

Preparation Manual



*“ . . . open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God. . . .”
Acts 26:18*

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PREPARING FOR MISSIONS!!!!

Greetings to you from the Shattering Darkness Ministry Team in Burkina Faso West Africa! So, you are praying about, or have already decided to serve the Lord with us!! We are thrilled. We have prayed for you for a long time!! We may not know your name. We may not know your church. Nevertheless, we have pleaded with the Lord for many months to send out laborers into HIS harvest. (Matthew 9:37-38 NASV) We are so grateful at your willingness to obey our Precious Jesus. Very few people have come here, served among our peoples, loved them, taught them, sang and danced with them, cried with them, prayed with them, and then returned to America unchanged. Be prepared to have your faith challenged and stretched. Be prepared to have your heart broken. Be prepared to see God in brand new ways. Be prepared to lose sleep. Be prepared to be hot. Be prepared to be dirty. Be prepared to laugh. Be prepared to hold children. Be prepared to teach. Be prepared to sing. Be prepared to give testimony. Be prepared to do things you have never done before!! Be prepared to share the story of Christ with an unreached people group. Are you catching a "theme" here?? We want to do all we can to help you "Be Prepared" .We want to help you with practical items. We want to help you with emotional items. We want to help you with spiritual preparation as well.

SOME of you are "seasoned" short-term mission servants. If so, some of our suggestions will be familiar. However, please do not fall into the trap of thinking you have "been there, done that" so you have no need to worry about the preparation. Let me suggest to you that you approach this trip as though it is your first one ever! Let it be exciting. Let it be a challenge.

FOR others, this will be your first trip overseas. You are nervous. You are frightened. You do not know why you want to come. You do not know why the Lord is prompting you to be a part of this team. You do not know how to raise the money. You do not know...

THUS, the reason for this Preparation Manual.

IN the pages that follow, you will find helpful tips regarding shots, items to bring, enlisting prayer support and suggestions for raising funds for the trip.

BE sure to regularly visit our [website: www.shatteringdarkness.org](http://www.shatteringdarkness.org) for current information.

WE want to serve you. We want to help you in any way we can to make the trip a life-changing one for both the ethnic groups we serve and for you. It is our prayer that you will be conformed to the image of Christ. It is our prayer that you will be a better church member. It is our prayer that you will see missions in a brand new way. It is our prayer that you will capture, or re-capture a passion for God. It is our prayer that you will love Him more profoundly, serve Him more diligently, hunger and thirst for Him more deeply and desire above all other things, that His glory and grace be displayed in and through your life!!

CAN a mission trip do all of that????????? Just you wait and see!!!!

PLEASE do not let all of this information intimidate you. We supply it as an encouragement to you and as a tool for you.

1. Pray for guidance in selecting the team members. All team members should be prepared to participate in ministry opportunities with Bible teachings, testimonies, discipleship training, counseling, pastoral formation and " all other duties as assigned" (food preparation, dish washing, hanging laundry, loving on children, drying tears, etc.) Colossians 3:17, 1 Corinthians 10:31
2. Pray about the dates of the mission trip. This should be decided with input by both the team U.S.A./Canada and the missionaries on the field. Usually the most effective teams plan to be in the villages a minimum of 5-7 days. With the 2 days spent in Ouagadougou coming, going, and the 2 days travel internationally, teams should consider trips of 10-15 days. If you feel led to have more days...we would welcome it. Likewise, if you are unable to plan 10 days, we would be excited having your team minister for

as long as you are able. (Some teams find that less than 7 days of 'service' leaves them feeling frustrated. Our Ministry Team is also concerned about the amount of money the Impact Team members invest for such a short time on the field. Most of the expense is airfare and does not change whether the team spends one week or one month on the field. Our team also likes ample time with YOU...our partners so we are able to begin building and developing long-term relationships with YOU. It also allows time to begin developing friendships with the National leaders you serve alongside.)

3. There are various Companies that provide travel insurance for trips overseas. One of them is Adams & Associates International (803) 254-9404 for obtaining short-term overseas insurance coverage at a reasonable cost. For others, you can easily research coverage and prices on the internet. Be sure the travel insurance includes evacuation insurance.
4. The Team Leader needs to provide the on-field missionary or Shattering Darkness Director of Ministry, Patrice Hien with the name and contact information of the stateside "point person" holding the responsibility of contacting the Impact Team's family members of field updates. This can be done as soon as the final team is formed. You may want to designate this responsibility to the Prayer Coordinator of the stateside prayer support team.
5. Begin to schedule regular team meetings to pray for the trip and discuss the plans for
 - A. The travel,
 - 1) Passports - Make sure that each person has a passport that is valid 6 months past your planned return. If a person needs a passport, you may pick up an application at the local Post Office. Complete the application and return it to the Post Office with 2 passport photos, positive ID (birth certificate) and the fee (approximately \$65.00). These items are sent to the Passport Agency and your passport and documents will be mailed to you. This process can

take from 2 weeks to 4 months. Prepare in plenty of time to submit with your visa application.

2) Visas - Paperwork for the visa can be downloaded from the Internet and should be completed and turned in with 2 passport size photos. These need submitted to the Burkina Faso Embassy in the U.S. within 6-7 weeks of planned departure. For those of you returning to Burkina who already have an entry Visa... *please verify the dates are still active!*

3) Airline Tickets should be researched, purchased and confirmed 1-3 months prior to travel. Often purchasing in advance allows for a greater discount. The two recommended airlines with service from the U.S. to Burkina are Air France and Belgium Air.

B. The types of ministry to prepare:

1. Some teams do village evangelism, village discipleship, prayer walking, and showing of the Jesus film. Other teams desire to do church construction, healthcare, leadership training, Bible Clubs and other children's ministries. In other words, whatever the Lord tells you to do, providing that the activity/ies follow the overall Action Plan and goals of Shattering Darkness Ministries. Each team member will be asked to give his/her testimony. Lessons and testimonies will be reviewed once team arrives on the field to aide in the translation and comprehension of our leaders.

**** The Shattering Darkness Ministry Team reserves the right suggest specific ministry activities and village locations so that all outreach is in line with ministry goals and action plans. ****

C. A schedule for receiving the necessary medical treatment:

1. The shots that are required are:
Yellow Fever and Meningitis

2. Also **highly** recommended are:
Hepatitis,
Tetanus and
Typhoid (booster)
3. You must begin Malaria preventive medications prior to your arrival in Burkina Faso.
Dr Cheryl Decker (please refer to contact information on website for our Board of Directors) will make the best recommendation for malaria prevention.

*****Please DO NOT take
Larium(Mefloquin)*****

C. What to bring as a team:

1. Ministry items:
 - a) Wordless books: (color order: blue, black, red, white, yellow, and green.)
 - b) Testimonies***
 - c) Discipleship lessons *** (written out)
 - d) Any other teaching aids that you are prepared to use. Try to make them as simple to reproduce as possible so the villagers can possibly use the same types of aids for their ministries. (Bible pictures, flannel graph, puppets)
 - e) Games for children (soccer balls [deflated & to be inflated here] Frisbees, nerf balls, paddle balls, etc.)

Because groceries are expensive here, and we never know what will be found on the shelves, we have found it much better if Teams are able to bring some food items with them. The following are things we request as a result of "trial and error" in the past.

2. Foodstuffs (based on 2-5 persons)

- a) You will be responsible for bringing most of your breakfast items including cereals (oatmeal is available here). Snacks for lunch at/or between villages. Often we have to eat on the run and items should be portable, fast and nutritious. Granola Bars, Peanut Butter Crackers, Cheese Crackers, Slim Jim's, beef jerky, trail mix, nuts, jars of peanut butter and jelly for sandwiches.
- b) Dinners will be prepared using foods that are available in Ouaga and items that the team will bring with them. We ask that you bring: 3 packets of Spaghetti Seasoning, a LARGE jar of peanut butter, 2-3 blocks of Velveeta cheese, 4 large cans of chunked chicken, 2 large cans chunked ham, and several assorted salad dressing packets.

Many times, SS classes enjoy gathering the food items for the team as a tangible way to be involved in the mission endeavor.)

3.) Dress Code:

Women: Long (ankle length) dresses or skirts. Broom skirts and jean skirts are great. You will be glad for pockets! Shirts/tops must not show cleavage! Please also, nothing skin tight.

Men: ok ladies, I know 'not fair' but guys can wear jeans, shorts, cargo pants and t's!! Gentlemen: if you are preaching/teaching please wear appropriate U.S. church 'casual'.

How we dress reflects on how we respect our Savior.

Exception: Medical Teams: Men and women can both wear 'scrubs' that are loose fitting and obviously medical garb.

Dress code needs to be adhered to even on the mission compound. Dress code needs to be honored in the evenings at ministry site.

The way we dress and present ourselves is a direct reflection of how we love our Savior, how we respect the culture of our host country and how we care about the people we have come to minister to.

We cannot express too strongly the necessity to be covered in prayer before you come, during your ministry here, and a month after you return to the U.S. We cannot put into words the physical, emotional, spiritual toll of spiritual warfare that is constant. As a team, we consider the items below as "minimum requirements".

A. *Enlistment of Prayer Partners*

1. We are asking that team members have at least 5 pray-ers praying for them beginning a month before you arrive and continuing for a month after you return to the US. Be expecting spiritual attacks of all kinds before, during and after the trip. This is also an excellent way to get children (and even grandchildren) involved in the trip. They will be thrilled to hear what God did because they prayed.

B. *Begin a Journal from the moment you begin seeking God's will about coming to Burkina Faso, and at the latest once you become a team member. Record DAILY verses God gives you, thoughts, fears, answered prayer, ways the Lord is meeting the financial needs, devotional thoughts, etc. This will not only keep you spiritually sensitive to the voice of God during*

your preparation, but will also be a source of encouragement to you as you re-read the journey later on.

** Some people who kept a journal the “first time around” do not see it as necessary on subsequent trips. PLEASE do not fall into that trap! Our Lord will speak new things into your heart and spirit each time you serve Him here! ***Please do not skip/skimp on this vital area of preparation!*** (The book “A GOD STORY” grew out of journal entries)

C._Team leader should make available to all team members: Names, addresses, phone numbers and email addresses of all participants. Pray for each other daily.

D._Depending on how far in advance the team starts forming, the following are some “schedule” guidelines:

E._

1. ***12-18 months advance of arrival:***

A. Meet with all tentative team members every 2 months.

i. Pray together.

ii. Voice concerns.

iii. Begin study of the country and culture. (Refer to ‘Worldview’ portion of team Prep information on the website as well as ‘Fast Facts’.)

F. 6-12 months in advance:

i. Begin to meet monthly.

ii. Assign someone to be secretary and be sure minutes are mailed to each team participant within 7 days of the meetings.

iii. Pray.

iiii. Assign a different team member each month (including any youth that are to be involved) to present a Bible Study/devotional that deals with:

i. Knowing God wants you on this trip

- ii. OR: Why God tells us to "GO and Tell"
- iii. OR: "How to Witness"
- iv. OR: " Using Personal Testimony Evangelistically"
- v. OR: "Obedience"
- vi. OR: " Jesus"
- vii. OR: "Missions"
- viii. OR: " What God is Showing you through your Journal"
- ix. OR: "What you are wanting the Lord to do IN you on the trip"
- x. OR: "Steps for Spiritual Preparation"

G. Be sure to sing at each meeting, allowing each come together to be a time of spiritual renewal, encouragement. Focus solely on the Lord His will.

H. Enlist Sunday School Classes, Choir members, Mission groups to be praying for you. Ask if they will make weekly announcements about the trip and pray for the team members by name. (Senior adult men and women will be some of your most faithful and fervent Prayer Warriors for you!)

I. **3-6 Months before departure:**

CHECKLIST:

- 1. Passport/s requested: _____ received _____
- 2. Shots: (Date received)
 - Yellow fever _____
 - Meningitis _____
 - Hepatitis _____, _____, _____
 - Tetanus (booster) _____
- 3. Malaria meds begin date _____
- 4. Personal medications? Y/N _____
- If YES: Purchased? Y/N _____

3. Journaling daily? Y/N_____
4. Working on personal testimony/N_____
5. Working on Bible Lessons? Y/N_____
6. Daily quiet time/N_____
7. Faithful to monthly meetings/N_____

1-3 Months prior to departure

Checklist:

- Shots still needed: _____, _____
- Passport in hand? _____
- Paperwork received & completed for Burkina visa/N_____
- Malaria meds purchased/N_____
- Prayer Partners enlisted/N_____ (minimum of 5 people)
- Plane tickets ordered/N_____
- Funds raised/N_____
- Journaling daily/N_____
- Faithful to monthly meetings/N_____
- Faithful in quiet time/N_____
- Faithful to church services/N_____
- Have you presented your lesson to team members/N_____

Less than 30 days prior to departure:

Need to meet weekly

- Read John 17 daily
- Read Joshua 1 daily
- Read Isaiah 61 daily
- Read Isaiah 62 daily
- Read Revelation 5 daily

Checklist: (If anything on this list is still pending, you must obtain immediately!) In the column to the far ***left***, indicate once the item ***is in*** your carry-on, or suitcase. ****** Have your passport, tickets, shot record, Bible, medications, one change of clothes in your carry-on. ******

Date received/date completed:

____ Passports in hand _____
____ Burkina Faso visa in hand _____

Shots completed _____
____ Malaria medicine purchased _____
____ Personal meds purchased _____
____ Personal testimony ready _____
Bible lessons/devotionals ready _____
____ Bible in hand _____
Prayer Partners praying _____
Necessary funds raised _____
____ Plane tickets received _____
____ Sunglasses? _____
____ Sunscreen? _____
____ Comfortable walking shoes? _____
____ Flip-flops? _____
____ Closed toe walking shoes _____
____ Rain Boots (if applicable) _____
____ Umbrella _____
____ High-Powered Flashlight (and ample batteries) _____
____ Sunhat/visor/cap? _____
____ Snacks purchased? _____
____ Food items collected? _____

Someone lined up to get the team and luggage to the airport?
All luggage tagged and identified? _____ ***(It is a good idea to mark all team luggage in an easily identifiable way : Wide, bright red ribbon/ bright yellow smiley faces/bright colored rope tied around the handle/etc ** This allows our luggage handler/helper easily identify all luggage for the team.*****
Do you have the following ***in your passport?***

Local Contact person: Lynn Kennedy and/or Patrice Hien.
Lynn: 011-226-74-69-26-65

Patrice: 011-226-70-23-57-33

Baptist Mission in Ouaga:50-30-72-58

You will need this to fill out paperwork for entry into the country. **Place this number, address on a piece of paper, and keep in your passport. Please give this number to family members in case of any emergency.**

Have you given the stateside 'point person' the email and phone number of where you can be reached? (We ask for phone calls only in the case of emergency.) In addition, your family and friends need to know your time with us is so short and intense that team members do NOT have time to send e-mails! It would be good if you establish one or two people to be the liaison between you and all the folks stateside.
lynnkennedyburkina@gmail.com

FUND RAISING: The following are some suggestions others have used: Any or all of them may be helpful for you and your team members.

PRAY!

Use IRS refund check.

Use birthday/Christmas/graduation money (For any of these occasions, when people ask what you would like, let them know you are planning this trip and say a donation to the trip would not only be a blessing to you, but an investment in the gospel)

HOLD a garage sale letting people know what the processed are for.

HIRE yourself out as: babysitter, grass-cutter, car washer, House cleaner (some women did this recently and had so many church families request their services; they did not have enough of them to clean all the houses. They earned the full cost of the trip quickly. We affectionately named them our "M & M's" (Mission Maids!) With these items, be sure you start early on so people can schedule you and you will have ample time to raise the funds.

WRITE a letter to family and friends sharing your heart for missions and ministry. Give them details about the trip and what you will be doing. Ask them to **join you in prayer** for the trip. (Give them approximate dates, the name of the country, the name of the people group, etc.) **If the Lord** lays it on hearts to send you money **BE SURE** to acknowledge the gift (prior to departure from the U.S.) and be sure that once you return from the trip you contact all supporters with details. Send them photos. For people living close-by, plan a snack/photo/video/report night so they are able to see and hear what their financial investment reaped.

WORK a little overtime (especially if you are single)

FIND a temporary part-time job (especially if you are single)

ONE church set up a display table in the Bible Study area. Information was given about the length of the trip, cost, ministry and the like. The total cost of the trip was divided by the number of total hours of the trip from departure to return. People were then given the opportunity to "sponsor" the days and hours of their choice and had a "hands on" role in the trip and the person sponsored.

ASK people who have been on mission trips for the ways they raised money.

Some churches pay airfare and the volunteers pay all other expenses.

Some churches provide partial scholarships for mission volunteers.

Some churches take up a special offering to be divided among all who are going.

We serve a mighty God. Money is no issue for Him. Our obedience is. Our faith is. If He has called you to join Him in

this ministry and on this trip...He has already provided the resources. We just need to do our part.

Pray. Trust. Wait. Listen. Act. Obey.

Along with this information, you will our Shattering Darkness website contain detailed information about the people here. You will learn their heritage, customs, culture, and beliefs. The information will help you to prepare appropriate, directed teachings and testimonies that will touch their hearts.

Your team may want to choose one or two people to read all the background information and share about 15 minutes each team meeting. Your team-leader may prefer to do all the teaching about the ethnic groups being reached via Shattering Darkness Ministries. Once again, a visit/s to our website will be a great help in seeing what our Lord is doing here and ways to pray: www.shatteringdarkness.org

The team leader needs to feel free to contact any one of our Board members with specific questions not addressed in this manual.

And so... the adventure of a lifetime begins.

A pastor's wife recently spoke with me about a note received from a church member during a time the Pastor and wife were seeking God's will about answering the call to go to a different church. The couple loved their church. They had no desire to move away. In the note, the church member wrote:

"There are lost people waiting at the other side of your obedience."

Wow! The Lord used those words to prompt the couple to a new, deeper level of trust and obedience. The Lord used those words to show His ultimate will. A short time later, the Pastor and family accepted the call. That family is now leading one of

the most influential Southern Baptist churches in the United States.

Could it be our Lord desires to use these same words to bring you here.... a continent half a world away?

May our Glorious Lord show you His will. May each of you be willing to follow Him... **"there are lost people at this side of your obedience!"**

Hidden in the One Shattering Darkness,

Shattering Darkness Ministry Team

Isaiah 9:1-2, Acts 16:26-28



Dagara People Profile

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DAGARA PEOPLE PROFILE: 10/01/2013

Have they heard the gospel?

In Burkina Faso, approximately 50% of village dwellers have heard the full gospel message. . This is similar in Ghana. The Catholic Church is influential in NW Ghana and SW areas in Burkina Faso. The most current information indicates 1 church or "preaching point" for every 30,000 Dagara in Burkina. (There are seven(7) American and no European missionaries for 400,000 Burkina Dagara.) Recent figures indicate 500,000 Dagara located in Ghana, many of which have moved toward the central and southern areas of Ghana to live in proximity to medical care, electricity, water and employment. Ghana is said to be more 'evangelized' as work with a Baptist couple and a Methodist couple began work in the 1950's. However, it does not appear that any evangelical group has been in the area for many years. Research over the past 15 years among all professing 'evangelical' groups show most ministry is still in the south in spite of many pleas by the church leadership itself for pastors, evangelists and indigenous missionaries to move north.

There are currently two mission agencies working with the Dagara of Burkina Faso. There are three (3) Church of Christ couples in Dano as well as 1 'dependent' Southern Baptist missionary living in Diebougou. (** Mr. and Mrs. Ed Manning are preparing to join Shattering Darkness staff in Burkina, along with their daughters Grace and Maleah in December 2013)

Have the Dagara responded to the gospel?

The Catholic Church has been in the area for 38 years. They have built schools and clinics and most Dagara who have heard the name of Jesus have done so as a result of the Catholic ministries. Sadly, the teaching encompasses the beliefs that 'works', baptism, and church attendance will gain them entrance to Heaven! Forty (40) percent of the Dagara have never heard the name of Jesus! Thirty (30) percent have heard His name and believe He is the Son of God. (Thirty percent of these are 'nominal' Catholics still practicing their fetish/totem/sacrificial beliefs.) Four (4) percent have accepted Jesus as personal Savior, primarily because of Canadian Pentecostal work, which began in the 1930's., Southern Baptist ministry began in 1998 and in 2002 the Church of Christ. The Canadian Pentecostal work shows they have a few small churches that are led by Burkinabe pastors. Church of Christ continues evangelism and has 9 preaching points and 1 established church to date many being led by brand new converts who have received a minimal amount of training and a minimal amount of supervision! Baptist work has resulted in 12 churches and 20 preaching points representing membership from 20 neighboring villages. Baptized believers total more than 3000, 40+ trained Dagara leaders teach, preach, evangelize, lead worship, train the children and write the music. Weekly meetings record 2000 or more in church services, prayer meetings and village meetings at various "preaching points" (See separate attachment of FAST FACTS)

Do the Dagara have a church?

Out of 140 villages surveyed, (there are approximately 200 villages in Burkina) 100 have no church. Ghanaian figures from 1991 indicate 5 Baptist congregations (1 church building, 1 pastor, 100 total members). The Methodists in Ghana indicated 3 congregations (1 church building, 1 pastor, 53 total members). **The Baptist work via Shattering Darkness has plans to enter Ghana and locate the Dagara villages as well as accurate ministry statistics to target the unreached in Ghana. (Pastor Patrice Hien and Pastor Samson Kwame are currently reaching Muslim women and street youth in the large city of Kumasi as Pastor Hien attends seminary.)**

All new ministries begin under trees or a local meeting area. Once the Dagara come to Christ, they often express a desire to have a place to worship their Savior. Our Lord is so faithful and has allowed us to partner with American churches resulting in: 12 houses of prayer and worship; 9 children's buildings; 9 bread ovens; 9 safe-water wells; 1 youth activity building; LIGHTHOUSE Christian School! We project January 2015 for first class of our Pastor Training

Institute! ALL Glory and Honor and Praise to our Lord Jesus!

Do the Dagara have a Bible translation in their language?

The New Testament is now available in the Wiile dialect. The Gospel of Luke and the book of Hebrews are now available in the Lobr dialect.

Are there hindrances to distribution of Christian materials?

There is no government restriction. Various methodologies to distribute materials as they become available. Illiteracy is very high among most village dwellers. National figures indicate 85% but the village figures are much closer to 92-95%. The Jesus film in a Dagara dialect is now being widely used by the Shattering Darkness Team. January 2014 hopes to provide the Jesus film in both Birifor and Lobiri groups.**

Are the Dagara open to change? Christianity?

The Dagara are a gracious people and will listen once a relationship has been developed. However, few have been willing to leave the 'religion' of their ancestors. Some 'religions' are well received because of humanitarian projects, and permission to continue sacrifices and fetishes!! Many also are proponents of drinking alcohol. Protestants have had much less success **until recent years.**

Since mid 2000 nearly 3000 professions of faith have been recorded and nearly 2500 baptisms by immersion as a result of Southern Baptist (more specifically, Shattering Darkness Ministry Team as of early 2004) evangelistic work.

Do the Dagara need cross-cultural assistance to get the gospel message proclaimed to each Dagara?

In order for the 750,000 Dagara to have access to the gospel, there is currently a need for cross-cultural assistance. There is a definite need for saturation evangelism, leadership training and development, development and distribution of evangelistic/discipleship materials/methodology. Dependable modes of transportation are also needed such as: new dirt bikes and a new truck. With these materials, we fully believe a concerted effort targeting the Dagara could be fully accomplished by December 2020. (A viable reproducing church within walking distance of every Dagara location with equipped Dagara leaders and exit strategy complete.)

The formation and opening of a "Center of Formation" will play a very strategic role in this overall vision becoming a reality.

FAMILY STRUCTURE of the Dagara

Home life with the Dagara can be monogamous or polygamous. The first marriage will be the 'official' government recognized marriage if the couple has the ceremony performed by the local mayor. If the husband takes additional wives it is for prestige and ease. It is a show of influence and riches, as the husband takes on (theoretically) the provision for the additional wives and any offspring from the union/s. In Dagara culture, rooms are added on to the family structure so that each wife has a room to herself.

The Dagara people group has 7 clans. Two of these are matriarchal, others patriarchal. From the reading done and the interviews conducted, many things determine the headship of the family. Once again, 'theoretically' in a male dominated home, the husband/elder will make major decisions. He has the final word. He is responsible for providing a home for the family, finances for the family and provides the means to educate the children. The wife is responsible for the home, raising the children, food preparation, and supplemental income. In recent years, the women have had to assume more and more of all responsibilities, including the fieldwork that at one time was the sole responsibility of the head of the home. The preparing of the land and clearing of the land and the tilling still rests in the hand of the men. Women are responsible for the seeding and they help with the harvest. In recent days with couples coming to Christ and discipleship in process, marriages are changing and women are given more respect and in some instance the opportunity to voice an opinion in the decisions.

The lines of authority in the Dagara familial system are very interesting. In many instances, both husband and wife will make the decision. If there is disagreement, the husband will make the final decision. However, if a decision is made that the person involved disagrees with, they can go to other members of family and plead their case. As an example: if a young woman wants to complete her education but the father says no, she is free to go visit her mothers' brothers and ask for their assistance in convincing the father to allow further schooling. If the mother made the negative decision, the one involved is free to visit the mothers' sisters and ask for their influence. This effort is frequently used to influence/change initial decisions. If the parent is not in residence when a decision is needed, the elder relative in residence will make the decision, or no decision will be made until the parent returns.

The Dagara hold two things as extremely important as individuals as well as members of a community. The Dagara hold tenaciously to their individual personhood. They guard their ability and 'right' to make their own decisions and plans and way in their world. At the same time, they hold the sense of community and their responsibility in the unity, solidarity and peace as vital. Any action that disturbs communal peace is met with disdain. There is no such thing in Dagara life that only affects the individual or the individual and his immediate family. All decisions affect all the community. Thus, a disturbance must be rectified with the community as a whole. There is a system of animal sacrifice for atonement. There is a distinction between those 'initiated' and those who have not. The community has the right to expel the agitator from the community.

***** We can see by this that for a Dagara to come to Christ, the stability and unity of the family or village is threatened. I personally believe this is one reason the Lord is saving many Dagara, so the believers can mutually support and defend each other in the ensuing persecutions and threats.*****

Within the Dagara culture, all children (theoretically) are seen as the responsibility of the immediate family; the extended family, the community. Behavior is corrected by anyone. Children have defined tasks from very young age. The young boys (5 and above) are often seen shepherding and herding the animals. The young girls help around the house, carry wood and water. Education even in the public realm is very expensive and educating the males takes priority. The Dagara hold education in high esteem. It is rare that a male will marry a woman more highly educated than him. In recent years, the females are pursuing more education and no longer are seeing marriage as their only option in society.

******* Sadly, with the arrival of television and European/American programming; a negative turn is readily seen in the younger generation. The use of alcohol, the wearing of provocative clothing, single women going to bars and smoking, and a proliferation of sexual activity all reflect a deterioration of morality. Many parents are more than willing for their daughters to be sexually active and thus gain "goods" for the family. *******

Most are subsistence farmers/herders. Some have positions with local government. For a night guard who works 6 days a week and 12 hours a day, the fixed salary is the equivalent of \$67.00 a month! Teachers and health workers make about \$140.00 a month. Currently, the people with the most influence/authority would be the 'chef de famille' and the 'chef de terre'. The 'chef de famille' can influence up to 100-150 people in the extended family. He acts as:counsel, saving money, decisions, settling disputes. The 'chef de terre' is responsible for offering all sacrifices to gain the approval and attention of the 'gods' overseeing planting/cultivating/rainfall/weather changes.

As stated above, there are 7 clans in the Dagara people group. They began in Ghana and migrated because of the war and in search of better land and more land. They currently live in NW Ghana and SE Burkina Faso and there is a possibility that a subgroup (Birifor) is located in northern Cote d'Ivoire. In recent years, some have moved to southern regions of Ghana to find work and to locate in areas that have electricity and ready water. The Dagara have 3 dialects Lobr (pronounced low-brrrr) Wiile and Birifor. The people who speak Lobr and Wiile can understand each other, but Birifor is more difficult. Although the languages are similar, the customs of the Birifor are more like those of the Lobi rather than of Dagara. This is a different 'Lobi' than found in Ghana. When a child is born in a recognized marriage, the parents decide if the child will take the mothers' family name or the fathers'. If a husband changes his mind about the marriage before payment in full of the dowry, the wife returns to her family, but the husband keeps any children from the union. If he is taking longer to pay than the bride's family thinks is prudent, the wife can be made to return to her father's home, but the husband keeps the children. Both partners in the marriage have the right to seek divorce. Usually, the woman will seek divorce if she has not borne any

children and the fault lies with the husband. She is then free to seek remarriage with someone who can father children. If a wife is sterile, the husband usually seeks another wife without divorcing the first one. Wife beating continues but if it is brutal and or often, the wife is free to seek shelter in the home of the husbands' brothers, or with her own family. She must do this without taking the children with her. The family will often get involved to discover the extent and the cause of the beatings.

A few Dagara raise cattle, but most raise crops and hunt with bow and arrow. The women make 'dolo' the local alcoholic beverage. Some women weave baskets they sell in the market (every Sunday among the Dagara) and are sometimes sent by transport to Ouagadougou (the capital) for selling. Few places in their villages offer work to receive remuneration. There is a 5 o'clock marché (pronounced mar-shay) where the women gather and sell whatever fruits or vegetables are available. In Dissin, Dano, Diebouyou and Ouessa (the 4 largest of the approximately 180 Dagara villages in Burkina Faso) the system on the Sunday marché is the same. In NW Ghana, the marché is every 6th day. The women in Dano and Diebouyou have formed an association. I visited the 'House of Women' here in Diebouyou with 5 women of the association. It consists of 2 buildings. There are 3-4 classrooms (literacy and sewing). There is a storage room and an office. The women explained that they sought private funding for the building and its construction. It was very easy to see their pride in their accomplishment. The property also includes a private well.

If a wife dies, the daughters carry on the responsibilities in the home and the fields. If the husband dies, the extended family will be responsible (in theory) for the widow. Accomplishment and education are so valued, that members who do not achieve something are frowned upon and often ridiculed or bad-mouthed. They will sometimes re-locate to try to make good or to escape the ostracism. This does not seem to be the case if the member is physically handicapped. The government provides some assistance for women with lots of children if she cannot provide for them. When a couple is married, the wife moves into the courtyard of the father-in-law. The husband will construct a room beside that of the father but not always attached to it. Some Dagara homes have a second story that the elder inhabits. A person considered 'incompetent' is an embarrassment to the family. Tradition and history are taught through stories, religious practices, initiation rites, schooling and family.

***** In recent years, if a married son comes to Christ, and the extended family, most specifically the elders, refuse to destroy the fetishes and refuse to stop the sacrifices, the believing son/sons leave the family homestead along with his wife and children, and builds a small place for the family. These homes are dedicated to Christ! This is a total and complete break from tradition and coming from the believers themselves as they mature in faith! ****

All traditional Dagara families have totems. With the Dagara, each clan has a totem. If the totem is a snake, they are forbidden to eat snake. In one region, the alligator is considered sacred with harsh punishments if someone injures or kills one. Totems are used as a way to identify family lines and influence. There are also the practices of ancestor appeasement. Animal sacrifices are means to

appease, gain favor, protect. I recently had a discussion with a woman claiming to be a Christian. She is a member of a local church. She readily admitted her practice of 'fetishes'. When I questioned her about it, she told me that the fetish system is a part of her identity; it is the foundation of who she is! This group widely adheres to the belief of casting spells. They have fear of sorcery and often believe that illnesses that cannot be diagnosed or unexplained/ unexpected deaths are the result of being hexed.

Authentic news is passed by word of mouth. This is in immediate family, but also through visitation. I had made 3-4 visits to the community before officially moving. When I arrived, one of the Dagara took me around to introduce me in the community. Each time, he said, "This is the woman I told you would be coming..."

When the father dies, property is passed on to the eldest son. If the eldest son is too young to oversee the home, the eldest uncle will take responsibility until the son is of age. The family as a whole will use any money that is left. If the man worked and gets monthly pension, the pension is given directly to the widow. (In the case of multiple wives, only the first wife receives the pension allotment.) The family will work the land and the family will share all produce/income. The daughters do not directly inherit anything. When the mother dies, the daughters inherit the kitchen utensils, clothing and perhaps other items peculiar to women.

There are 3 types of marriages and a couple can have any/all of them. At the grass roots, a couple will be married in the village of the husband. The uncles of the bride will perform the ceremony. The ceremony can be short, but the celebration lasts a couple of days. The parents (or witness) of the young man will initially approach the parents of the young woman. If a dowry is agreed upon and if the young woman agrees, the marriage will be planned. The dowry is paid over a period of time, and is not paid prior to the wedding. The dowry usually involves cattle, money, furniture, whatever the family of the bride requires. It is not acceptable for the bride to have a dowry that exceeds what was given to the family of the bride's mother. In recent years, the government has tried to put an end to the 'bride price' as it appears to be selling the woman to the man. Although the practice continues, some families are attempting to make the practice more one of 'gifting' small items of appreciation to the bride's parents, rather than purchasing the bride. The young woman will often have the right to decline the marriage proposal. There are occasions when the couple is forced by family pressures to marry in order to solidify the family, to gain property, etc. Close bloodline marriage is forbidden. Marriage between the Dagara and other ethnic groups is permitted. Only the civil marriage (performed at the Mayors' office) is recognized by the state, and if a couple wants a church wedding, it will usually follow immediately after the civil ceremony. The majority of Dagara are traditionalists. Those who have converted to Catholicism still hold on to many of their traditional practices. In recent years there are some (minimal numbers) converting to Islam. When someone in the community dies, all barriers are forgotten and the community mourns as a whole and the community takes part in whatever the funeral practices involve.

Female circumcision, forbidden by law, continues! Some women are currently serving prison terms for their roles in performing female circumcision. If the mother of the child desires the daughter to be circumcised, the elder woman of the family will perform it. In Ghana (though increasingly rare, this is done when the girl is between 5-10 years of age.) If the husband loves his wife, he will remain faithful. Ghanaian research indicates 20% of Dagara marriages are polygamous. Infidelity on the part of the man is accepted, yet on the part of the woman there are strict penalties. Women are concerned about AIDS and some are separating from the husbands to prevent becoming infected. The women in villages do not have the opportunity to be informed about AIDS prevention. They are often not aware that sexual intercourse can result in pregnancy. When a single woman becomes pregnant in a village is accepted without problem. Although the government has attempted to educate Burkinabe about the dangers and prevention of AIDS, the villages are difficult to reach, the inhabitants illiterate, and understanding is limited.

*** Sexual activity outside of marriage is considered the norm and not condemned, not judged, not questioned. Although evangelical groups teach about purity and abstinence and secondary virginity; it is very slow in penetrating the heart and finding acceptance and adherence, even among the new believers.***

If a child is fortunate enough to go to school and proceeds through school there are some choices open to them. Yet, even if a student goes through university, there are few jobs available. Usually it takes knowing someone of authority and influence to fill a position. In a recent testing for nursing, 600 people were tested and only 20 positions available. When a student reaches what we know as high school they are able to take what are known as 'concoirs' exams. These exams are topic related exams and if passed, will equip them for specific jobs (health, teaching, etc.) If a student fails a concoirs twice, he cannot attempt a third time. Other than this, a child often follows whatever his father did (farming, etc) There are rare opportunities to apprentice in areas like woodwork, painting, tire repair. The apprenticeships are usually very expensive.

Without a doubt, weddings and funerals are the big celebrations/events. Initiation rites are ingrained in the culture.

In recent years, the roles of men and women have undergone changes, many that have already been mentioned above. The more that women work and become the income makers; they are making more and more decisions and are opting to marry later in life. Women are becoming vocal about their fear of AIDS and discontent over multiple wife marriages. Women are taking control of their lives and their futures, seeing little or no need of God; and no need whatsoever for purity, chastity or fidelity. They are enjoying their associations. The youth seem unsettled and want change. (This seems to be a constant the world over).

SOCIAL STRUCTURE

The Dagara are difficult to classify. Source upon source state the Dagara are not in groups, villages, courtyards, etc. The family group

is important. The extended family is important. Yet there is not a sense of unity within the Dagara as a whole. There is no overall leader. There are binding beliefs. There is interaction with other ethnic groups.

In Dagara culture, the newly installed person, (the stranger or a family member relocating from a distant area or a foreigner) makes the initial introductory visit in the community. Once this visit has been made the Dagara return the visit. Friendship is important, and having many friends is a sign of success. With 2 male friends, gifts will be exchanged. They may offer help in the field; may exchange various services; offer gifts of similar use or similar value. For 2 women, they will share the work of planting, sowing, harvesting; they will give gifts of jewelry and cloth; cooking utensils will also be given. In a female to male friendship, it is permissible for the female to help in the fields, to offer a tablecloth, pottery jar, butter or oil for sauce. In a male to female friendship, the man may offer her produce from his field or a small chicken/hen. In all of the stated cases, a reciprocal gift of kind is expected. If not reciprocated, the receiver of the initial gift is seen as stingy and selfish. The bottom line here is NOT the value or type of gift, rather it is the giving which carries special significance. Religious ceremonies, weddings and funerals offer social opportunities. The weekly marché is also as much for meeting with friends as for the buying and selling of goods.

Many things determine ones place in the social structure. Wisdom is highly regarded. Wisdom is achieved through experience and suffering, and thus the elder men and women are respected and listened to. Listening with the intent to understand also attains wisdom. Observing others/ watching and then imitating are another aspect of gaining wisdom. Conformity to and with the group, thus safeguarding unity and peace is expected of the wise person. A wise person of stature will be humble and modest, always allowing others to speak well of him and not boasting of his personal successes. Self-sufficiency is highly regarded. Begging is frowned upon and it brings shame to the family. Shame is also brought to the family of someone who must depend upon others for food or clothing or lodging. The exception here is in result of death, fire, illness, and drought. At these times it is permissible to ask for help and to receive help. Another exception is the case of the handicapped. The family willingly provides and cares for the handicapped.

The Dagara believe that a stranger or foreigner may be a spirit in disguise sent to spy. They are treated with an array of conflicting signs and emotions. Strangers/foreigners are greeted with sympathy but at the same time with distrust. They are accepted into the community but held at a distance. They may earn trust, but there will be guarded acceptance given. They are feared and yet simultaneously received in the home. Rather than ask if the visitor is thirsty, a beverage is served. It is expected the stranger will decline and say he is not thirsty. To decline shows scorn or contempt for the host. Dolo, the alcoholic beverage mass-produced by the Dagara women and is often offered rather than water. It is similar to beer and can be very strong and often is made with sugar. The hospitality of the Dagara may stem from their history of migration, often leaving them as the stranger/foreigner in areas where they settled.

Once government has marked land, it is necessary to purchase it through the established channels. The chef de terre would first be asked permission as a courtesy, when permission given, the purchaser would proceed. In the case of property not 'loteed' by the government, the chef de terre establishes territorial boundaries. If someone is interested in the land, he goes to the chef de terre and an amount is agreed upon. Although the chef de terre may gain a little from the transaction, this is not a system for him to get rich.

There is a very detailed system of initiation among the Dagara. These vary from male to female and include specific initiation language. Much of this is secret and even the clans do not know the secret language of the other clans. Upon birth, there is a type of 'reception' rite performed. This includes shouting and celebrating so the newly born knows they are not alone. Female circumcision, if performed will occur shortly after birth and will be performed at the request of the mother by the elder woman. Boys will be trained by an elder to certain responsibilities of the tribe. Another stage for the males only includes being taught how to hunt animals with the bow and arrow. At one stage of the initiation a young man may be stripped of all clothing and left in an area for 6 weeks. He must depend only on himself to hunt for and find food, clothing, and shelter. If someone dies during this time, the deceased is not buried in the family area. Both males and females are taught the dangers of living in the bush. In mid teens, both male and female go through what is called the grand initiation. Some of the things included in this are being clothed in elaborate costumes and walking throughout the area. It has also been said that a male and female must lie beside each other through the night without clothes, and without touching each other. Houses which have an inhabitant being initiated will have an 'X' painted on their house. Males are taught funeral rites. Marriage is viewed as the culmination of attaining adulthood.

Leadership is really decided within each family except for the chef de terre. The position of chef de terre is passed down from generation to generation. The chef de terre then chooses a delegation. The names of his delegates are submitted to the government. Members of the delegation will live in the various villages that the chef de terre oversees. If there is a local problem, the delegate tells the chef de terre. If the problem cannot be resolved by the chef de terre, it is then brought to proper authorities (prefecture, commissariat, gendarmerie, mayor, etc.) Upon the death of the elder, the eldest son takes over leadership of the home. If the son is too young, the eldest uncle will assume leadership until the son is ready. A person must have completed initiation before being regarded a leader and prior to being asked for counsel. Leaders are highly respected. They are given reverence and respect. The young will semi-bow to leaders. The same is done when one leader greets another leader. All the chefs-de-terre within the Dagara meet periodically to discuss problems, etc. Each canton (territorial region) has a chef de terre.

As stated elsewhere, the Dagara value unity/community while safeguarding individuality and liberty. Respect for others is valued. A developed sense of an honest work ethic is valued. Children are not valued because so many of them die before the age of 5, there is a tangible sense that even parents keep their emotions and love in check in case the baby dies. The Dagara have a genuine sense of personal

achievement and it carries over into a desire to value and safeguard their personal items, whether they are many or few.

Theft, lying, greed, indebtedness, carelessness and casualness are societal taboos. These are actions that cause discord and disturbance of equilibrium and peace. These can actually bring about expulsion and exclusion from the family or community.

Most Dagara are oral communicators. French is the national language in most of West Africa. Those not in school usually only speak their tribal language and cannot read. In recent years, the government has started teaching literacy classes but few materials are available, and they are very old.

Only those who can pay for school can attend. It is nominally effective because textbooks are unavailable. Education is highly respected, but this includes learning by experience, not only school/book learning. Although the Catholic Church has invested a lot of money and ministry in throughout the SW region of Burkina Faso, they have not been actively involved in literacy work. They are involved in formal school teaching, water projects, well-baby care and varying types of health care.

Knowledge is respected on individual basis. There is no vocational ladder so to speak. There is no educational ladder in place. If someone continues in education, they are respected by community. If a person becomes an office worker, they are respected for getting employment. If someone has a lot of money, the others are pleased for him or her. Unfortunately, the ones gaining the paying positions rarely return to their home villages and extended family because they will be expected to help with familial needs!!

Grounds for divorce include bad temperament, bad reputation, sterility or being on bad terms with the in-laws. There are often problems and open hostility between the mother-in-law and the daughter-in-law. Dagara proverbs say many things about the 'barking' between the two, including proverbs describing the ugliness of the one, along with being pathetic, hopeless, shabby looking. Although not condoned, the mother-in-law may also strike the daughter-in-law. The relationship between the father-in-law and daughter-in-law is often very cordial. The wife often jokes with the brothers of her husband. A marriage is in the village. Although a couple will appear cold and non-committal in public, some of their marriages are warm and are love marriages. If a husband truly cares for his wife, he will usually remain faithful to her. If a wife is unfaithful, it is taboo for her to even prepare a meal for her husband until the sin is confessed and she is purged of the sin via sacrifice and whatever the family/community deems necessary. Men and women are free to behave any way they desire prior to marriage. For a Dagara man, the ideal wife will have a good character (because it is a reflection on him), hard worker; pay attention to him has discretion and is submissive. The ideal husband for a Dagara woman is a worker who succeeds, is generous with food and provision, takes responsibility and is peaceful. Physical beauty and sexual prowess are of secondary importance, but Dagara songs do reference both.

Dress for men and women are traditional African dress. The women wear panya's (long pieces of wrap-around cloth). The men wear slacks and shirts. More and more men appear in western style clothing. Cloth is inexpensive and some of the women have long skirts and sculptured tops, still in African cloth and African style. Both the men and women for public affairs, marriages and funerals wear traditional clothing. In recent years, more and more young women are seen in the villages wearing pants! One person told me people are changing to European/Western style clothing because of personal preference.

The family and community take responsibility for dealing with anyone who acts in a way that disturbs unity and peace. The government has people in place that deal with the breaking of civil law. As the ethnic system was in place long before formal government, the government allows local territories to continue their local customs and practices as long as they do not go against or interfere with the official operation of the country.

There is a detailed system of official healthcare in the country. Villages are fortunate if they have a pharmacy within their proximity. The larger areas may have a dispensary and pharmacy. Villages will often have a resident person who deals with tribal medicines/herbs/etc. Medications are very expensive. People who have the money are taken to the capital city for severe illness or serious accident. There are many levels of health education in the country. There are about 4 levels for what we would call a nurse, there are women trained specifically to help in childbirth, others are trained in prescription medications, etc. Very few attain what Americans would refer to as an R.N. or M.D.

RELIGIOUS STRUCTURE

This structure is so complex that research dissertations have been written on this detailed issue. The answers that follow merely touch upon the basics. In reality, every aspect of Dagara life reflects what they believe and what they follow about the religious/spirit world.

The predominant religious system of the Dagara is African Traditional Religion. In very recent years, Islam has begun to gain adherents. There is a very small Canadian Pentecostal movement within the last 60 years, but the growth has been minimal, both numerically and spiritually. There are a few Assembly of God churches dispersed throughout the Dagara territories in both Ghana and Burkina. Southern Baptists began evangelical work in September of 1998 and the Church of Christ began among the Dagara in 2003. Both the Baptists and C of C work in the local language. Even those claiming to be 'Catholic Christians' hold on to their totems and fetishes. When the Catholic Church took a stand against initiation rites, the people rebelled and thus the church stopped dealing with the issue. Some priests even take part in the animal sacrifices.

Although writings claim the Dagara are 'monotheistic', they have a very complex hierarchy of gods and spirits.

Naamwin = the unique God, creator of heaven and earth.

Di-mwin = domestic god, oversees home and family

D)w-mwin = god of fertility and pregnancy

Kaku)r-mwin = god of agriculture
Bawr-mwin = god of trials and testing (seasons, physical,
economic, social, moral)
Sa-mwin = god of rain
Kpime = overall reference to ancestor spirit
wie = spirit of the expanse of nature.
man = spirit of the river
baa = spirit of water flow
kulbow = spirit of water holes, wells, ravines.
Taw = spirit of hills and mountains
kotome = generic plural term for various spiritual powers of
diverse origins.

The Dagara believe life exists in two realms, the invisible and the visible. The spirit world is the invisible. Birth is not seen as the beginning of life, but as a journey preparing one for death and a return to the spirit world. Their view of God will be stated below in 3.11 but the Dagara do believe that lesser spirits can take on bodily and physical forms on earth. Power comes from God and other spirits.

The Dagara believe in magic, casting of spells, sorcery, good and evil spirits.

- The primary family ancestor is usually buried in the yard and marked. If the house is large, there is a specified room within the home that houses the tomb. A family altar is present, but the actual rituals will vary from family to family and this is a very private undertaking. Appeasement of the departed spirits is taken very seriously. If an ancestor is displeased or feels slighted, they will bring trouble to the family. If they are pleased, there will be peace in the family. If a young child dies, it is believed they will return in another bodily form

Naamwin, the creator God is seen as all-powerful and over all of heaven and earth. He is not seen as the Father of Jesus Christ. Naamwin is viewed as being far away and unreachable. He is seen as powerful, vengeful, inaccessible, unique, and unable to be known by His creation, strong, providential, just. He is good to those who are good and bad toward those who are bad. The Dagara believe that God created all of heaven and earth. After creation and setting everything in place, He remains removed from His creation and cannot be reached by them. Dagara believe God is more powerful than the other gods/spirits. It is interesting that when a Dagara desires blessing or rain or health, etc., he does not pray to the god of health or rain; but instead prays to Creator God asking Him to influence the others!

Although sacrifices are offered to the others, no sacrifices are offered to the Supreme God. As covered elsewhere, any action that brings shame to the family or discord to the community is viewed as sin and must be atoned for. This may mean sacrifice, repayment, and some other type of sanctioning by the family/community. I do not yet know if these actions (theft, lying, murder, etc are seen as sin against God, or sin against community). There are many myths dealing with creation. Death is seen as the avenue for returning to ones prior state of being. In the Dagara belief system, one exists in the spirit world before physical world.

While in the spirit world he/she is put through a series of tests. Once successful, the opportunity is given to 'look upon' pregnant women in the physical world and the unembodied is free to choose which womb he will be born from. At the moment of entry into the womb, one chooses to be born male or female. Physical life is then viewed as a learning process. Each person has a personal destiny and personal goals to achieve. However, one must never try to make ones way alone. There is belief in re-incarnation. Unexplained illness or premature death is often attributed to the work of sorcery. Women are respected within the culture as life givers and nurturers. More research must be done in regards to actual belief in 'salvation' and also converts.

The Dagara have been much more open to Catholicism than to Protestantism. It remains to be seen if this is because they can continue in their ancient practices and heavy drinking, because of the many social aid projects, or a way for God to provide a bridge of entry into the people's hearts and lives. (Two Catholic priests from Canada began work in 1929 in the area of Jirapa in Ghana. The work was slow. In 1932 there was a severe drought and the Dagara prayed to their gods for rain. Nothing happened. In desperation, the people went to the two priests and asked them to pray to their God and promised generous payment. The priests replied that God did not want their presents; He wanted them to receive His love. All entered the church and prayed together. The following evening the rains came. The following morning there were hundreds asking to become Christians, and by the time rainy season ended, there were 25,000 conversions recorded. (Sadly, many of these returned to the old ways, or continued in the old ways.)

Testimonies of a Dagara Archbishop and of a missionary priest say that conversion to Catholicism can be easy because: priests are hospitable and have never practiced human sacrifices and fear for those who do, appear to be people of natural goodness with respect for their elders and parents. Even today, many Dagara become priests and the 'Mother church' provides food, lodging and salaries, sometimes even motorcycles or cars. The traditional 'sacrificial' practices are easy to translate into the 'sacrifice' of the mass. Catholicism also interprets the prayer to ancestors as veneration of the saints. It is also easy to translate the strict moral code of the Dagara into the 10 Commandments. The Dagara are a humble and hard working people, thus preaching of the Good News to the poor and the 'under-dog' was readily received. Because of the medical and educational work of the priests, they lived very close to the people.

In 1954 the Baptist Mid-Missions began a work in WA and 1956 in Lawra. (These are in Ghana. There is no BMM work in Burkina Faso.) They focus on literacy and Bible translation. Roger and Noreen Russ lived in Lawra and worked on a NT translation for 20 years. There is still no word as to whether the translation is available, and the couple has now left the field. Nancy Ball lives in WA and although teaching literacy to the Dagara does so in a language (Wala) spoken by Muslims. Literacy is taught in areas where they have churches or preaching points. Methodists began a work in the mid 50's in the areas of WA and Lawra. A recent survey trip indicates the Methodists are involved in social ministry and are not penetrating villages. A survey in recent years shows 5 Baptist congregations, 3 Methodist congregations and an estimated 100 Catholic congregations in the NW Ghana region.

The Assemblies of God are currently targeting the Dagara. Campus Crusade for Christ (CCC) recently completed the Jesus film in the Ghanaian Dagara dialect. It is shown in villages and is well received.

Personal choice is respected. However, one must remember that any choice-bringing disharmony will be frowned upon. For one person to come to Christ within a family will bring much more discord than if the father converts, and the family following. If the elder male converts, it may result in the entire family or even extended family following his example his leadership and example.

Religion relates to society in every respect. It is inconceivable to a Dagara that someone not believe in a Supreme God. His existence is a given. Thus, to exist in harmony, He must be respected. In business and in family life God and the spirit world are obeyed, and revered. The very important roles of birth, death and marriage and initiation also reveal the place of the spirit/religious world for the Dagara.

Foreign religions are viewed skeptically and reservedly. The Dagara look at their religious beliefs as foundational to their identity. Adding to what they already believe is one thing, changing or eliminating those beliefs and practices present a dilemma few to this point have been willing to do.

Primarily the chef de famille and the chef de terre are the responsible people within the family and within the community. They keep order and offer sacrifices and settle disputes. As already stated above, the chef de terre position is inherited and the chef de famille is the elder male of the family unit. Within the Catholic Church, the priests, brothers and sisters go through training and are placed in areas of service.

The history of African Traditional religion includes amulets, totems, fetishes, sacrifices, and ancestor appeasement. Initiation rites teach some of these things as well as word of mouth and practice/observation.

ECONOMIC STRUCTURE

The economic structure is agrarian. In 1991, 4,629,374 Burkinabe were 'working'. This represents 50% of the 1991 population. Of those working, 92% worked in the agricultural arena, 2.6% in hotels and restaurants, 2.4% in services, 1.1% in manufacturing, and 3% miscellaneous. In 1990 it took 100 working Burkinabe to support 114 non-workers. As of 1995 110 workers were needed to support 114 non-workers.

The government has a few social services that aid the sick and poor who cannot provide for their own needs. To say there is a 'primary driver' of the economy is difficult. The people are farmers and herders primarily for self-provision. Excess crops may be sold locally for minimal income. There is not a lot of 'drive' to amass goods and money. Personal relationships hold much more value to the Dagara than personal possessions. Time is not money in the Dagara culture. Time is a way of establishing relationships.

Some areas are impossible to reach between the beginnings of the rains in late May or June until the roads are dry and scraped. In some of the region it will be late November or December before the areas can be reached by anything other than foot, bicycle or moto.

Most areas have at least one locality where dolo is made and sold. Field crops are at the local market. Women have small stands where they sell peanuts, popcorn, bread, eggs. A person who repairs bicycle tires and truck tires are found in various areas. Of items that are exported (primarily cotton and beef, and on a much smaller scale leather goods) 87% are imported by France (38%), Italy (34%) and Japan (15%

The price of certain goods and services are established by the state. (Electricity, phone, processing of governmental papers). Trained professionals (roofers, masons, painters) will establish their own prices for labor and must pay whatever prices are set for the materials. It is necessary to establish a firm estimate before work begins. It is also a good practice to price materials oneself. In the case of fruits, vegetables, beverages, prices are set locally and depend upon the time of year, available transportation, and personal need.

Nationally, the government controls the flow of money. The French cfa is the basis (value based on the EURO). This has a detrimental affect upon those receiving aid in American funds as the higher the value of the EURO, the lower the value of the US dollar. (Since early 2000 the value has decreased from \$1.00= 620 cfa, to the current \$1.00= 444 cfa!!* This means that rather than \$1.00 having the purchase value of \$1.20 \$1.00 has the purchase value of \$0.80!) Burkina receives some outside foreign aid. Burkina consistently imports much more than exports. Being landlocked, it is very difficult to get goods to a seaport. The once viable railroad that went from Ouagadougou south to Abidjan and north to Kaya became partners with Cote d'Ivoire and Niger in Sitarail in 1994. This privatization was to exist for 15 years and hoped to enable upgraded services and improvement of the rails and materials. However, each country is individually responsible for the rail system in their respective areas. In 1987 1,581,977 passengers used the railroad. In 1996-1997 this number decreased to 444,000. The plans to lay rail to the north for the mines has been 'on-hold' for many years. Mining continues in the country by foreign entities. In 2011, gold was discovered in SW Burkina. This has ushered in a 'monetary hunger' leading to 'gold camps' and pornography, drugs and immorality. Digging primarily by hand, pockets of gas and cave-ins have caused many deaths!

For the most part the government controls the public sector. In December of 1997, of 42 new enterprises the state considered undertaking, 18 were designated as private enterprises.

The lower class of society is the rural dwellers subsisting on the products they can grow and cattle they herd and fowl they shoot. They are the illiterate and/or untrained. The middle class would be the dwellers in larger rural areas, perhaps with some level of education, employed in the public sector or proprietor of their personal business. Those relocating to major areas are considered the 'fringe'. These rarely return to their villages once leaving and

finding better paying jobs. Lower, middle and upper class Burkinabe as a whole would fall into the same categories as above.

Burkina Faso is one of the poorest countries in the world. (May 2010 figures show Burkina Faso is the second poorest nation in the world.) It is at a disadvantage being land-locked and the rivers are not deep enough to allow transportation of goods. Some foreign aid is received. Health care is poor and the cost of medicines high. Education is expensive and many times books are not available or outdated. Jobs are difficult to find even for people with a university education. There are times when the police do not have bullets for their guns and no gasoline for their cycles/cars. Burkina has an airport and two national airplanes. There is an effort currently to have a phone line at each area containing a prefecture. Areas to the north are very dry and desert-like. Although currently peaceful, there have been border skirmishes in the past with Mali and Ivory Coast. The average daily income for a worker is the equivalent of \$2.00-\$4.00 American.

Workers are signed up at the Caisse. The government establishes pay rates for specific jobs based on training, experience, marital status and number of children. Each month the employer deducts the 'tax' from the base salary. The taxes are paid to the state regularly. The employer pays the employee a month's vacation each year. It is also expected though not required for the patron to pay for medical services and medications for the employee. In order to terminate an employee, substantial reason must exist, and it is always better to have record of written warnings prior to the actual termination. Severance payments based upon salary and length of service must be made to the terminated employee unless terminated for a grave action. If the employee has paid into the Caisse for a substantial time period, he will receive a pension, paid monthly at retirement or disability. The government also gives assistance to mothers who have many children if they cannot feed them. Although medications are expensive, low cost medical consultation and services are available.

The 1998 edition of "Les Atlas Jeune Afrique: Burkina Faso" gives much detailed information on the items in Economy Section 4.

NATIONAL POLITICAL STRUCTURE

The 1997 Burkina Faso Constitution states that Burkina Faso is a democracy, united and secular. It is considered a Republic. Burkina has universal, equal and secret suffrage guaranteed by the Constitution. The official language is French. The President is elected for a term of seven years by majority vote. At the end of the term, he is eligible for re-election. If the President dies or is impeached while in office, the Prime Minister will provisionally receive the power, but the functions of President will be exercised by the President of the National Assembly. A new election will then be held to choose a new President, who will in turn serve a seven-year term. The current President has been in charge more than 25 years!

The President names the Prime Minister and establishes the power and responsibilities required of him. The President is highest civil and military authority (Chief of Armed Forces and Chief of State), names Ambassadors and names the Chancellor. The government also has a

Counsel of Ministers, National Assemblé, House of Representatives and Supreme Court. Members of the National Assembly, called 'Deputies' and members of the House of Representatives are 'Representatives.' Deputies are elected directly and serve in a legislative capacity for a term of five years. Representatives are elected indirectly and serve in a consultative capacity for a term of three years. The 1997 Constitution details all of the above including divisions of power and authority.

Missiological Implications

1. Due to the strong system of protecting unity and community, this people group is a prime group to respond to a 'people group/church growth movement' of great proportions. With the working of the Holy Spirit, groups, villages, areas will respond to the gospel message in mass. One-by-one would almost precipitate the new convert leaving community to safeguard against upsetting equilibrium. Yet, mass conversion would bring about a heavenly unity and heart desire to see more and more peoples come to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.

2. Because the people hold education in high esteem, new converts will be anxious to study and grow in their new faith. Discipleship will be of primary importance as will be the training of leaders (male and female).

4. Women are now responding to the gospel and being trained to be active in ministry.

5. As children are considered the responsibility of the community as a whole, research needs done as to effective methods of reaching and teaching the children. It seems that college interns, short-term volunteer groups could be used effectively ministering to and reaching children and youth. Forty-nine percent of Burkinabe population is under fifteen (15) years of age!! This statistic alone makes it imperative to reach the youth with the gospel. The current average lifespan for a Burkinabe is fifty-two (52). **Our LIGHTHOUSE Christian School opens October 2014. Mrs. Celine Hien will be the first grade teacher. Victor Somda and Christien Some are currently in Teacher Training Formation in Ouaga. They will become employees after their student teaching is completed, 2015.**

6. Burkinabe students are required to learn English. Given this fact and coupling it with the number of Dagara which live in English-speaking Ghana it may be that offering ESL may also offer platform to enter primary and secondary schools with evangelical teachers serving for one or more semesters as a type of 'teacher in residence.'

7. Due to the high illiteracy rate, other methods of sharing the gospel is needed. A wordless tract needs to be developed. These need to be developed in mass so that the hearers can be left with the tract to remember the message but also so the message can be repeated and passed on to others. As the Dagara are gracious when given gifts, the tracts would be treasured and safeguarded. This system could also be used for initial stages of discipleship.

8. Networking/partnering is imperative. In order to reach 3/4 of a million people, evangelicals must work together to pull resources,

information, experience and expertise. In addition, other social aid agencies might be willing to become of humanitarian need projects. In recent years, medical teams that spent time here were very effective and over 300 conversions recorded. People continue to talk about the teams and we are hoping to do the same type of projects for many years to come.

9. The Dagara people are humble. They are not beggars and do not have an entitlement mentality. This leads me to believe they will legitimately respond to the gospel with heart conversion and not with an attitude of "what is in it for me?" I also believe they will genuinely respond to the gospel in an attitude of praise and gratitude to the Savior.

10. A strong prayer base is essential. The powers of darkness are so strong here that the work will be impossible if not bathed in fervent prayer, both by the networking partners but also a strong stateside base.

11. God has an eternal plan for the Dagara, Birifor and Lobi. He desires that all shall hear His message of salvation and He desires that all come to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. It is the belief of the Shattering Darkness Ministry Team that He is at work with and among this people. It is vital to discover His plan for reaching this precious people. It is His responsibility to bring people to faith; it is our responsibility to be faithful in the giving, going and sharing.

12. The Dagara and Birifor are cordial to strangers. They do not make the initial visit to a newcomer to the community but will return the visit. It is thus imperative to develop a team of members willing to visit and to touch the people where they live and work and play. This also means that a mentality of "build a church and they will come." WILL NOT BE EFFECTIVE with the peoples of West Africa.

13. For the Dagara, and other followers of African Traditional Religion (ATR) life on earth is a journey. Each person must seek his personal destiny yet be in community with others. Being alone is something inconceivable to them. Thus, it will be important for the networking team to work in a united and loving way. It will be necessary to cultivate sincere relationships with the new believers our Lord has entrusted to our care. It will be important to make visits if at all possible with others from the community.

14. Because of their respect of wisdom gained by experience and suffering show the ultimate wisdom of the One true God who knows all, is everywhere, is all powerful, all knowing, and Who suffered the ultimate by being abandoned, persecuted, betrayed, mocked and even crucified... all because of His love for them!!!!

15. With the strong belief of personal destiny and accountability use as springboard for personal sin causing separation from the One true God. Use the strong importance of unity in community to show the importance of being a member of the ' body of Christ' and the true bride for whom Christ died.

16. Need a clear distinction/explanation of prayer: what it is, why we pray, to whom we pray, etc.

17. Must be able to deal with the spirit world. (Fetishes, totems, veneration of dead, demons and Satan.)

18. Must address death and life after death.

19. Must address funeral practices.

20. As some believe in the possibility of re-incarnation and also a system of trial and error in the spirit world before physical birth, it will be imperative to deal with there being no biblical basis supporting reincarnation, need to make a decision for Christ while alive, the reality of hell and judgment.

21. Capitalizing on hospitality toward strangers, tie in the fact that Jesus came to earth as a stranger, some received Him and others rejected Him. Those who receive Him are allowed entry into heaven. Those who reject Him are banished forever to hell. God lovingly gives us that opportunity today.

Updated and revised for the equipping and preparation of short-term Action Teams.

October 8,2013



Isaiah 9:2 "The people who walk in darkness Will see a great light; those who live in a dark land, The light will shine on them". (NASB)

Acts 26: 16-18 "But arise, and stand on your feet; for this purpose I have appeared to you, to appoint you a minister and a witness not only to the things which you have seen, but also to the things in which I will appear to you; delivering you from the Jewish people and from the Gentiles, to whom I am sending you, to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, in order that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me." (NASB)

How will the Dagara and the other unreached peoples of West Africa be reached with the Gospel?

1) Concerted, fervent prayer

- *2 Chronicles 7:14*
- *Romans 8:26*
- *1 Thessalonians 5:17*
- *Philippians 4:6*
- *1 Peter 3:12*

- a. Pray specifically- Pray for the Holy Spirit to convict the lost and open the eyes of the blind. (Psalm 107:10-11; Psalm 78)
- b. Pray for the forces of evil to be held back. (Ephesians 6:10-20; Psalm 34:14; Psalm 101:4; Proverbs 8:14; Matthew 6:13; John 17)
- c. Pray for open doors into new areas. (The book of Acts)
- d. Pray for New believers to stand strong. (Joshua Chapter 1)
- e. Pray for wisdom and strength for the Dagara team. (Romans 11:33-36; Philippians 1:9-11)
- f. Pray for your team members daily. (Philippians 1:3-8)

Enlist a minimum of 5 people to pray for you at least one month prior to departing for Burkina Faso, the entire time you are here, and one month after you return to the U.S.

- 2) They will be reached if you care enough to come. (Isaiah 6:8; Acts 1:8; Matthew 9:35-38, 28:18-20)
- 3) They will be reached if you care enough to love. (1 Corinthians 13)
- 4) They will be reached if you care enough to touch. (Acts 3:6-10)
- 5) They will be reached if you care enough to teach. (Psalm 51:13; 2 Timothy 2:15)
- 6) They will be reached if you care enough to witness. (Romans 1:16; Romans 15:14-16; 1 Corinthians 9:16)
- 7) They will be reached if you care enough to sing. (Ephesians 5:19-20)
- 8) They will be reached if you care enough to believe. (Mark 9:24; 2 Corinthians 5:7; Hebrews 11)
- 9) They will be reached if they hear. (Romans 10:1-15)
- 10) They will be reached if we obey. (John 3:16; John 14:23; John 20:21)

WILL YOU BE THE ONE TO CARE ENOUGH????????



Spiritual Preparation Guide

Personal Reflection

God has called each of us His children to live a life of holiness. “Holiness” means that, as followers of Jesus Christ, we are set apart from the rest of the world. Our attitudes and actions should reflect that we are different; that our lives are morally blameless. Holiness is a three-step process. First, God has called you to be holy! Second, we must accept God’s call to be holy, and we must present ourselves to God as a “living sacrifice.” (Romans 12:1-2) This means that we give all that we are and will ever be to Jesus Christ. We surrender our lives, our desires, and our dreams completely to Him. Thirdly, we pursue a holy lifestyle. Holiness does not come easily! In order to live a life of holiness, we have to take personal responsibility for the sin in our lives. This checklist for personal reflection will help you to examine your life. It will allow the Holy Spirit of God to point out certain areas of your life that you may not have surrendered to God. Chances are that, as you read over this list, you will find several things that you need to confess and to yield to God. The following “steps of action” will help you know how to do that.

Steps of Action

- A. Pray the prayer of the psalmist: “Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me and know my anxious thoughts; and see if there be any hurtful way in me, and lead me in the everlasting way.” (Psalm 139:23-24)

- B. Be very honest as you answer each question. You may want to keep a pen and a piece of paper nearby to write down anything that God reveals to you as you read over this list.

- C. Agree with God about whatever He reveals to you. Confess the sin He

reveals with a willingness to turn from it and leave it behind.

D. Praise God for His cleansing and forgiveness (1 John 1:9)

E. Renew your mind and rebuild your life through meditating on God's word and applying it to your life.

F. Review these questions periodically. The pursuit of holiness is an ongoing process!!

Questions

Genuine Salvation (2 Corinthians 5:17)

1. Was there ever a time in my life that I genuinely repented of my sin? When? (Definition of sin and repentance)
2. Was there ever a time in my life that I placed all my trust in Jesus Christ alone to save me from sin? When?
3. As King of all creation, Jesus Christ has the right to rule over my life. Was there a time in my life when I completely surrendered that right to Him? When?

God's Word (Psalm 119:97, 140)

- C. Do I love to read and meditate on the Word of God?
- C. Is my personal private time with God consistent, meaningful, and intimate?
- C. Do I apply God's word to my everyday life?

Humility (Isaiah 57:15)

1. Am I quick to recognize and agree with God in confession when I have sinned?
2. Am I quick to admit to others when I am wrong?
3. Do I rejoice when others are praised and recognized and my accomplishments go unnoticed by people?
4. Do I esteem all others as better than I esteem myself?

Obedience (Hebrews 13:17, 1 Samuel 15:22)

1. Do I consistently obey what I know God wants me to do?
2. Do I consistently obey the human authorities God has placed over my life?

Pure Heart (1 John 1:9)

- a) Do I confess my sins by name?
- b) Do I keep short “sin accounts” with God (confess and forsake as He convicts)?
- c) Am I willing to give up all sin for God?

Clear Conscience (Acts 24:16)

- a) Do I consistently seek forgiveness from those I wrong or offend?
- b) Is my conscience clear with every person? (Have I asked forgiveness of everyone I have wronged? Have I made right what I have done wrong?)

Priorities (Matthew 6:33)

- a) Does my schedule reveal that God is first in my life?
- b) Does my use of money reveal that God is first in my life?
- c) Next to my relationship with God, is my relationship with my family my highest priority?

Values (Colossians 3:12,13)

- a) Do I love what God loves and hate what God hates?
- b) Do I value highly the things that please God (giving, sharing Christ with people, who need Him, and studying His Word, prayer)?
- c) Are my affections and goals fixed on eternal values?

Sacrifice (Philippians 3:7-8)

1. Am I willing to sacrifice whatever is necessary to see God move in and through my life (time, convenience, comfort, reputation, pleasure, etc.)?
2. Is my life characterized by genuine sacrifice for the cause of Christ?

Spirit Control (Galatians 5:22-25, Ephesians 5:18-21)

1. Am I allowing Jesus to express His life and His will through every area of my life?
2. Am I allowing the Holy Spirit to fill (control) my life each day?
3. Is there consistent evidence of the “fruit of the Spirit” being produced in my life?

First Love (Philippians 1:21, 23)

1. Am I as much in love with Jesus as I have ever been?
2. Am I thrilled with Jesus, filled with His joy and peace, and making Him the continual object of my love?

Motives (Acts 5:29; Matthew 10:28)

1. Am I more concerned about what God thinks about my life than about what others think?
2. Would I pray, read my Bible, give and serve as much if nobody but God ever noticed?
3. Am I more concerned about pleasing God than I am about being accepted and appreciated by people?

Moral Purity (Ephesians 5:3-4)

1. Do I keep my mind free from books, magazines, or entertainment that stimulate fantasies or thoughts that are not morally pure?
2. Are my conversation and behavior pure and above reproach?

Forgiveness (Colossians 3:12-13)

1. Do I seek to resolve conflicts in my relationships as soon as possible?
2. Am I quick to forgive those who hurt or wrong me?

Sensitivity (Matthew 5:23-24)

1. Am I sensitive to the convictions and promptings of God's Spirit?
2. Am I quick to respond in humility and obedience to the conviction and promptings of God's Spirit?

Evangelism (Romans 9:3; Luke 24:46, 48)

1. Do I have a burden for those who don't know Christ?
2. Do I consistently witness for Christ?

Prayer (1 Timothy 2:1)

1. Am I faithful in praying for the needs of others?
2. Do I pray specifically, fervently, and faithfully for revival in my life, my church, and our nation?

Me, Pray for Lost People? Why?

I. Because God Asked You Too

“I urge, then, first of all, that request, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone – for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.” 1 Tim. 2:1-4

II. Because God Desires Us to Pray for those who do not know Him

“But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.” 2 Peter 3:8-9

III. Because of the Present Condition of those who are Lost Without Jesus

“Whoever believes in Him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God’s one and only Son.” John 3:18

IV. To Help Change the Attitude of Those Who Hear the Truth about Jesus and Who He Is

“When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment: in regard to sin, because men do not believe in me.” John 16:8-9

So How Do I Pray?

I. Ask God to Break Satan’s Bondage in Their Lives

“We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge Of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.” 2 Cor. 10:5

II. Ask For God to Give Them Ears to Hear and Faith to Believe

“But blessed are your eyes because they see and your ears because they hear. For I tell you the truth, many prophets and righteous men longed to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it.” Mt. 3:16-17

III. Ask God to Send People to Share the Message About Jesus

“Ask the Lord of the Harvest, therefore, to send out workers into His harvest field.” Mt. 9:38

IV. Pray For People to Share

“How, then, they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news.”

Romans 10:14-15

V. Pray for People to Share

“And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ.” Colossians 4:3

VI. Pray for Boldness to Share

“Pray also for me, that whenever I open my mouth, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the Gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly as I should.”

Ephesians 6:19-20

Because Time is too short.

Because people are too lost.

Because hell is too real.