

# UNDER THE ACACIAS

Keith and Lynne Smith in Burkina Faso

November 2010

More photos and regular updates at Keith's blog : [www.undertheacacias-blog.org.uk](http://www.undertheacacias-blog.org.uk)

Dear Friends,

We have now been here in Burkina for 6 weeks and are taking the opportunity of a good internet connection (rare!) to send you an update on the work/our lives in Burkina.

## Here Are 7 Things We Give Thanks For, Well Maybe 8.

### 1. **The families we share a yard with.**

We are blessed to share a yard and our lives with Pastor Pierre, Seydou and their families. If it wasn't for their love, support, prayers and wisdom (especially at this time of transition) life in Gorom-Gorom would be difficult. We are also very thankful for Naomi, Pastor Pierre's daughter, who helps with housework in the mornings.

### 2. **Our neighbours**

Recently one of our neighbours made a commitment to follow Christ. Her husband is both deaf and mute and they have been unable to have children, which is a great sorrow. She comes to our yard every day for prayer, to hear Gods word and to fellowship with the women. Please pray for her. Another neighbour has a young child with learning difficulties, we long to see him healed. Her husband was very opposed to her Christian faith, but recently has softened. Please pray for good contacts with our neighbours and continued opportunities to share Christ's love with them.

### 3. **The Pastor-Missionaries**

We have made a commitment to visit one of the Pastors each week. So far we have been to Tasmaket, Essekane and Saouga. Pastor Jean and his wife Elizabeth in Tasmaket continue to push forward in evangelism. Their energy and enthusiasm are unstoppable!

Visiting Essekane was a surreal experience. It used to be a village that was built up around artisanal gold mining. Now a Canadian company has bought the rights to the mine, with the government of Burkina only getting

10% of the profit. The mining company bulldozed the town and relocated the community to a site nearby. They built a soul-less concrete jungle of identical houses in an area where people have no means of making a living, no potential for farming or keeping animals. The 'community' consists of those who have stayed, transient mine workers and people who come to mine privately by digging holes in the ground on a site the Canadians have given them permission to dig (because there's not much gold there.) Drug abuse, alcoholism and prostitution have devastated family life. Very few Christians who go to Essakane stay faithful to Christ. Pastor Ousseini faces huge challenges in reaching out to the community and in discipling the Christians.

We also had the privilege of visiting Pastor Paul in Saouga. He shared how he and his wife have suffered for their faith. On going to bible school they had no money or means of support. When they arrived they had nowhere to stay and ended up in a house that the community has been using as a toilet. His wife cleaned the house, but it still smelled so bad they couldn't eat inside. Often she had no food to cook, and would boil a pot of water so that the women of the community wouldn't know they had nothing to eat! She also had to give birth alone in the middle of the night as he needed to go out and work in the fields to make money to feed the family. Despite their poverty and suffering they have a testimony of Gods faithfulness and a commitment and love for Jesus that puts us weak westerners to shame.

### 4. **Harvest**

Thank God for a good harvest this year!





## 5. The Christian School

We were delighted to see Phase one of the Christian School in operation. The teacher for the third class is Pastor Prosper Ouedraogo, a man of God with a big heart for reaching out to children in the province. The School Inauguration on the 7<sup>th</sup> November was a resounding success. Steve Parry came from the UK to represent both APT and Glenwood Church. Steve spoke on partnership, using a Fulani proverb that it takes 'more than one finger to milk a cow', Keith managed

to preach the gospel in his 5 minutes (never one to miss an opportunity), and the representative from the education department, a committed Muslim, testified that the school is producing children of character who love God and have compassion for others! The children sang and danced making everyone very proud.

## 6. Evangelism

Pierre, Seydou & Keith continue to travel out to the villages each Friday to evangelise. Pierre preaches on the radio, and he or Pascal preach every morning in Gorom between 5am and 6am with a loudspeaker! We visit some local families regularly and people continue to stream into our yard...so there is plenty of opportunity to share Christ.

## 7. Our New Home

We are so thankful for our new home. We now have a functional kitchen and office. It is a huge blessing and great publicity for woodless construction building techniques. It's entirely made of mud, from the roof to the floor tiles! People in the local community have been joking "that's a nice big mosque you've built in your yard!".



## 8. Market

Market day is interesting. Someone tried to sell Lynne a cow's head that had been lying in the dirt. Seems it's quite a delicacy here! Lynne is enjoying finding her way round the market, meeting people and using her Fulfulde to buy the weeks groceries.

## ...And 5 Challenges for Prayer

- Language** "Fulfulde na tiidii sanne" Fulfulde is a complex language both in structure and in pronunciation. Lynne typically spends 2-4 hours a day in study. She is using her limited French to get by and to communicate with her language helper to learn Fulfulde. Not easy!
- Office** Keith is struggling to find time to do the administration for APT that is essential to keep everything running well. Our internet connection has been temperamental.
- Health** Apart from the usual pregnancy ailments, Lynne has been having problems sleeping. We are not sure if this is due to the pregnancy or due to her anti-malaria medication. It's difficult to function with only a few hours sleep.
- National Elections** Pray that the presidential elections pass peacefully on the 21<sup>st</sup> November.
- Dental Clinic** Our dental materials have got stuck in Niger. The container they are travelling in does not have an even balance of weight, so someone will travel out to Niger and rearrange everything. It then has to go by train to Burkina and clear customs here. The delay has postponed our plans for dental clinics. Please pray for a quick resolution!

Thanks for your continued prayers and support for the work in Burkina Faso.

## Keith and Lynne

Keith and Lynne Smith, BP22, Gorom-Gorom, Burkina Faso, West Africa.

Acacia Partnership Trust: 10 Tarragon Way, Pontprennau, Cardiff CF23 8SN, UK ([www.acaciapartnershiptrust.org.uk](http://www.acaciapartnershiptrust.org.uk))

World Horizons UK: North Dock, Llanelli, Carmarthen SA15 2LF, UK ([mwg.office@virgin.net](mailto:mwg.office@virgin.net))

World Horizons US: PO Box 17721, Richmond, VA 23226, USA ([usinfo@worldhorizons.org](mailto:usinfo@worldhorizons.org))