

FOI ET VIE RÉFORMÉES



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A rural Christian radio in Mali

Would it not be a challenge for Christian youth groups to support our radio-ministry?



Participants to the two-day seminar in Bamako

Recent visit to Mali

Dear friends,

A year ago I visited the country of Mali (in West Africa) for the first time. In the newsletter that followed, I wrote about this visit and the strong impression it had made on me. During the year, I reported to you about the developments taking place there, not only with regard to the take-over of the Northern part of Mali (two-thirds of the country) by various rebel movements—mostly Islamic, but with a strong nationalist Tuareg component—but above all about the struggle of Christian radios which continue to spread the light of the Gospel in their surrounding communities.

I have just returned from an eight-day visit to Mali, accompanied by two South African missionaries, Chris-Johan and Jeanette Fourie (both fluent in French). Their experience on the field of Christian radio—they have, over the years, built and managed three radios in Madagascar—made their presence invaluable. Our purpose was to properly assess the condition and needs of Christian radios in Mali: there are no less than 50 of them, although the country is predominantly Muslim (95%). What kind of challenges do these radio stations face, how do directors and staff manage different aspects of the life of a station (studio, programming, equipment, safety, relationship with listeners, finances, etc.); what kind of material is most appropriate for their studios given the conditions. These matters were not only monitored during our visit to several FM radios in rural areas, but also addressed during a two-day seminar. The

seminar, held at Radio Espoir, in Bamako, the capital of Mali, was attended by the representatives of 17 Christian radios who were deeply appreciative of the Fouries sharing their vast experience; we, too, learned a lot from their respective history and struggles. Pastor Maurice Sogoba, director of Radio Espoir and coordinator of a large network of Malian radios, welcomed us warmly. He is, so to speak, the father figure of the Christian radio movement in Mali.

Help Christian radios in Mali

With donations already received, we were able to equip Radio Espoir with a proper mixing table (the current one has definitely finished its time) and also a computer that will allow it, in due time, to become an Internet radio, in addition to its FM broadcasts. There are thousands of Malian immigrants in large French cities (like Paris);

they too could be reached by Radio Espoir (which airs *Reformed Faith and Life's* programmes twice per day). In addition, we were able to provide for the repair of a damaged pylon in a rural area: a radio signal cannot properly cover its anticipated radius if the pylon is not completely straight. Other urgent needs have been identified. Some of them can be met with the rest of our Mali fund, others will have to wait until we have replenished it.

Looking at the very limited means which these fellow Christians have to put Christian programmes on the air, and thinking how almost any teenager in the West has more sophisticated (and valuable) electronics in his/her bedroom to play games and listen to mindless chat, would it not be a challenge for Christian youth groups, perhaps in your own church, to match what they spend on electronic "entertainment" with a contribution to our African radio ministry?

For instance, instead of buying the coveted \$80 headphones, settle for the \$40 version and donate the other \$40 to Christian radios in Mali?

David versus Goliath

Upon returning from this visit, I was struck by a seemingly very unequal battle taking place there: on the one hand these tiny stations emitting, with their small pylons and dipoles, a radio signal that carries the powerful Gospel of our Lord Jesus-Christ; on the other, some of the tallest buildings in the Arab world (think of Burj Khalifa in Dubai) which exemplify the wealth and power of today's Muslim sheiks. The unequal battle between David and Goliath comes to mind. Some countries, like Qatar or Saudi Arabia (allied to Western powers) pour their money and wealth into West Africa, dishing out student scholarships, building mosques, arming Islamist



More than 50% of Africa's population is under the age of 15

movements which use violence in order to eradicate all trace of Christianity. But do we doubt the final issue of the battle? *You come to me with a sword and with a spear and with a javelin, but I come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied.* Such were the words of David while facing Goliath (1 Samuel 17:45). Are not the small pylons of Christian radios something like David's slingshot, projecting God's Word in a hostile world?

Dear friends, Christmas calls us to a spiritual battle, and arms us with the Word incarnate, even Christ, who is *living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.* Will you be part of this spiritual battle with us? May you and your family enjoy a blessed Christmas, in the knowledge that the victory belongs to our Lord and Savior.

In His name,

Rev. Eric Kayayan

Do we doubt the final issue of the battle?

Please send your donations to the following address:

Reformed Faith & Life, P.O. Box 112, Lansing, IL 60438, U.S.A.

Our South African bank account is at ABSA Bank, Menlyn, Pretoria, Rep. of South Africa (name: Reformed Faith and Life; branch Menlyn; cheque account number: 40-4878 6755)