

'TIS THE SEASON

Please check out our website at:
<http://www.transformationalministries.com>



As the Christmas season quickly approaches, it is a bit difficult to get in the holiday mood as dry season has also quickly approached and brought with it intense sun, dusty roads and the end of Tiffany's flowers. However, it is the season of change in Banyo as many of the Fulbe ministry projects have come to fruition and are in the process of starting or expanding.

By far the most exciting ministry project this past month has been the installation of an FM radio station that will be operated by some of the Fulbe men to reach the local community. The project has been pursued by our Converge Worldwide colleagues for nearly eight years as they have struggled to get the approval from the government authorities to begin. The door finally opened this year, and 99.7 FM is officially broadcasting to the



Chad helps mix concrete by hand as the anchors are prepared for the antenna tower cables

Banyo community and beyond. We were blessed to have a small team with HCJB come from Ghana to facilitate training and start-up of the radio station last week.

Chad has had the opportunity to play engineer by assisting with the installation of the tower anchors (pictured above). Mixing 100 cubic feet of concrete by hand is not something we'd recommend, but "African Engineering" can sometimes be a little more labor intensive than what we are accustomed to State-side!

The community has already embraced the new station and are proud to see this kind of development come to the Adamawa Region. We are extremely excited about the opportunities this ministry will bring and doors it will open that have been closed to other means of communicating the Gospel message. With the potential to broadcast a 25 kilometer radius, those not only in the local community but also in the outlying "bush" areas will be able to tune in to what could be a life-changing experience...



It will be a while again before Tiffany and the rest of us will be able to enjoy her flowers with the onslaught of the dry season.

The Northington Newsletter

The Top Three...

Prayer Requests—Keep praying for...

Arrival of our drilling rig by the end of the year and a merciful customs

Good health for our family as the transition to dry season seems to have brought much illness to our home

Unity and growth of the Fulbe church

Prayers Answered—Thank the Lord for...

Peaceful elections that concluded in October with no major incidents or protests.

Protection of Chloe is a nearly catastrophic accident at a recent community celebration

The beginning of a long-awaited radio ministry in our community

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... prayer partners back home who have been so diligent in keeping us and this ministry as a part of their regular prayer schedule. Many things happen here that only find their explanation in prayer, as you will read later in "Chloe's First Near-Death Experience"...

We briefly attended this year's annual Fulbe Conference in an effort to keep the conference "Fulbe" rather than influenced by the "Nasaara", as they call Westerners here. We've come to learn that our presence at such events can sometimes influence the way in which people behave or talk, and this can be more of a hindrance than help as this is a time for the Fulbe to come together and explore their faith and culture in ways we often cannot understand fully. As with development-type projects, ownership by the people is extremely important. If there is ownership, then it is unlikely something will carry on in a sustainable manner. This holds true, we believe, for other things like conferences.

Tiffany was invited, albeit rather impromptu-like, to teach on a health subject of her choice. After presenting a few options to the men, they chose family planning, much to our surprise. This is a difficult subject to teach and understand in this environment due to the cultural complexities surrounding the marriage structure, the reasons for having children and a variety of other cultural nuances that often differ significantly from the world from whence we come. Tiffany did a great job of navigating these complexities, and the men were very appreciative of her teaching.



BIOGAS—It's a dirty job, but someone has to do it...

If you can't tell what's in the picture to the right, imagine very fresh cow manure mixed into a wet slurry by hand and then carefully added to the large container in the background to produce what is referred to as "biogas", a byproduct of the anaerobic decomposition of organic material that can be used as a fuel for cooking. The gas is actually a combination of methane, carbon dioxide and some other impuri-



ties. It's the methane component that we use to burn on a modified cook stove. The challenge with biogas is that it takes a lot of fresh manure to produce the volume of gas that is practical for household use, which for many Fulbe families is not a problem at all. We're still trying to come up with an affordable design that produces enough gas for daily cooking while using local materials.

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!

HAVE A COW MAN!

In an effort to improve relations with the “bush” community and create an alternative source of income for the Fulbe church, several cow owners within the church have pooled their bovine resources and created a small herd that is managed by a Fulbe “gynaako”.



Our “gynaako”, or shepherd.

Raising cattle is one of the more “lucrative” endeavors in the underdeveloped Adamawa Region, but it can be challenging to keep cattle healthy and alive in an environment that can be very unforgiving, especially during the more difficult dry season when food is scarce and disease is abundant.

We received news last week that one of the cows actually turned up missing, and we’re still waiting to here a report on whether it was found or not. Cattle theft is also an issue, and sometimes a cow will be lost or injured in the bush as they forage on grasses and other plants. The herd is moved from place to place due to the scarcity of food during much of the year.



Betsyatu, our beautiful young lady cow.



Meet the herd!

CHLOE’S FIRST NEAR-DEATH EXPERIENCE

We know that’s not a title that any relative or friend wants to read, but all kids have those near-death experiences when their young, right? In this case, though, it was a bit unique due to the nature of the events in our Cameroonian context.

Every year there is an annual religious celebration that is accompanied by a sort of horse show here in Banyo. It is called “Fantasia” (wasn’t that a Disney movie?). The event takes place in front of the local king’s palace, which is probably not at all like the image of a palace that is in your head right now. Imagine a lot more mud blocks, dust and less paint and you’ll be a lot closer.

During this show, the traditional king, or

Laamii’do, sits outside in front of the palace across from the mosque surrounded by his entourage of community elites. While sitting there, groups of elaborately dressed men and horses charge towards the Laamii’do and come to a very sudden stop in front of him. Sometimes the men will brandish swords, whips or other weapons reminiscent of the days when various kingdoms stretched across this part of Africa under the control of Fulbe leadership. The men take great pride in their horsemanship and presentation. Both horse and rider are elaborately clad in turbans and tassels of various colors and styles.

This had been the first time our family had attended such an event, and we had decided at the last minute to try and catch

“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.”
- John 10:11

part of the show after teaching one of our lessons at the Resource Center. As such, we parked on a small side road adjacent to the palace and walked up to the crowd. The spectacle had already begun, and we were quickly greeted by a group of four horses and their riders who came rushing up the road only to quickly halt in front of the king. We found it was difficult to see the horses because we were behind so many people in the crowd, so I lifted Chloe to my shoulders so she could at least enjoy the show. People don’t typically put their children on their shoulders here, so I always get a few laughs or comments when I do this.

(continued from above)

This continued on like this for some time with different groups of riders taking turns. Some of them were coming in pretty “hot” almost at a full gallop before pulling back the reins. It was really quite impressive and definitely entertaining.

Things took a turn for the worse, though, as Tiffany and I were discussing how much longer we would stay. She had already taken Chloe from me and was holding her in the traditional style here on the back. All of a sudden, a runaway horse

and rider came rushing through the crowd right where we were standing. No one had seen it coming, and the crowd just scattered or was knocked down by the horse as it continued its course forward. I was knocked to the ground as I helplessly watched Chloe fall from Tiffany’s back in what seemed to be slow motion. I jumped over Chloe as quickly as I could to try and protect her from the horses hooves. Fortunately the horse didn’t turn and miraculously missed us as it passed.

Tiffany’s protective mommy instinct kicked in immediately as the not-so-nice mother came out and

she began scolding the rider as he passed. We quickly inspected Chloe’s body for any injury and were relieved to find the only scratches were on our own bodies.

We quickly left the event accompanied by numerous apologies. We later learned that they had asked the man to discontinue riding, but he refused. Later on, him and his horse actually fell down during one of the passes from what we understand. We don’t think we’ll be suing anyone, but it certainly was a scare and both the first and last time we attend

Fantasia!

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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—Living in Community

It would be fair to describe our life in Cameroon as a world of contrasts when compared to our manner of daily living in America. Perhaps these contrasts are the greatest in the realm of community and how that plays out every day in its various forms. Living in community is one of the defining characteristics of our African lifestyle and one that is difficult to easily define or understand fully.

It begins with letting go of the independent nature that we realize is a product of our upbringing in Western culture. In African community, everyone has a role in the larger community—a part to play so to speak. This often takes the form of a sort of hierarchy that is established by things like age, family status, resources available (or at least perceived resources), education level, and, in our case, the color of our skin. As a Western minority in this environment, we are immediately, albeit reluctantly, elevated to a higher status in this unspoken hierarchy. Whereas in the America some of these same factors (e.g. resources, education, etc.) may elevate

someone in our society, too, in Africa this “ranking system” brings something with it—expectations. The Biblical parable of “to him who has been given much, much is expected” plays out in a very tangible way in our day-to-day interactions with people here that never occurred as middle class Americans. Here we are regarded as people who have the resources to provide jobs, pay medical bills, school fees and transportation costs of others, solve difficult physical and spiritual problems and many more expectations that result from our perceived position in the community.

The things that once just made us average Americans now make us stand out in a way that leaves us feeling overwhelmed most days by the demands, needs and expectations we encounter. Of course this also opens doors to new and unique opportunities to be engaged and involved in people’s lives in intimate and very real ways. However, there is no “shutting off” these interactions. They come at any time and in many forms from many people typically unannounced and unexpected.

Our character has been stretched in the areas of patience, perseverance, compassion and generosity. We often find ourselves yearning for an “average, simple life”, if such a thing exists. Our emotional “tanks” are emptied quickly, as are our pockets. It’s extremely difficult to find a balance between being a cheerful Christian giver while not breeding a dependency that, in the long run, can be detrimental to the well-being of the individual, their families, the community and even the country and continent when regarded on a much larger scale of similar activities occurring in many African localities.

At the heart of most problems one will often find the heart, and unless it changes, no amount of money, resources, compassion or aid will alter the situation permanently for the better. We pray that in the midst of community living at this level, our hearts will remain soft, our eyes open and our example appropriate.