

Subject **Tamberma 1**

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Dear Friends & Family,

Many of you have prayed and asked about what is going on with the Tamberma people of Togo! Because of being in the states for the wedding, I was not able to go with the team that went this summer, but Samuel who graciously agreed to take my place (and has done a wonderful job!!) gave a good description of life there so here's his account with some pictures. The Togolese pastor who leads the Tamberma team also has written an update that you'll find in a separate update.

Here's Tamberma through Samuel's eyes:

As I traveled back from Naduba yesterday I looked forward to getting back and writing an email about the difficulties of the journey to the village and the hardships that were faced. I thought with joy of the consolations I would receive and the "Atta Boy's" that I so often desire. But as I rested last night I thought, "What kind of Christ-like spirit is that?" That isn't following in the footsteps of Christ, 'who humbled Himself, becoming obedient to death, even death on a cross,' is it? No, Romans 5 tells us that our sufferings are supposed to produce perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. There is no character in complaining how hard life is or wondering why God does what he does. No, character must come from obedience; it must come from dedication; and it must come from love for God's children.

The truth is that God provided me with everything that I needed, brothers and sisters in Christ who poured out their hearts in prayer and love for me, and the Holy Spirit to guide me through the difficulties that God had placed before me. He blessed me with the opportunity to see hundreds of forgotten people praising God with their whole hearts, kids chanting "Roi de roi (King of kings)!" and "Jesus, Ami des enfant (Jesus, Friend of the children!)," and the joy of serving Christ! He blessed me with my Togolese 'Mama' Akouwa who served me with love, food, and prayers throughout the week.

This past week I learned so much that I would not trade for anything in the world. The one thing that impacted me the most was a little girl named Roseline. She is about 5 years old and attended the VBS every day of the week. She has the responsibility of carrying her younger brother on her back an unknown number of kilometers to the church. I have seen her on 9 different days now and she has worn the same orange outfit every single time that I have seen her. She seems to be one of the popular girls; all of the other young girls would call her name and include her in their games. However, often I would notice that some of the older girls would bully her a little bit: maybe with a shove, hard words, or snatching things from her hands. But this is where she made the biggest impact on my week. Each time someone was mean to her, she would humbly brush it off and never pushed back, never showed anger in her emotions, never retaliated, never let it affect her at all. She would simply skip off or find another toy. It was so simple but so amazing! Her humility, her loving actions, and her self-control were really something to admire and to apply to my life.

The Tamberma people are a very lost, poor, and broken people group. The children are all very poor, malnourished, and scarred from fetish ceremonies where they are cut as many as 12 times on their faces as small infants. Though there is little to no money for food, the children all have valuable bracelets and beads to 'protect them' from evil spirits. It is the saddest part of the world I have ever experienced. However, there is a fire started that will not go out. The church is growing! Each night we would show a film and hundreds of people would pack into the church to learn about God. Hundreds would attend everyday to learn about Jesus Christ. Hundreds of children are learning to be the next generation of Believers. I am forever grateful to have been a part of the movement and I cannot wait to hug and talk with my sister Roseline in Heaven one day!

Attached are several photos from Tamberma:



A typical house: The mounds are idols that represent each person in the house. Sacrifices are made on them each year for the health of the family member. They are built up each year with more mud. The two silos are where all the food is stored for the dry seasons.



My dear friend Roseline

This boy was so joyful. His face enraged me when I thought of what his parents had done; but the joy that he had from praising Christ shined through any scars from the evil he has experienced.





God's Car: Coming back yesterday we loaded the top similar to in this picture and 11 adults crammed inside for a total of 11 hours travel time. In addition, 6 live birds came back with us! I would laugh so hard when the rooster would crow as I was barreling down the roads!



This pastor leads the church in Naduba. It is growing! He is facing enormous challenges with language barriers and teaching new concepts to the people but he does it with so much joy. It is so rare to see him without a beaming smile, typically only when he is pouring out his heart in a sermon with an important message.



A sandal: This shoe still has plenty of use left in it. I child wore it to VBS and I snagged a picture of it. I am sure that he would tell you how grateful he is to have a shoe. A new set of sandals like these costs about 75 cents at the market.

Thanks for your prayers and please continue!!
Beky