

CFH CHRONICLES

CHRIST FOR
HUMANITY'S
NEWSLETTER

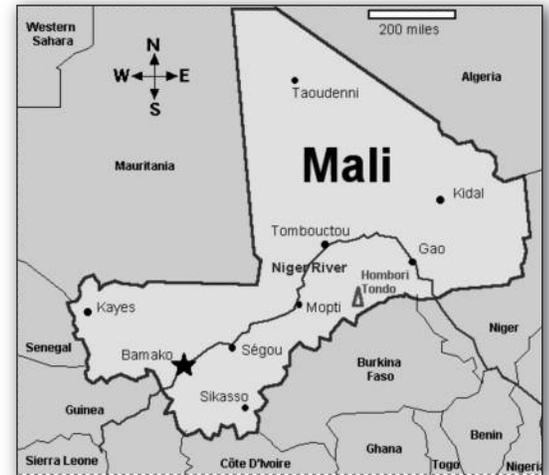
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"AND THIS GOSPEL OF THE
KINGDOM WILL BE
PREACHED IN THE WHOLE
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TO ALL NATIONS..."

Mali Revisited

Christ for Humanity has not sent a mission team to West Africa since March 2012. During that mission trip, Ronda Tyson and her two ministry team members were delayed from returning to Tulsa because a military coup siezed Mali's government. For the first time in ministry history, CFH's Crisis Management Team was called into action, evaluating the situation with the State Department and contacting the American embassy in Bamako, which provided a safe-house for our team until the airport opened for international travel. Over the ensuing years, five Islamist groups continue to be actively engaged in northern and western portions of Mali; however, the eastern regions of Koulikor, Sikasso, Segou and Kayes have experienced little to no violence.

After a container of medical aid – provided by CFH and Colorado's Crossroads Church Northglenn – arrived safely in Bamako in late January, Ronda Tyson, CFH's Director of West African Outreach, and her husband John, a pastor at Fellowship Bible Church, decided to return to Mali. Their mission was to provide support to a number of missionary friends, to preach and teach in several churches, and to follow-up with Christian doctors who



received medical aid sent from the U.S. CFH's Crisis Management Team was once again briefed and ready for action should the need arise, while everyone prayed that this trip would be safely completed.

After traveling a grueling 24 hours, John and Ronda touched down in Mali's capital Bamako at 8:00 p.m. on Saturday, July 16th. In-country missionary friends Jim and Jennifer Bowers picked them up at the airport and took them to the guest house they manage for visiting missionaries. After a short rest, the couple hit the ground running to accomplish the many ministry activities arranged for them by the Bowers. The couple attended Lumière Church Sunday morning, followed by a meeting with English-speaking missionaries of various denominations later that afternoon. Monday was spent visiting some of the clinics that received medical equipment and supplies sent from Tulsa. These private clinics were opened by doctors who decided to forego more lucrative employment at area hospitals in order to serve and witness to their patients, most of whom are Muslims. During the first week in Bamako, Ronda also spoke to several ESL classes, a ministry opportunity she has undertaken on several of her past visits to Mali.



John and Ronda Tyson

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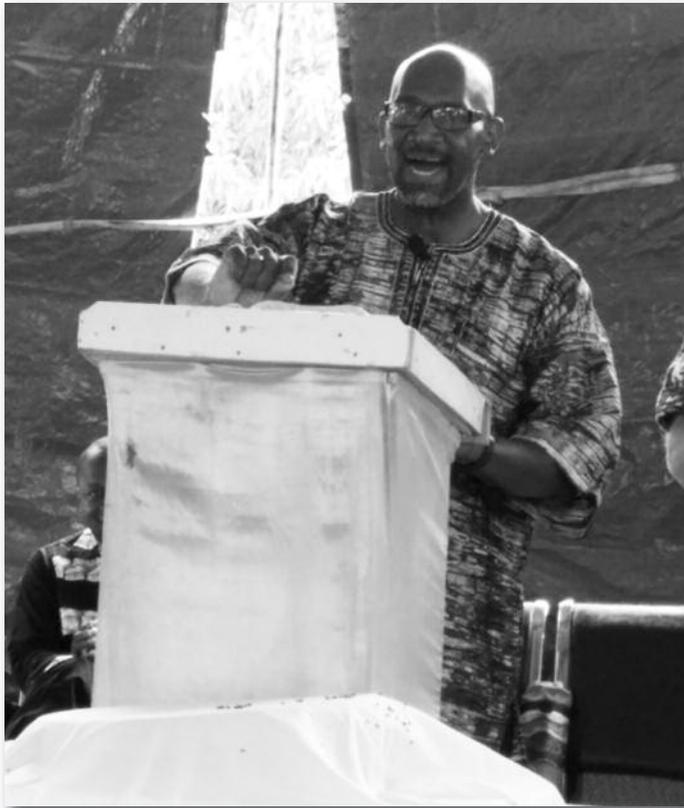
CFH CHRONICLES
CHRIST FOR HUMANITY, INC.
(918) 836-2424
FAX (918) 836-2610

Mali Revisited

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On two occasions, John and Ronda held marriage seminars primarily for single Malian Christians - first in Bamako and later in the Kayes region where the couple spent much of the second week. John and Ronda quickly discovered that they needed to adapt their message to meet the cultural needs of the people. As in India, marriages in Mali are arranged by the parents, so the Christian approach to dating to find a suitable mate was not a pertinent topic. To get the seminar started, each class member was instructed to make a list of all the attributes desirable in a future spouse. After reviewing their lists, John asked, "Are you that person?" Some deep soul searching took place at that point, sparking a discussion about the individual's responsibility to become the godly spouse.

One serious issue that John and Ronda addressed with both classes was the problem of singleness. In Malian culture, an unmarried woman or a wife who has no children is degraded and rejected. John and Ronda really drove home the point that in God's eyes, everyone has equal value, and that an unmarried person, who is unencumbered by responsibilities to a husband and/or children, has greater opportunities to serve as an ambassador for Christ to extended family, friends and to the community.



John preaching God's Word in Mali.



CFH classroom project at Rebooth Christian School completed.

On July 25th, John, Ronda and the Bowers undertook the 10-hour bus ride to the Kayes region. While there, the team visited Rebooth Christian School to tour the three classrooms CFH funded in 2014. Ronda also reconnected with friends she made during previous trips, introducing them to her husband. During their time in Kayes, John and Ronda met with clinic doctors who benefited from the container of medical aid. Then Rebecca, a local missionary, took them to a village to see the work she is doing with Muslim children. She introduced the Americans to the village chief, who welcomed them hospitably. On July 28th, the ministry team boarded the Bamako-bound bus as the 2016 mission to Mali drew to a close.

Thankfully, no military crisis occurred during the 2016 trip to Mali. However, when traveling abroad, challenges can arise. Imagine the Tysons' surprise on returning to Bamako to learn Air France was on strike, and they would need to reschedule all their flights from Paris to Tulsa. Due to exorbitant international cell phone rates, Ronda called Lynette Morris-Gunn, CFH's U.S. contact for the trip, who successfully arranged all of their return flights, as well as reserving a reasonable hotel room for them in The City of Lights. Isn't God great! Thanks to this unexpected, two-day layover in Paris, the problem of getting home morphed into a mini-vacation for John and Ronda, who had the opportunity to explore one of the most beautiful cities in the world.

Jesus admonished His disciples to go into the entire world and preach the Gospel. How grateful Christ for Humanity is to John and Ronda for answering that call, becoming emissaries for our Lord to one of the poorest countries in West Africa. We have faith that everyone with whom this inspiring couple had contact during their two weeks abroad saw the light of Christ shining through their lives and that God led darkened hearts to desire to share that light.

"And this Gospel of the Kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations ..." Matthew 24:14

U.S. MINISTRY NEWS:

Fourth Annual National African American Missions Conference

Ronda Tyson, CFH's Director of West African Outreach and African-American Mobilization, has two ministry goals: (1) to encourage and support frontline missionaries working in difficult places; and (2) to mobilize and encourage diversity within the mission force in order to break down barriers to receiving the Gospel message. This last goal entails urging African-Americans to participate in frontline mission work. Over the past 17 years, Ronda has accomplished these objectives by arranging and leading short-term mission trips to The Gambia, Senegal, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau and Mali to help field missionaries share the "Good News" of Jesus Christ to Muslims and animists. She has also sponsored a number of conferences and special events in Tulsa to engender interest within the African-American church to seek solutions to local issues and to help African-Americans reach their brothers and sisters in Africa.

To further these ends, Ronda and five other African-Americans from several Tulsa churches flew to Washington D.C. to attend The Fourth Annual National African American Missions Conference, sponsored by Great Commission Global Ministries and SIM USA. Held June 23 - June 25, the 2016 conference theme **Missions Is Our DNA** involved equipping, training and empowering interested African-Americans to **Disciple, Network and Act** - core strategies for successful international ministry.

Jesus told His disciples in Matthew 9:37 that **"The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few ..."** to encourage them to disciple others. While many U.S. believers have picked up the gauntlet and are gleaning souls abroad for Christ, the African-American community is under-represented in international discipleship. Only one percent of African-Americans participates in any form of global missions, even though the ethnic group represents 15% of the U.S. population. The reasons for this disparity can be traced to historical, social and economic factors, which make networking an important avenue for engendering interest and enthusiasm for missions among people who often consider themselves the mission field. Hearing from missionaries who have spent years laboring abroad is a wonderful way to empower prepared hearts to act on Christ's mandate to create believers throughout the whole world - called for by The Great Commission.

The June event encompassed three conferences in one, accomplishing much during the three short days to accommodate the needs of children, youth and adults. Child Evangelism Fellowship developed an entire program for children 5 -12 years old, which included local-outreach opportunities. Older youth enjoyed gifted facilitators, speakers and workshops to encourage them to action. The adult division delivered provocative messages, cutting-edge workshops, and plenty of opportunities to network with national and international ministry leaders.

How grateful CFH is to Ronda, John and Alaina Tyson from Fellowship Bible Church, and Brenda Edwards, as well as Carol and Sydney Singleton from First Baptist North Tulsa, for attending this year's conference, designed to encourage and equip African-American believers to become actively involved in international missions. Many conference attendees visited Christ for Humanity's information booth to learn about all that our ministry is accomplishing for Christ in West Africa and to discover how they might join us in adding names to the *Lamb's Book of Life*.



"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you . . ." Matthew 28:19-20

LOCAL OUTREACH NEWS:

“Suffer the Little Children to Come Unto Me”

Christ for Humanity feels that introducing Christ to children at a young age is the best way to produce faithful, adult Christians. Only recently, CFH learned of *In the Gap*, a ministry in Oklahoma City striving to accomplish this goal within the public school arena.

In the Gap developed the *Character First!* program for school-age children, designed to develop “positive character traits such as Responsibility, Self-control, Truthfulness, Discretion and Gratefulness.” These traits will enable children to govern themselves, have personal integrity, and become effective leaders for tomorrow. While the program is taught in a secular environment, these attributes for good citizenship are grounded in Biblical truth.

What makes In the Gap unique are the dedicated Christian young adults who present the biweekly curriculum in classes throughout Oklahoma City’s public-school system. These missionary interns raise their own support, undergo intense training in effective teaching techniques and then provide *Character First!* at no cost to OKC’s public school administration. The beneficial results of the program in the pilot program sparked interest in 50 schools across the city to introduce *Character First!* in their facilities. While the program’s success is wonderful, the demand for classes is outpacing the ministry’s capacity to respond with trained interns and volunteers.

Because so many children come from homes where both parents work, In the Gap also sponsors After-School Bible Clubs. Children attending this program enjoy a safe, fun and educational environment lead by missionary intern and volunteer teams. Children have the opportunity to learn Biblical truth, receive help with homework, and experience a structured and positive atmosphere during after-school hours. Relationship building takes place at these clubs, enabling missionary interns to help children apply the principles they have learned to real life problems.

This fall Elizabeth Shoemaker, a young woman who became actively involved in international missions as a teenager, was asked to join In the Gap’s intern program. Having the heart to evangelize young people, Elizabeth answered that call and is now serving with other like-minded young adults in Oklahoma City. Though Christ for Humanity often supports the efforts of missionaries serving abroad, our staff also recognizes the need to share Christ at home. Because In the Gap’s goal is to reach children for Christ, our ministry decided to help Elizabeth with financial support. Our prayer is that God will use her in a mighty way to draw children into Christ’s kingdom, adding more names to *The Lamb’s Book of Life*.



Elizabeth Shoemaker

“Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of heaven.” Matthew 19:14

Container for Feed the Children

Feed the Children (FTC) was founded in Oklahoma City 35 years ago to address the worldwide problem of childhood hunger with the ultimate goal of “creating a world where no child goes to bed hungry.” FTC serves communities by providing resources that are essential to improving the quality of life for children and their families: distributing food; drilling water-wells; installing water-retention systems; educating parents about basic hygiene and common childhood illnesses like diarrhea; and by treating patient ailments directly with the help of traveling doctors and nurses.

Christ for Humanity has partnered with Feed the Children on numerous occasions providing food and medical supplies for its U.S. and international outreaches to children. On August 17th, CFH filled a Feed the Children truck with 27 pallets of medical supplies for medical outreaches at home and abroad. Our prayer is that this aid will bless the lives of “the least of these” across our world – an expression of Christ’s love for people living in darkness and despair.



“Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you did it to Me.” Matthew 25:40

How rare it is for a national newspaper like The Wall Street Journal to print an article focusing on the importance of faith in the lives of ordinary people, but such a story actually appeared in the Journal this summer. The account of one hospital's efforts to fulfill a dying man's request was so touching that this month's *CFH Chronicles* reprinted the article in its entirety. Enjoy!

“A Swimming Pool in the ICU?”

by Dr. E. Wesley Ely
The Wall Street Journal –June 17.2016

“A swimming pool in the ICU? You must be nuts.” The nurse's voice was almost lost amid the whooshing ventilator and infusion pumps.

Five days earlier, we had admitted Bennie, a Vietnam veteran, to the intensive-care unit of our VA hospital in Nashville, Tennessee. Frail and wrinkled, he had a look of utter confusion and a furrowed brow that would pluck the heartstrings of even the most calloused physician. Decades spent in Southern tobacco fields left him looking old enough to remember Hoover's presidency. Double pneumonia and too much sedation made him delirious.

As his attending physician, I was thankful for his family. His daughter and son, Laura and Len implored: “Take good care of Dad. He's all we have.” Seeing him on a ventilator is terrifying, they said, but we believe in miracles. While loving, such a mind-set could become problematic since their father's situation had the makings of a fatal illness despite our best technology.

With antibiotics and fluids, Bennie improved dramatically and was taken off the ventilator several days later. That same night, though, a massive stroke paralyzed his entire left side, and he went back on life support. We quickly administered clot-busting medication, and he rallied again, remarkably regaining movement of his left arm and leg. The following day, the intern reported, “His delirium has cleared, and he's mouthing words around the endotracheal tube despite his wicked aspiration pneumonia.”

I sensed an unexpected window of opportunity. We revisited Bennie's life goals in light of what had happened and spoke directly about the big picture. With his children looking on, I held Bennie's hand and looked him in the eyes. Choosing my words based on what I knew about his background and the family's expectation of miracles, I said, “Bennie, just like tobacco plants eventually wither and wilt, so do we. You have improved in some ways, but overall you are very weak. How can we serve you best?”

The next morning, Laura and Len were upbeat, which confused me since Bennie looked weaker than ever. They pointed to words on a white-board in the room, explaining they were Bennie's goals, “Stable vital signs. Baptism.”

I spotted Kelly, our charge nurse, smiling like a cat who'd swallowed a canary. In her arms she clutched a box containing a large vinyl swimming pool. First I made sure this was actually Bennie's request and not the family's. My next thought was that we'd have a chaplain anoint him with holy water in his bed, but Laura disagreed. “Jesus wasn't sprinkled, Doc, he was dunked.”

A senior physician protested that the patient was on a ventilator and said he'd never seen a bedside baptism in 50 years of practice. There was no shortage of opinions about whether this was safe, or even possible.

A large area next to Bennie's bed was cleared and an electric pump inflated the pool. When a multi-person bucket brigade proved too difficult, an engineer rigged dialysis tubing to circulate the pool with a stream of warm water. Bennie was then hoisted high into the air via a patient-transfer lift, and the ventilator was unplugged before he was lowered into the pool.



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Swimming Pool in the ICU *(continued)*

Len gently took his father, the man who'd shown him how to farm, into his arms. Following the cherished Christian tradition, we slowly submerged Bennie's head completely under the water saying, "Dad, I baptize you in the name of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit." On cue the palliative-care social worker began belting out "Amazing Grace." The rest of us stood frozen in time.

First out of the water was blue corrugated ventilator tubing. Then his face appeared around the breathing tube. Bennie's huge smile seemed to say, "Better late than never."

When he died a week later, Laura implored me to tell other people about her Dad, hoping his experience would show them that "we can all become strong through our weakness." In fact, I have seen scores of patients and families use profound "outer wasting" as a catalyst for deep inner renewal. The two most important "frames" of our life are birth and death. We typically associated baptism with the former, yet Jesus spoke of his death as a baptism to indicate the formative next step that dying represents for our journey.

The ICU team's bold yet careful response to Bennie's unusual request taught me an enduring lesson regarding sympathy versus empathy. Sympathy is feeling sorry for someone; empathy is feeling "with" someone. In all the surrounding insanity of the hospital that day, diving deeply into Bennie's life through his baptism on the breathing machine allowed all of us to be reborn, too. Being "with" him in that pool, and rising with him out of it, we walked into others' lives better prepared to serve.



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(918) 836-2424 • FAX (918) 836-2610

6314 EAST 13TH STREET
TULSA, OKLAHOMA 74112

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