

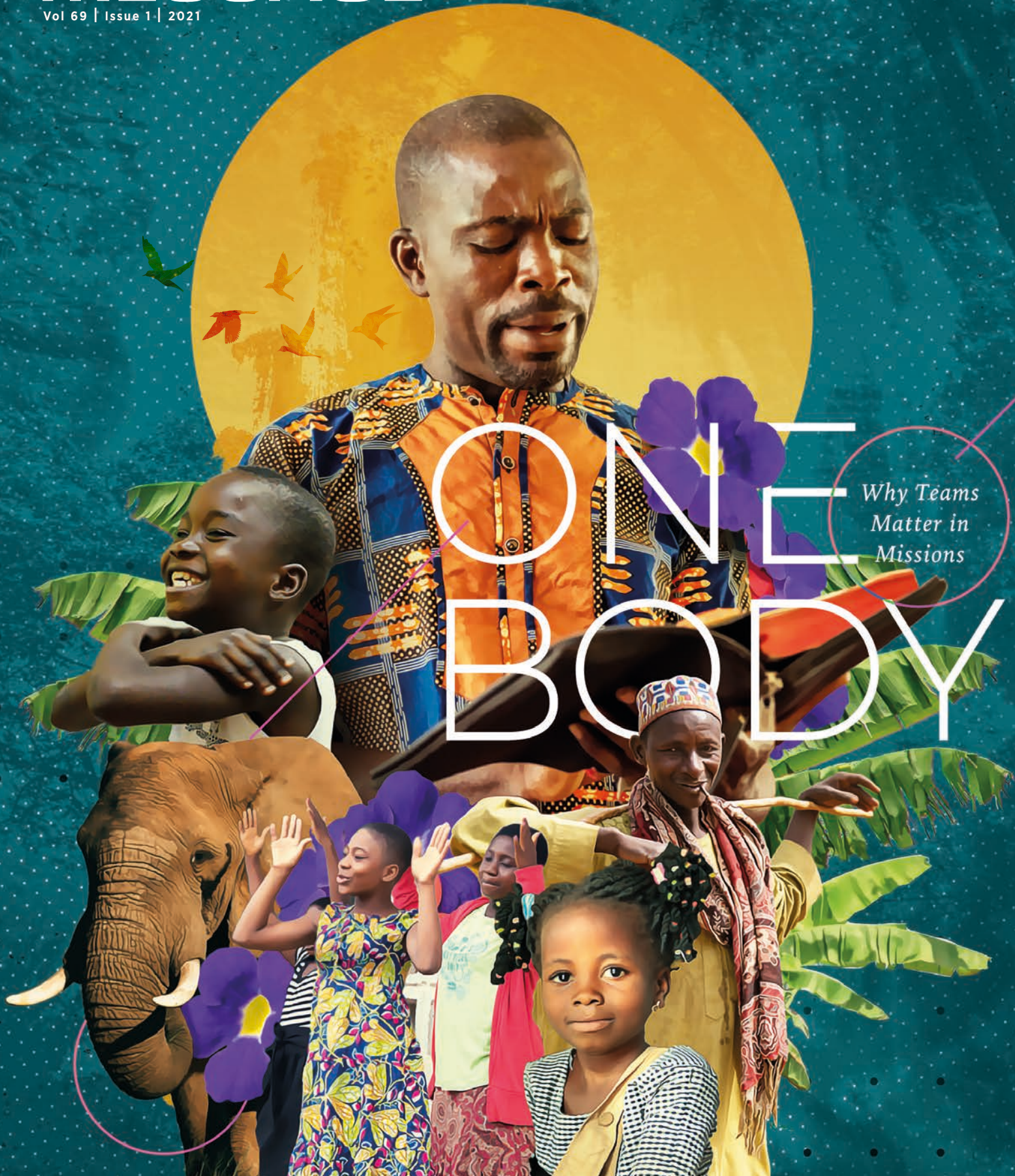
# MESSAGE

Vol 69 | Issue 1 | 2021

abwe®  
INTERNATIONAL

# ONE BODY

*Why Teams  
Matter in  
Missions*



# EDITORIAL

FROM THE PRESIDENT

ISSUE N° 01 | EST 1927

A PUBLICATION OF ABWE

## Why Teams?

You have probably heard the saying: If you ever find the perfect church, do not join it, or it will cease to be perfect.

The same is true for the perfect missionary team—it does not exist. Because missionaries are sinners too. Sincere servants of God may clash because of personalities, ministry philosophies, and convictions. And as a result, teamwork is messy.

Going alone may seem like the easy solution. After all, popular culture tells us that any solitary individual can become a world changer. We live in a me-centered society. Even in the church, we can begin to think that missions is about *me* realizing *my* calling to invest *my* potential and use *my* life. And it is true that the Great Commission needs unique, pioneering missionaries to blaze gospel trails into some of the most restricted and remote areas of the world.

But the lone ranger ideal has no place in the kingdom of God. *The work of Christ requires the whole body of Christ.* Even Jesus surrounded himself with teammates, flawed and laden with baggage as they were.

Teamwork is in the DNA of ABWE. Just as the body of Christ is made up of many parts (1 Corinthians 12), missionary teams need to be diverse in gifts and talents. Young families, single women and men, retirees, full-time evangelists, doctors, teachers, pastors—every role is key to advancing the gospel. Our ambition is not just to send workers, but teams.

In this issue of *Message*, discover how God is using one long-lasting team of ABWE missionaries to bring healing and hope to the least-reached peoples of Togo in West Africa.



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#### WHO IS ABWE?

ABWE was founded in 1927 as an independent Baptist mission. We are dedicated to fulfilling the Great Commission by multiplying leaders, churches, and missions movements among every people. Currently, more than 1,000 ABWE missionaries are working to advance God's work in more than 70 countries through evangelism, discipleship, church planting, leadership development, and national partnerships.

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Paul Davis, ABWE President

THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING THE MINISTRIES & MISSIONARIES OF ABWE



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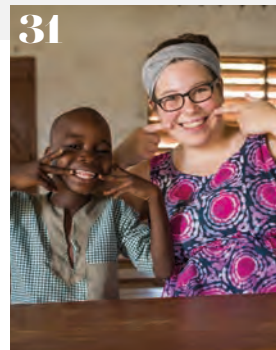
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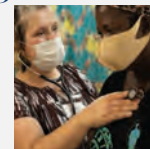
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Digital art by  
Raul Medina

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-  [missionspodcast.com](https://missionspodcast.com)

## Tweetables

### Calling All Medical Professionals

📍 LOCATION: UNITED STATES



Do you have a passion to meet physical needs through healthcare and a zeal to share the gospel? Discover what God is doing through our medical ministries in Togo. Hear from a panel of veteran missionaries and professional doctors at the Medical Friends of Togo Conference on June 12, 2021 at College Park Church, Indianapolis.

**LEARNMORE** at [MedicalFriendsOfTogo.org/2021-conference](https://MedicalFriendsOfTogo.org/2021-conference)

### Youth Fellowship Brings Togolese Together

📍 LOCATION: TOGO



Every Christmas season, the youth from the churches surrounding Lomé (capital city of Togo) and across the country gather for fellowship and to compete in soccer tournaments and Bible quiz competitions.



New Short-Term Missions Opportunities

### Launch Point

**EACH YEAR, THE AMERICAN CHURCH INVESTS BILLIONS OF DOLLARS INTO SHORT-TERM MISSIONS.** But too often the return on investment is insubstantial, especially in terms of gospel proclamation and spiritual growth.

ABWE is determined to change this through Launch Point, a ministry focused on creating short-term missions trips for long-term impact. Launch Point exists to create, lead, and promote short-term missions opportunities across the globe that are:

- Explicitly gospel-centered
- Focused on the flourishing of national partners and communities
- United with long-term missionary efforts
- Local church-centered
- Maximized for discipleship

**LEARNMORE** at [LaunchPointMissions.org](https://LaunchPointMissions.org)



**LEARNMORE** about Sifa Threads and how you can support the ministry at [abwe.org/SifaThreadsMemoirs](http://abwe.org/SifaThreadsMemoirs)



## Jon & Holly Boyd

📍 LOCATION: COLOMBIA

Iglesia Cristiana Bautista Impacto Bíblico of Santa Marta has been praying about starting a new church for the last two years. Now it is in the beginning stages of making that prayer a reality, as members of the church walk the streets in search of a suitable church-plant location.

**READMORE** about how our missionaries are serving all over the world at [abwe.org/blog](http://abwe.org/blog)

## Sifa Threads | ABWE Ministry

📍 LOCATION: TANZANIA

Sifa Threads, a ministry that frees marginalized women from sex trafficking, poverty, and other hardships by equipping them with artisanal skills and the gospel, held its second annual fashion show. Twenty-six Sifa Threads students participated, showcasing the clothing designs they had been working on all year. Approximately 250 people attended and all proceeds went to Sifa Threads.



## Brennan & Kathleen Coughlin | EveryEthne

📍 LOCATION: UNITED STATES

An ABWE church plant in New Jersey donated \$100,000 to help fund the first pregnancy care center in the city of Trenton.

**LEARNMORE** at [abwe.org/TrentonCare](http://abwe.org/TrentonCare)

## Answered Prayer on Four Wheels

📍 LOCATION: TOGO



Students at the Village of Light, an ABWE school for the blind in Togo, celebrate God answering their prayers for a new vehicle.

**IN 1992, MISSIONARY** Kay Washer bought a Toyota van to transport students from the Village of Light Center for the Blind to church every Sunday and also to their respective villages at the close of each semester.

Since then, it has been called the “New Van.” And although the Village of Light sold the older vehicle that the New Van replaced eight years ago, the reliable 15-seater has retained the outdated and misleading name that the Togolese staff had affectionally given it 29 years prior.

As transportation needs increased at the Village of Light, the staff searched for a gently used van. However, with other more pressing needs, the acquisition of an updated vehicle continued to be placed on hold. At least, that is what Village of Light administrators Rory and Kristy Moore thought. But God had other reasons for the delay.

In the summer of 2020, the Togolese government announced a limited-time offer that lowered the import tax on vehicles. Previously, the combined sum of the import tax and additional fees made the already expensive venture of car buying an even more exorbitant endeavor. This special offer would save the Village of Light thousands of dollars.

But Rory and Kristy received the news late. They had to quickly come to a decision because another ABWE ministry was also finalizing vehicle orders and needed to include the Village of Light’s purchase. After much prayer, they committed to getting the van. But that was the easy part. Now they had to raise \$35,000 in just two weeks when the payment was due.

The couple shared the incredible opportunity and immense need on social media. Before the day’s end, a donor contacted Rory and gave \$15,000 toward the new vehicle. The generous donor was also willing to contribute a matching gift of \$10,000 if others pledged the remaining sum. Sure enough, two weeks to the day, the last of the \$10,000 matching gift came in. All the funds were in place.

Now, the Village of Light has a new “New Van” that sits in the parking area next to the old “New Van.” The day the new vehicle drove onto campus, dozens of students waited to greet and “see” it for the first time. Rory and Kristy shed tears of joy watching the students rejoice at the arrival of God’s special gift to the Village of Light. •

**WATCHMORE** [abwe.org/NewVan](https://abwe.org/NewVan)

## Impacting LIVES FOR GENERATIONS



### CONTACT

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or 717.909.2394

## What does it look like to leave a legacy?

At a school in Michigan, a remarkable, 150-year-old red oak stood near its entrance and welcomed visitors for decades. So, when the ancient tree crashed to the ground one windy day, it came as a shock to many people, including the grounds director Charlie Huizinga.

But Huizinga knew what to do next.

“I was making my rounds one day more than a decade ago—looking around the oak I discovered little trees coming up. Acorns were still attached to the root.”

That day, Huizinga had harvested some of the seedlings and transplanted them onto his property. Over the years, they grew to become 20-foot-tall trees themselves. Huizinga’s foresight proved invaluable. Today, one of those former saplings now fills the hole the original red oak left behind.

*When you give a legacy gift to an organization you care about, you can be certain the roots of your generosity will impact lives for generations to come.*

### TAKING TIME TO CREATE A GOD

**HONORING WILL** helps us to think through important questions like:

- Does my will reflect what is most important to me and my family?
- What kind of legacy do I want to leave for my children?
- How would an inheritance to my children impact their lifestyle?
- What are the beliefs and values I want to pass along to the next generation?
- Does my will reflect my love for Christ, my church, and favorite ministry organizations?

## Gospel Games on the Air

📍 LOCATION: TOGO



Moise and Atta (second from the left and second from the right) are twins who both won games and are now participating in a weekly Bible study with ABWE missionary Adam Drake (far left). They desire to pursue ministry when they finish school.

**MISSIONARIES MUST CONSTANTLY** look for creative ways to engage the lost, especially unreached Muslim people groups.

This creativity is what drove the building of Hope Radio in Mango, Togo, which aired its first gospel broadcast more than two years ago. With a listening community that is 80 percent Muslim, the radio ministry has the difficult task of planting gospel seeds in hard soil. Yet despite obstacles, listeners have responded favorably to the programming.

For example, on its one-year anniversary, Hope Radio decided to try something new—a week-long live Bible quiz gameshow. Four staff members conducted the show, asking simple Bible questions in French and the three main African languages. To their surprise, the phone started ringing immediately.

“It was humorous to hear the sincere attempts of people with minimal Bible knowledge try to answer questions like, ‘Whose wife turned into a pillar of salt?’ or ‘What king wrote many Psalms in the Bible?’” said ABWE missionary Adam Drake. “Sometimes, it would take five to 10 calls before we received the right answer.”

For the ministry’s second anniversary, the team held similar on-air games—like “Two Truths and a Lie” Bible-style, and “Bible Family Feud,” surveying the local people. They recorded the names of the callers for follow-up conversations

and talked with each winner who came to receive a prize. Several traveled some 25 miles to claim their award—a long journey on Togo’s poor roads.

“Of course, we don’t think Bible trivia will bring anyone to saving faith,” explained Drake. “But as people are drawn to Hope Radio, they will hear God’s truth during our daily programs.”

Sometimes, hard soil must be tilled before planting can begin. Hope Radio believes God is doing just this, preparing souls to receive the gospel. •

### LEARN MORE

[abwe.org/HopeRadio](http://abwe.org/HopeRadio)

# A Missions Family

**ABWE IS MORE THAN A MINISTRY—IT IS ALSO A FAMILY.** Yet we know that generations of family ministry service could not have happened apart from the endurance and faith of ABWE missionary kids (MKs).

Bill Petite, ABWE missionary in Japan, shares his experience about his children, Billy and Danielle:

“Thirty-three years ago, I wrote a small flyer as an introduction to our ministry in Japan. Recently, a friend gave me a copy of that paper, and I read it again. Over the years, some of our plans never came to fruition, but one brief paragraph on that flyer was almost ‘prophetic.’”

“We wrote: ‘The Japanese people love children. Billy and Danielle will provide moments for witness and outreach that would otherwise be impossible without them. As they grow up, their Japanese will probably surpass ours and their opportunities to bear witness to the gospel will increase. Lord willing, they will be positive assets to our ministry, a source of joy to our occasionally discouraged hearts, and a possible third generation of cross-cultural evangelists.’”

All of this has been abundantly true. Billy and Danielle, now each married with children of their own, continue to serve the Lord in Japan. ●

**RECENTLY, ABWE EXPANDED CARE FOR MKs** because we believe in preparing the next generation of God’s laborers for missional living wherever their futures take them.



**600+**

**MISSIONARY  
KIDS SERVE WITH  
THEIR PARENTS  
AROUND THE  
WORLD**



**5+**

**FULL-TIME ABWE  
STAFF ARE COMMIT-  
TED TO MK SUPPORT  
AND PROGRAMS**



**100+**

**MKs HAVE GONE  
ON TO SERVE IN  
MISSIONS FULL  
TIME AS ADULTS**

“Scripture places a strong emphasis on passing faith, wisdom, and wholehearted love for the Lord on to our children. That is one reason why ABWE is committed to serving our missionary children well.” - Paul Davis, ABWE President

## MEDICAL EVANGELISM

For 94 years, ABWE has been opening doors for the gospel through compassionate healthcare ministries.



## The Unreached Within Reach

**T**HE PHRASE “GOING TO UNREACHED people groups” typically brings to mind images of pioneering missionaries hacking through jungles with machetes, smuggling Bibles across borders, or traversing mountain ranges in harsh conditions.

But oftentimes in reaching unreached people groups (UPGs), missionaries spend more time trying to creatively go to their physical location and not necessarily on how they will draw the people in spiritually once there.



**THE 'FUMO' PEOPLE**  
are one of the largest ethnic groups in Africa, with 38 million people in 18 countries.

**THE 'FUMO'**  
reside in basic dwellings on the outskirts of town. They live off the land with their livestock.

ABWE specifically built the Hospital of Hope (HOH) in northern Togo with this in mind. The medical evangelistic ministry was strategically placed to show the love of Christ to patients from Muslim UPGs in the surrounding area, including the Fumo.\*

The Fumo represent one of the largest and most widespread ethnic groups in all of Africa, with nearly 38 million people living across 18 different countries. Historically a nomadic people, the Fumo who live near HOH are primarily pastoral, herding cattle and other livestock. They typically reside on the outskirts of Togolese towns, where the wide spaces are more favorable for tending animals.

“ABWE has been praying for the Fumo for years, even before a Togo North Team existed,” said Ron Washer, ABWE Executive Director for Africa.

ABWE missionaries first made contact with the Fumo at Hôpital Baptiste Biblique but found it difficult to witness to them, since the Fumo did not speak French or any local dialects.

After HOH was completed in 2015, God directed a Fumo Christian from a nearby country to join the hospital as a chaplain. His work and cultural knowledge have helped to build bridges among the Fumo. HOH also hired Fumo nurses, security guards, and interpreters to better communicate with Fumo patients.

“By 2018, there were already a few Fumo believers at HOH when we arrived,” said Sean\*, ABWE

missionary doctor at HOH. He and his wife came to HOH after being encouraged by Todd DeKryger, former chief of staff who died from Lassa Fever in 2016, to consider using their gifts to minister to the Fumo.

Sean assists at the Fumo Center near hospital grounds. The facility acts as a place where Fumo can learn about God and the Bible, participate in discipleship, and be taught how to read and write in French and in their own local language. The Fumo chaplain also lives at the center with his family and often facilitates spiritual conversations with any Fumo who visit.

Sean also serves in a local house church and in Bible studies among the Fumo.

Recently, a group of Fumo believers were baptized, marking a historic moment in missions.

“It’s the first Fumo baptisms among ABWE missionaries,” said Sean. “I don’t know if there’s ever been Fumo baptisms before in Togo.”

The significance was not lost on one of Sean’s colleagues, a Togolese national, who said to Sean, “Doctor, if you were to have told me 10 years ago that there would be a baptism among the Fumo, I would have said that you were crazy.”

Since the Fumo are an oral culture, putting a Bible in their hands is not necessarily the most effective way to communicate the gospel to them. So, Sean and the team fundraised for audio recorders with Bible narrations on them in the Fumo language.

The campaign received more than \$12,000. According to Sean, the donations will go beyond the needs of the Fumo and toward other ministry projects too.

The team continues their efforts to reach other UPGs and prays that God will raise up more laborers who will take the gospel to those who have not yet heard. •

**“...if you were to have told me 10 years ago that there would be a baptism among the Fumo, I would have said that you were crazy.”**



#### NEW LIFE IN CHRIST

A man from the 'Fumo' tribe is baptized after coming to the saving knowledge of Christ. This is the first Fumo baptism that we know of in the entire country.

\*Names changed for security purposes.

# LEGACIES

HONORING FAITHFULNESS



ABWE INTERVIEW



SERVING  
WITH ABWE  
FOR **37**  
YEARS

HONORING

## Gil & Denise Thomas

Missionaries to Portugal and Executive Director of Good Soil Ministries  
at the ABWE International Headquarters.



**THE THOMASES' JOURNEY TO THE MISSION FIELD STARTED WITH** a flat tire, when Gil pulled over to assist Denise with her car. They were married six months later. Their mutual passion for missions, and an encouraging challenge from missionaries Jon and Marilyn Rust, prompted Gil and Denise to pursue ministry in Portugal with ABWE in 1984. They served there for 23 years doing church planting before being called back to the International Headquarters in 2008 to join Good Soil Ministries.



**Q: How did God first call you to missions?**

**Gil:** I gained an interest in ministry while working at a Christian camp in New York for six years. While at Clarks Summit University, I decided against majoring in music because I wanted to be involved in 'real ministry,' which is a silly notion when I look back on how God used music during our years in Portugal. God impressed upon me the need for church planting, and so during junior year I asked myself, 'Why can't I go?'

**Denise:** I grew up attending a missions-oriented church in Michigan and always loved hearing the inspiring stories from visiting missionaries. My grandparents were also involved in ministry, and so I thought I might follow in their footsteps when I got older. In college, I dedicated my life to ministry service at a missions conference.

**Q: What was the best part of being a missionary?**

**A:** The best part is serving God and playing a part in his work in other

people's lives. We also enjoy getting to know other cultures and helping to develop others spiritually.

**Q: What moment had the biggest impact on your ministry?**

**A:** A significant moment in our ministry occurred when ABWE missionary Jack Shifflet approached us about training teams in other countries. Soon, I was traveling around Europe teaching our field teams. In 2005, I was part of a group of ABWE missionaries who gathered to develop a cross-cultural evangelism, discipleship, and church-planting training curriculum for the mission, which eventually led to us being enlisted to expand the training worldwide.

**Q: What is your favorite memory from the field?**

**A:** Our favorite memories from the field relate to what we did musically. The surrounding ABWE church plants in Lisbon formed a joint-church choir that would perform multiple times each December. Some of the concerts were held in public venues such as theaters and town halls. As we introduced the

different songs, we were able to present the gospel.

**Q: What advice would you give someone considering cross-cultural ministry?**

**Gil:** A lot about being a missionary is not just getting to the field but staying there. One key is to form close friendships with the local people. Seek out a close friend who will be a partner in Christ.

**Denise:** Develop yourself in hospitality, which is a wonderful way to serve—especially in Europe. [Europeans] take mealtime very seriously. Familiarize yourself with the national dishes and cuisine. •

"Gil and Denise were very often the first to volunteer to go and meet a new need, giving up their personal goals for the good of the team. Gil led by example, pushing himself beyond the status quo and challenging others to try things beyond their imagined limits."

— Jon Rust, retired ABWE missionary

# Dal & Kay Washer

MISSIONARY PIONEERS IN AFRICA

By Message Staff





OUR HISTORY OF

## MINISTRY IN TOGO

ABWE's most fruitful fields have resulted from missionary teams flooding a nation for the purpose of the gospel.

Since Dallas "Dal" and Katherine "Kay" Washer opened the field of Togo in 1974, hundreds of ABWE missionaries have served in its forests and cities, their myriad skillsets paving the way for countless ministries and church plants.



### A SURVEY TRIP GONE WRONG LEADS TO A NEW CALLING

# 1972

After years serving as missionaries in Niger, Dal and Kay Washer conduct a survey trip with ABWE to Benin, but when they cannot find a place among existing ministries, the team travels to Togo instead. There, they discover a marked difference between the spiritual openness of the Togolese and the people of Niger.

# T

**THE YEAR WAS 1972**, and ABWE missionaries Dal and Kay Washer were looking for a new ministry.

After 18 years of serving in Niger, the Washers had set their sights on the country of Benin. Kay later wrote that “settling down there would be like coming home.”<sup>1</sup>

When they encountered several closed doors in Benin, the Washers and their survey team had no choice but to move on. They left burdened, believing a golden opportunity had slipped through their fingers.

The team decided to drive west toward the border of a small nation called Togo—one of the most densely-populated African countries with 40 distinct ethnic groups, many unreached.

Being accustomed to “stony indifference or blatant rejection”<sup>2</sup> of the gospel in Islamic Niger, Dal and Kay were thrilled to find that Togo was different. “[The Togolese] eagerly accepted literature we passed out and requested Bibles in their own language. Children and young people

mobbed us as we handed out tracts,” wrote Kay.<sup>3</sup>

The Washers’ disappointment dissipated. It was clear that God was calling them to Togo. But they realized that if they wanted to make an impact in Togo, they would need a team.

As the Washers dove headfirst into local life, they began to build relationships. These led to evangelistic Bible studies and, eventually, a church plant in Lomé.

More teammates, including Dave and Elwanda Fields, Tim and Esther Neufeld, and Jim and Carol Plunkitt, joined the Washers by 1977.

As is often the case with missionary teams, additional people meant more ideas and more opportunities for ministry expansion.

**“[The Togolese] eagerly accepted literature we passed out and requested Bibles in their own language. Children and young people mobbed us as we handed out tracts.”**



## 1974

### DAL & KAY WASHER OPEN THE FIELD OF TOGO

In the early stages of their ministry, the Washers evangelize Togolese through outreach events like volleyball in their yard. After playing, Dal leads the young men in a Bible study. These small steps led to the first ABWE church plant in Lomé.

### THE VILLAGE OF LIGHT IS BORN

Kay starts Togo’s first blind school in Lomé. Impressed, the Togolese government grants the Washers land on which to build a larger facility called the Village of Light.



## 1978

### MORE HELP ARRIVES

Annette Williams arrives in Togo and eventually serves for 41 years, most notably in her role as hospital director. Surgeons David Clutts and Linc Nelson lead a survey trip in search of prospective locations for a medical ministry. A chief hears the news and promises land.

## 1977



### IN 1975, THE FIRST WAVE OF MISSIONARIES TO TOGO

included Jim Plunkitt, Dave Fields, Tim Neufeld and their families.

“Dal Washer had the heart of an evangelist; he had the incessant desire to spread the seed of the gospel all across Togo. David Fields was a gifted teacher who focused on deep discipleship in his church-planting strategy,” explained Andrew Ward, who serves as a field team leader in Togo.

“[I]n hindsight, we can see God’s plan in providing the ministries in Togo with diverse and complementary leaders.”<sup>4</sup>

With Dal and Dave leading, the ministry in Togo could grow deep and wide. The Washers pushed the gospel into the corners of the country, and the Fields helped train new believers for leadership.

As church-planting progress in Lomé continued and more missionaries arrived to share the load, Dal and Kay felt it was time to take the gospel further into Togo.

They moved to Kpalimé, a city of 30,000 set 75 miles inland.

Years earlier in Niger, Kay’s compassion for the blind, who could only provide for themselves by begging, led her to take courses in braille during a family vacation. From this, she began teaching a few blind boys how to read during her time in Niger. This ministry work extended into Togo, and Kay began the country’s first blind school. She found herself teaching numerous classes and taking every opportunity to teach her students the Bible.



### NATIONAL LEADERS ARE DISCIPLED & TRAINED

The team in Togo expands, starting Bible Institutes in both Lomé and Kpalimé to raise up a generation of Togolese leaders.

# 1981

# 1985

### HÔPITAL BAPTISTE BIBLIQUE OPENS ITS DOORS

After more than six years of construction, Hôpital Baptiste Biblique (HBB) officially opens. In its early years, HBB treats more than 10,000 patients annually. Now, that number has nearly doubled.



**AS THE SCHOOL'S SUCCESSES** grew, government officials took notice. With the blessing of Togo President Gnassingbé Eyadéma, the Washers constructed a new blind facility called the Village of Light on land given to them by the government.

After years of teaching in grass huts and vacant shops, Kay described the transition into the new building like “moving into a mansion.”<sup>5</sup>

The Togolese community remained skeptical of the visually impaired children's intellectual abilities—until two Village of Light students finished first and third in the regional government exams. Years later at her retirement, Kay was invited to the presidential palace and awarded the civilian medal of honor by President Eyadéma for her work. The Village of Light continues to this day, ministering to roughly 50 students each year.



# 1989

## DAL'S LEGACY LIVES ON AFTER HIS DEATH

Dal passes away from a heart attack and is buried at the Village of Light. Seven mango trees surround his grave, representing the seven churches he planted in Africa. Today, by God's grace, these original seven have multiplied to 60 churches, all of whom can trace their lineage back to Dal.

But the school had accomplished more than education. As more Togolese learned of Christ, the Village of Light fed the team's church-planting efforts. By the 1980s, the church in Kpalimé was filling to capacity each Sunday.

Dal again resolved to reach deeper into the Togolese interior, not yet knowing that one of the most astonishing acts of God still loomed on the horizon.

## A PRAYER AND A TERMITE MOUND

One day, while driving to visit mountain villages in Kpalimé, Dal and Kay pulled over to picnic at an overlook. As they observed the landscape of isolated huts dotting the rolling foothills, they considered how few Togolese had access to quality healthcare.

“Oh God, these lost people need medical help,” they prayed. “Please send us nurses to meet the great need that we see.”<sup>6</sup>



As the years progressed, the Washers' prayers grew bolder.

They asked for an entire hospital—and their prayers were heard.

In 1978, a team of surgeons sent by ABWE arrived to survey possible locations for a medical ministry. A local village chief made them an offer: free land in return for a full hospital in Tsiko (pronounced chikaw). The land included the very spot where Dal and Kay had first prayed for the medical needs of the people.

The catch? There was not an adequate water source near the future hospital site. The team had no option but to apply to the US Embassy for a special drilling rig.

The rig arrived, and an intrigued crowd of Togolese and Americans swarmed the site to witness the momentous groundbreaking.

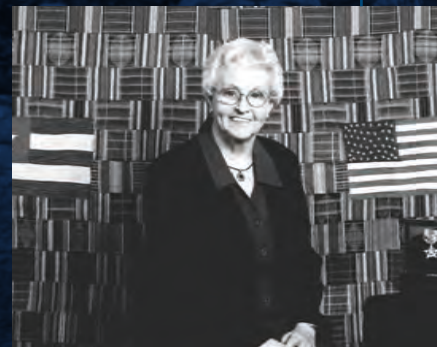
There was another catch. The embassy only allowed a limited number of digs, and the rig was not hitting water.

Over and over the drilling failed, until only one dig remained.

A bystander suggested using the tall termite mounds as a reference point. The crew selected a spot near a tall termite mound on the property,

## ABWE INVESTS IN TRAINING THE TOGOLESE TO BECOME NURSES

The hospital adds a Nursing Education Program for Togolese students, headed by Annette Williams. Since its founding, 50 nurses have graduated from the program, with 39 going on to work full time at HBB and the remaining 11 at ABWE's northern hospital, the Hospital of Hope (HOH).



# 1995

figuring the termites had used a nearby water source to keep their “mud castles” intact.<sup>7</sup>

The crowd waited with bated breath as the massive bit bored through a tough layer of rock. At last, resistance gave way, revealing an underground lake with more than enough usable water to sustain a medical facility.

The team viewed the discovery as God’s blessing on the project. About six years later, Hôpital Baptiste Biblique (HBB) finished construction.

After years of team involvement and prayers, ABWE had finally launched its first major medical ministry, ushering in a new era of physical and spiritual healing to the heart of Togo.

### LIVES WELL LIVED

The Washers spent their remaining ministry years in Togo helping build HBB, church planting, and leading the Village of Light. Dal passed away on the field in 1989 and

is buried near seven mango trees on the campus. Each tree represents an African church that Dal planted. Kay had to go back to the US in 1996 after suffering a severe leg injury, but then later returned to Togo one final time in 1999.

Although Kay spent the next 19 years serving stateside at her local church in Greenville, S.C., her heart yearned to be back in Togo.

“As I watch the hospital ministry unfold, I wish I had another life to give to the Lord,” wrote Kay before her passing in 2018.<sup>8</sup>

The Washers’ ministries in Africa paved the way for hundreds of other servants to dedicate their lives to Togo, creating thriving teams that exist to this day. Over the course of nearly a half-century, almost 500 ABWE missionaries, from short-term to long-term workers, have served in Togo through the hospital and other ministries—opening countless doors for the gospel. •



### Sources

1. Washer and Gray, K. A. (2007). *One Candle to Burn*. Harrisburg, Pa. ABWE Publishing.
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3. Ibid., p. 144.
4. Andrew Paul Ward, *50 Years of God’s Faithfulness: A History of ABWE in Togo*. Unpublished manuscript.
5. Washer and Gray, *One Candle to Burn*, p. 196.
6. Ibid., p. 238.
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8. Ibid., p. 247.



## 2015

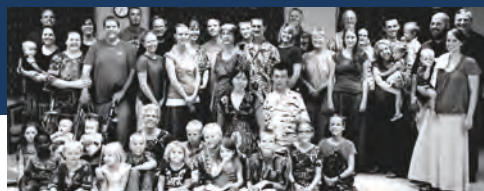
### KAY WASHER IS AWARDED HIGHEST CIVILIAN HONOR

On her last day in Togo, Kay is personally awarded the Order of Mono, the highest honor a civilian or foreigner can receive, by Togo President Eyadéma for her faithful work with the blind.

# 1999

### MINISTRY CONTINUES TO EXPAND AND THE TEAM GROWS

The Hospital of Hope opens in Mango, northern Togo with a focus on reaching more Togolese and Africans from surrounding countries.



### LEARN MORE ABOUT MINISTRY OPPORTUNITIES IN TOGO

Today, our three teams in southern, northern, and central Togo continue to lead lost souls to Christ through hospitals, Bible Institutes, and other ministries. Will you join them?  
[abwe.org/Togo](http://abwe.org/Togo)

# 2021



PHOTOGRAPHS BY  
HANNAH STRAYER & JUDY BOWEN

# TRUTH BE TOLD

LEARN HOW A TEAM IS BRINGING  
TRUE HEALING TO A NATION.

## MAMA MELANIE WAS CONSIDERED A WITCH.

M

After being blamed for several deaths within the clan, Melanie was forced to relocate. Her uncle moved her into a little mud hut on the side of a mountain out of fear for the family's safety.

In the small, West African country of Togo, it is rare for an elderly woman to live alone. So, when an ABWE missionary named Jane noticed Melanie outside her hut on one of her walks, she asked a neighbor if they knew anything about her story.

The neighbor responded that Melanie had done “bad things” in the spiritual realm.

Togo is a cauldron of religious beliefs. Voodoo, notably, finds its origins in the animistic practices of West Africa. In much of the country, Islamic and Christian influences blend with ancestor and spirit worship, leaving people with a distorted view of God.

After Jane approached Melanie, the two women struck up a relationship. Melanie told the missionary that she was actually a baptized member of a church. She also told Jane the cause of her isolation, claiming that she once was possessed by demons. Melanie's access to demons made her a witch and gave her powers over others, according to her clan. Although Melanie insisted the demons were now gone, the title “witch” remained.

Through many talks, Jane was able to share the gospel with Melanie a number of times.

**As she opened up, Melanie shared her discouragement about her life and her despair over being called a witch. She confessed that she just wanted to die, and in fact had failed four times to take her own life by eating cement.**

But the more Melanie listened to Jane share the truth, the more she realized she had not fully grasped the gospel before. The Lord opened Melanie's heart, and she placed her faith in Jesus.

Melanie now attends a local church, along with her uncle, and is being taught by a local pastor.

Left: Mama Melanie's life was dramatically changed after she met an ABWE missionary who shared the gospel with her.

**T**HE FACT THAT A BIBLE-BELIEVING CHURCH EXISTS IN THE MIDDLE OF TOGO IS NO ACCIDENT, EVEN THOUGH ABWE'S MINISTRY IN TOGO WAS A "MISTAKE."

At least, that is how Ron Washer described his parents' arrival as ABWE's first missionaries to Togo nearly 50 years ago. Initially, Dal and Kay Washer had plans to serve in Benin. But when that door closed, they were led to Togo and never looked back.

From a divine perspective, the launch of the first ABWE Togo team was anything but an accident. More than 50 churches started as a result of well-established ministries that focus primarily on education, healthcare, and Christian literature, but also include a blind school, a radio station, and even an aquaponics farm—all centering on evangelism.

Through these ministries, tens of thousands of Togolese like Melanie hear the gospel each year, and a team of missionaries and national believers work to connect those who profess faith to these churches for further discipleship.

All told, 101 ABWE teammates currently serve together in Togo, with dozens more short-term workers joining them on the field each year.

#### HEALING BODIES, SAVING SOULS

It was 1985 when as many as 2,000 people, including village chiefs and government dignitaries, attended the opening ceremony for ABWE's newest ministry, Hôpital Baptiste Biblique (HBB).

During the event, an ABWE leader gathered missionaries into the women's ward of the new building to remind them all of the hospital's primary purpose: spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ.



Almost 40 years later, the now 50-bedroom hospital serves on average 18,000 patients annually, and each one has an opportunity to hear the gospel.

Some patients, like a man named Komi, come from many miles away, allowing the team to impact some of the poorest and least-reached people groups in West Africa.

Komi was angry after being in the hospital for months battling a flesh-eating infection that threatened amputation. Beyond accepting physical care, he shunned those who tried to encourage him. When HBB chaplains shared the gospel each day with Komi, he constantly rejected both them and their prayers.

Several weeks passed with this same behavior before an exasperated chaplain finally gave up attempts at conversation and handed Komi a Bible to read for himself. Without television or much else to do, Komi began to read the book. Three weeks later, the once-bitter patient asked for an HBB chaplain and beamed as he exclaimed, "I understand now. I believe! Thank you for sharing this good news with me!"

Komi is not alone in his journey to faith. A staggering 1,500 HBB patients respond to Christ in faith annually through the witness of hospital workers.

A unified staff of missionaries and national partners work as a team at HBB to help heal patients and lead them to Christ. Often

Komi was angry after being in the hospital for months battling a flesh-eating infection that threatened amputation. Beyond accepting physical care, he shunned those who tried to encourage him.



Each year, around 18,000 patients like Komi come to HBB. About 1,500 of them make professions of faith annually through the witness of the hospital staff. Some new converts go on to join or plant churches.



these new believers bring the gospel back to their families and villages.

Of the ABWE church plants around the hospital, more than 80 percent of them were started by national believers and all are currently pastored by Togolese Christians who are equipped through HBB's auxiliary ministries like leadership training and theological education.

#### GERMAIN'S STORY

Germain grew up in an animistic household that worshiped idols. But when a classmate invited him to a church connected to an ABWE-planted church, Germain heard the gospel and placed his trust in Christ at the age of 16.

After earning his bachelor's degree in English linguistics, a local pastor told Germain about a translator position at HBB. Germain worked closely with ABWE

missionary Sharon Rahilly, a teacher at the nursing school who required Germain's translation assistance.

As he interacted with the students, who were primarily young believers, his role as translator expanded to mentor as well. Germain had a hunger for biblical knowledge, so God provided the needed funds for him to be sent to the US to study theology at Liberty University.

When he returned to Togo, Germain's family was commissioned for ministry by the local church where he served as assistant pastor. He also taught at ABWE's Bible Institute in Kpalimé, lent his skills to HBB's literacy center, and translated for visiting missionaries.

Eventually, Germain accepted the position as HBB's Assistant Hospital Director. But he was uncertain of how God would use his ministry gifts at the managerial level—until one conversation.

"I thank God for Germain. He is a gifted leader, a humble servant, and a true friend. His love for the Lord and his integrity are evident to all, and his counsel and insight have been an invaluable resource for our team."

- Tom Kendall,  
HBB Chief Surgeon,  
& Hospital Director



Germain Amevi Fayosseh and his wife, Ayoko, have worked at HBB since 2001 and 2004, respectively. They have three children: Hannah, Eliane, and Theophile.

**D**uring a meeting with a government employee, God prodded Germain to share the gospel with the woman before he left her office.

Months later, Germain received some incredible news from her.

“You saved our family,” she told him. “My husband and I were going to have a divorce.” Instead of separating, she had given her life to Christ, and she and her husband started studying the Bible with a local pastor.

Her testimony is only one example of how a medical ministry like HBB extends beyond doctors and patients, infiltrating the community at large.

#### AN UNFINISHED TASK

Although the gospel is spreading throughout Togo, Africa still contains hundreds of people groups without access to the good news of Jesus Christ. At least three unreached peoples—the Kotokoli, Zarma, and Fulani—lie well within reach of ministries like HBB.

HBB is poised to become a launchpad, sending African medical missionaries into all of Africa. But this vision cannot come to fruition with HBB’s near-obsolete, worn, 36-year-old equipment and facilities.

To continue reaching deeper into Africa, the team plans to renovate, enhance, and expand the hospital along with its surgical and medical training programs. The expansion will include a center focused on training Togolese and other Africans to use medical evangelism to become highly-skilled, kingdom-minded surgeons who can also effectively share the gospel.

Of the \$4.3 million needed to complete Phase 1 of the “HBB Vision Project,” only \$1.3 million remains unfunded.





**"The vision is to establish Togo as a springboard for missions to the rest of the continent" said Washer. "Togo is just the beginning. Africa is the goal."**

#### **A GREAT CLOUD OF WITNESSES**

Without the hospital team and their ministries, people like Mama Melanie, Komi, and thousands of others may never hear the good news that will set them free.

In Komi's case, he left the hospital with both his leg and a newfound faith. He was given literature and returned for a follow-up appointment, rejoicing and thanking everyone for sharing the truth of the gospel.

Then, only a few hours later, the hospital staff received a call that Komi was dead. He had been killed in a terrible car accident on his way home.

"Some people would say, 'That's not fair! How could God not protect him after he gave his life to him!'" said HBB

medical doctor, Michael Gayle. "It is sad. And it was shocking. But as Christians we really should also be saying, 'Hallelujah! This man was able to receive Christ before he died!'"

"This is why we are here in Togo. To share the best medicine of all—the good news of Jesus Christ! It is life changing and will save in the end,!" no matter the outcome of someone's life on earth. •

A child receives treatment at HBB. In 2020 alone, the hospital conducted 155 deliveries and 986 surgeries.

**Partner with HBB and the Togo South Team to finish the task and help heal Africa for eternity.**  
**[abwe.org/TogoHBB](http://abwe.org/TogoHBB)**

# VISUALS

MINISTRY PROFILE

## Hôpital Baptiste Biblique

TSIKO, TOGO

THE TOTAL NEED  
**\$12 Million**

Hôpital Baptiste Biblique (HBB) has been furthering God's kingdom in southern Togo in West Africa since 1985. As God leads us into the future, our desires are to continue:

- » **Healing** with excellence.
- » **Believing** in the transformation of lives physically and spiritually.
- » **Building** opportunities by teaching and training Togolese nationals.



## Upcoming Projects

The HBB Vision Project will renovate, enhance, and expand the hospital, support surgical and medical programs, and help train Togolese and other Africans to use medical evangelism to share the gospel.

### PHASE 1 - \$3.1 million of \$4 million raised!

- Apartment Complex
- Campus Technology Upgrade
- New Chapel
- New Cuisine
- Electrical System
- Guest House Expansion
- Medical Incinerator
- Missionary Housing
- Volunteer Housing
- Wastewater Treatment
- Water System Improvement
- Woodworking Shed Improvements & Truck Docks

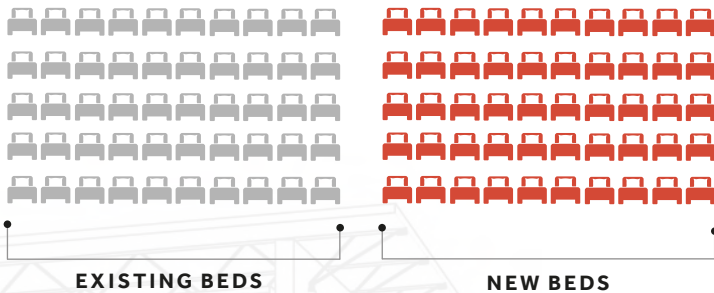
### PHASE 2 & 3

- **Surgical Support Addition** – Sterile Processing, Laundry, Surgical Staff Lockers
- Missionary Housing





HEAL TOGO. REACH AFRICA FOR CHRIST.



- **LARGER CHAPEL**



- **PROGRAMS & FACILITIES TO TRAIN NATIONALS**



- **SPECIALIZED WARDS (MENS, WOMENS, PEDS, INFECTIOUS DISEASE)**

**Help  
Finish  
the Task.**

**LEARN MORE**  
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#### PHASE 2 & 3

- **South Addition** – ICU, Peds, Women's Ward, Men's Private Rooms, Staff Lockers, Lower-Level Training Rooms & Storage
- **Core Renovation** – Central Nurse Station, X-Ray, IT, Private Rooms, Emergency
- **Cashier/Pharmacy Building**
- **Nursing School Addition**
- **Shaded Parking**
- **Clinic Building Renovations**
- **Administrative Building Renovations**
- **Toilet & Shower Building**



#### PHASE 4 & 5

- **North Addition** – Surgical Wards, Temp PACU, Temp ORs, Lower Level Mechanical & Storage
- **Covered Walkways**
- **Missionary Housing**
- **PAACS\* Housing**
- **Renovations** – New Operating Rooms, Chaplain Office, Lab Expansion, Main Entry



#### PHASE 6 & 7

- **Renovations** – PACU, OB Ward, Labor Room
- **PAACS\* Housing**
- **Wastewater Treatment Phase**

\* Pan-African Academy of Christian Surgeons



# FIELDNOTES

STORIES FROM THE FIELD



**TABITHA GROENEVELD**  
ABWE missionary and nurse  
practitioner at Hôpital Baptiste  
Biblique.

[READ MORE](#)

FROM OUR MISSIONARIES

[ABWE.ORG/BLOG](https://abwe.org/blog)

# Trusting God on the Hard Days

TABITHA GROENEVELD | ABWE NURSE PRACTITIONER

**IN MISSIONS, WE ARE** often privileged to witness God do incredible things.

This is especially true in medical missions. Sometimes, we see things happen that defy medical explanation, confounding us to the point where we just have to step back and humbly say, “Look what great thing God has done!” Those are the victory days in medical missions. Those are the experiences when God’s presence is most apparent.

However, for every victory day there are many days of defeat. On the mission field, failures are just as common as successes. In those times, we question what God is doing. Is God great even when he does not do seemingly great things? Can we trust him when he does not heal the patient that we had prayed so fervently for? Is he truly good when so much hurt and heartache surround us?

But such heavy thoughts were far from my mind as I headed to clinic one morning, with pep in my step. The sidewalks were lined with patients who had traveled hours to HBB. Many had already tried traditional medicines and herbs, while others had already sought treatment through the local witch doctors. Having exhausted those options, they were now waiting at the clinic doors, and I was eager to help them.

I might not have been if I knew what the day had in store.

I had no idea I would have to tell one woman she has breast cancer and requires an incredibly

100%

OF PATIENTS  
AT HBB  
HAVE THE  
OPPORTUNITY  
TO HEAR THE  
GOSPEL

**“Is God  
great even  
when he  
doesn’t do  
seemingly  
great  
things?”**

53

CHURCHES HAVE  
BEEN STARTED  
BECAUSE OF  
THE MINISTRY  
AT HBB IN THE  
PAST 36 YEARS

invasive surgery—not to save her life but only to provide some relief. Even worse, I had to break the news of terminal cancer to another patient. There was nothing we or anyone else in Togo could do to help her. Her cancer was advanced and extensive, beyond hope. I sat down on a low stool next to her, held her hand, and cried with her.

And yet, there were more: an 81-year-old with severe lung disease, and a 30-year-old who had a hysterectomy following a miscarriage. Astonishment crossed the woman’s face as she learned that she would never be able to bear children. Weeping, she asked if there was some medicine that would help her have a child.

For each of these patients, I had no satisfactory answers for their physical ailments. But I did have the beautiful message of Jesus Christ—our greatest hope. Each case was frustrating and heartbreaking. The suffering was overwhelming. It is in these moments that I cling to the sovereignty of God and tell myself over and over that he is always good, even when I cannot understand his plan or when things do not seem so. We can trust him even when prayers are not answered according to our will. He is great even when we are burdened by so much suffering.

Despite such truths, I walked home that evening heavyhearted. But I was escorted by peace, because my soul is anchored in the unchanging character of God. •



## 3 Reasons To Care About Unreached People Groups

- ALEX KOCHAN, DIRECTOR OF ADVANCEMENT & COMMUNICATIONS -

**THROUGHOUT HISTORY, CHRISTIANITY** has experienced periods of setback and advance, darkness and revival, death and resurrection.

At times, it may be tempting to believe that Christ's kingdom is "losing" when Christian cultures recede. But as G.K. Chesterton noted, "Christianity has died many times and risen again; for it had a God who knew the way out of the grave."

Today, even while we see previously "Christian" nations declining, we also see the gospel spreading like wildfire across the Global South. As missionaries pursue people groups who have never heard the gospel, we know that the kingdom of God will ultimately prevail across the globe.

This is why we care about prioritizing reaching those who have no gospel access:

### 1. CHRIST COMMANDED IT

Jesus commanded his apostles to disciple all the nations (Matthew 28:19). We are commissioned not just to evangelize every individual but to labor for the day when all the nations of the earth will know Christ.

"Nations" does not simply mean "countries." Biblically, the word "nation" can describe ethnicity, language, culture, and more. Understanding this, some researchers count as many as 7,414 current unreached peoples—totaling more than 3 billion individuals. Until this number drops, our mission is incomplete.

### 2. PAUL MODELED IT

Paul was particularly burdened for the unreached: "[I] preach the gospel, not where Christ has *already been named*" (Romans 15:20, emphasis added). The apostle

knew that those without access to the gospel were top priority.

Paul also asks, "[H]ow are [the lost] to believe in him of whom they have never heard?" (Romans 10:14b). The answer is, they cannot. We must send more workers like Paul to reach those without any Christian witness.

### 3. WE NEED IT

David Livingstone remarked, "The best cure for a sick church is a missionary diet." Our churches and families are spiritually anemic today because we neglect the work of the gospel.

We pray for revival in our nation, but what if revival is tarrying until we embrace our missionary call to the world?

We should never give up on the cause of the gospel at home. But we cannot forget God's heart for those who have never heard. One day, the knowledge of Christ will fill the earth "as the waters cover the sea" (Habakkuk 2:14). •

# SPOTLIGHT

— LIZ ORTIZ —



©Judy Bowen



**12,000**

TOGOLESE ARE  
DEAF & HAVE  
LITTLE TO NO  
ACCESS TO  
THE GOSPEL

## ‘From Deaf to Life

### **JONAS WAS NOT ALWAYS DEAF.**

He was born perfectly healthy. At the age of five, his parents took him to the hospital for basic treatment for an illness, but the doctors gave him too much medicine and accidentally put Jonas into a coma. When he awoke, the world around him was silent.

The Togolese culture tends to view the deaf and blind as helpless and of little value. It is not uncommon for these children to be beaten or abandoned. Most receive no education.

However, Jonas’ parents were different. They sent him to one of ABWE’s Christian schools. But Jonas was learning little in classes that were not geared for deaf students. That is when Liz Ortiz, ABWE short-term missionary at the

time, noticed him. Having studied sign language, Liz took it upon herself to teach Jonas. But when months had passed and Jonas did not show signs of progress, Liz contemplated moving on.

Then one day, something clicked for Jonas. Liz was quizzing Jonas by having him choose the crayon that matched the color she signed. At first, she thought it was just by coincidence that he had picked correctly. But one by one the crayon box emptied as Jonas successfully pulled out the right crayons.

The Togolese were overjoyed at Jonas’ success, and soon, local pastors and teachers wanted to know how they could teach and witness to the deaf. The population they had deemed as hopeless now had a way to receive the gospel. •

### **ABOUT THE PHOTOGRAPHER**



**JUDY BOWEN SERVES IN TOGO** where she oversees the Communications Resource Center, which is responsible for translating Christian materials into French and Ewe. She has published several photographic coffee table books that can be purchased at [TellofHisWonders.com](https://TellofHisWonders.com). All proceeds support the literacy ministry in Togo.



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