

Nicholas News

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Urbana 2003 Christian Student Conference

Praise the Lord!

- Our two newest African American members are moving to the next level in their training. Greta is in her second semester of training to do literacy work and Katherine is preparing to go to Cameroon to serve in management.
- We had a great experience while visiting four West African countries with the Cooperative Missions Network of the African Dispersion (COMINAD).
- Plans to do a youth trip to Burkina Faso with Urban Ministries, Incorporated are coming together for an April trip (April 2-16).
- The two seminars at the Urbana Christian Students Conference in December 2003 went well.
- Gertrude's sister Flora continues to experience stable health while she waits for a liver transplant.

Every two years IntersVarsity Christian Fellowship hosts a Christian student conference between Christmas and New Year's Day. The theme of this year's conference was "Your Kingdom Come, Your Will Be Done," based upon the Lord's prayer in the gospel of Luke. The purpose of the conference is to challenge college students and recent graduates to seek their place in God's mission. The 2003 conference was really special for us because it presented a great opportunity for us to spread the vision of world missions and Bible translation in particular. Among the 20,000 plus students, a record number (~1000) African American students attended. It was Kevin's first time to attend and we were delighted to have opportunity to present two seminars. The first seminar was entitled, "African American Heritage Churches and Missions." It was mostly attended by young African Americans who wanted to know more about our historical black churches, how they were involved in missions in the past and the challenges that we face today. The second seminar was entitled, "Partnership with the African American Church in Missions." This one was attended

mostly by white students who worshipped at African American churches. Both groups were interactive and eager to see God move African American churches to the next level in global missions. When we were not presenting seminars we planned to interact one-on-one with students at the Wycliffe exhibit but Kevin arrived at the Conference with a high fever and stayed in bed during the first couple of days. We were thankful when the fever broke and he was able to help me set up the computer for the seminar presentation. He felt much better on New Year's Eve so we could attend the closing services with 20,000 students, missionaries, and IntersVarsity staff. The ethnic diversity at this conference was truly a reflection of what John the apostle saw in Revelation 7:9. "...I looked and behold, a great multitude which no one could count, from every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb... It was awesome to see people from many nations in attendance at the Urbana Christian 2003 Student Conference.

Gertrude

Africa Visit in January

Thank you so much for your prayers. The trip to Africa went very well. Our purpose was to visit Adopt a Village programs initiated by USA churches in the COMINAD network. There were a few difficulties along the way, but we

were able to see the hand of the Lord with us, helping us along. Brian Johnson led the group on a scenic route to Benin and Mali. First, we flew on Ghana Airways from Baltimore, Maryland to Accra, the capitol of Ghana. In Ghana, we visited a Liberian refugee camp and met some friends and family of Brian. This visit was a stark reminder to pray for the current turmoil in Liberia. The journey to Cotonou, Benin was hot and dusty as we continued by bus with an overnight in Lome, Togo. While in Benin we had opportunity to visit Ouidah, a historical port where slaves were sold and shipped to the new world. We rode down to the beach to see a historical marker called La Porte du Non Retour (The Port of No Return). Slaves left Africa never to return. One of the



Kevin and Gertrude with the COMINAD group

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Africa Visit in January (continued)

To see more pictures visit <http://home.earthlink.net/~k.g.nicholas>

highlights of the trip was our visit with Benin's President, Mathieu Kerekou. He was pleased to visit with African Americans visiting his country. We spent about an hour with him. He was very warm and cordial. When he heard that we were going to go to northern Benin, he provided transportation for us there and back. What an unexpected blessing. The trip to Tanguieta in northern Benin was a long 10 hours through semi-desert terrain. The season was called Harmetan, a dry time when dust from the Sahara Desert overcasts the skies. Thankfully, our travel was on good roads most of the way although the last part of it was unpaved and bumpy. We arrived safely in the night at the Baobab Hotel. The next morning I got up very early to visit the Wild Animal



Gertrude making fufu with local women, Benin

Preserve with the group. Gertrude used the time to meet with Bible translators and literacy workers at Tanguieta. We were able to spot deer, antelope, crocodile, even a lioness. That afternoon we visited a couple of villages, where Carl and Ursula Williams are doing Bible translation with the Neteni people. Carl and Ursula Williams had just left for the USA so we visited with local people. The next day we headed back to Cotonou stopping a few times at roadside markets. On one stop Gertrude decided to try her hand at mashing yams for fufu. In Cotonou, we visited Akpali Kpevi Village which was adopted by Calvary Evangelical Baptist Church. It was exciting to see the different

projects that Calvary was able to accomplish in partnership with this village. Now Christians from Akpali are reaching out to some 22 different villages with the Gospel. On January 24th we flew to Bamako, Mali and on to Kayes, Mali to meet some Fulani Muslims. It was the last of four countries and we could not help but notice the difference—cooler temperature, greater percentage Muslims, slower pace and more time to visit and interact with local people.

The highlight of our stay in Kayes was spending the night in a small Fulani village where Jim Bowers of United World Missions is doing church planting.

Kevin



Rev. Jonathan Weaver and Jim Bowers meeting with local pastors in Mali.



Meeting with pastors in Northern Benin

Please respond to us by email, if possible, so that we may send our letters to you by email.

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Designate financial gifts to:
Gertrude and Kevin Nicholas
Write the check to:
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Prayer Points

Prosperity and blessing on our partners in Bible Translation. That's you!

Fruitfulness in ministry resulting in an increase in African Americans going to the mission field. We are praying for 24 career members this year.

Continued support and prayers of our financial partners as we seek to involve others in Bible translation.

Don and Sharon Hutchisson as they complete translation of the Sursurunga New Testament in Papua New Guinea.

Salvation of unsaved family members; health and strength of our parents and siblings.

Our spiritual and physical stamina as we face challenges in ministry as a married couple

Two full-time assistants in African American Mobilization at the Wydiff headquarters in Orlando.

Wisdom and discernment in ministry.

Safety in travel—in the USA and Burkina Faso in April.

***Thank you for partnering with us ...
...in His service,***

Kevin and Gertrude