and the stealing of money also vary considerably from what is normal to us. Last month, for example, a worker had been given a sum of money to buy materials necessary to complete the task. Instead of buying the

materials, he used the money for himself. When confronted about the inappropriate use of the funds, he indicated he had not stolen the funds because his definition of stealing was when someone forcefully broke into someone's home and took their belongings. In another instance, a member of the church stole a Bible from the prayer house to sell it and then pocketed the money without telling anyone. This kind of behavior is more common in a society where the lines between personal possessions and community possessions start to break down.

There is one culture, though, that supersedes what our respective cultures may find acceptable or common practice—that is Christian culture. Living cross-culturally has made it imperative that we look beyond the cultural norms and seek the universal Christian cultural norm. Christian living can be applied in any cultural context, but it is not uncommon for Christian values and societal values to collide, as we witness daily in America as well as here. Paul reminds us in Romans to no longer conform to the pattern of this world but be transformed by the renewing of our minds. Sometimes it is only by stepping out of the pattern we have been living in that we begin to see how much we have conformed.