

— the — RISHEL FAMILY

CHURCH PLANTING MISSIONARIES IN BURKINA FASO, WEST AFRICA

Dear faithful ministry partner,

May 2025

April and May are considered sacred months for the animists here in the Bobo area. The animists are those who follow the tribal religion and, as they get ready for a new season of rain and planting, they hold a lot of different ceremonies and activities to attempt to appease the spirits and have a good harvest. A big part of these activities involve a select group of men who put on wooden masks and elaborate costumes and dance



throughout the village, whipping anyone that crosses them. Even in the city of Bobo, we see troops of these masked men from time to time and will sometimes even see large groups of small children wearing the traditional masks and outfits. But the impact from this time of the masks is felt much stronger by our churches in the villages. It is often a time of uncertainty for them because they never know when the mask will come in and disrupt a church service and beat people they find on the church land. In the village of Kouentou, however, this year was different and it is all because of the Gospel.



Last fall, one of the village elders named Jean got saved and he was among those that were baptized last December. Since that time, Jean has been growing a lot in his faith and has become a vital part of the church in Kouentou. Last month, the chief of Kouentou held a big meeting with the other elders and leaders to discuss the affairs of the village. When the subject of the masks came up, Jean stood up and, in front of everyone, forbid the masks from coming onto the church land. He said that he now belongs to Jesus and the church belongs to Jesus and the masks have no place there. And by God's grace, they listened to him! For several Sundays afterwards, the masks would walk menacingly by the church and peer in through the windows but left them alone. God used the bold witness and testimony of Jean to protect His church!

We praise God for the work He has been doing through His churches out in the villages. These past few months, we have been working with these churches and their pastors to help train the members and to organize these churches so that they can advance even more for Christ. One way that we can help these churches to really advance is by providing them with a permanent meeting place where they can come together to worship. Our church in Finlandé is currently meeting under a temporary awning we built and our church in Kouentou, which is meeting in a small building that was on the land when we bought it, has outgrown that building. We have already been able to provide some cement and sand for both of these villages and the members have been working themselves to make the bricks for their buildings. The church in Kouentou will be celebrating their third anniversary in a few months and we are praying that God will allow us to have the building finished by then. Each church building will cost around \$8,000 to complete. If you would like to invest in the future of these churches by giving towards the completion of their buildings, please reach out and we would love to share more information about this need with you.



Our classes are continuing at the Bible Institute and it has been encouraging to see the excitement and zeal of the students to learn more about the Bible. As part of our Bible Institute program, we had a class over these past two months on how to read in French. We did this to help the members of our churches who cannot read and study their Bibles. That class was a big help and it really excited some of them to continue to grow in that area so that they can grow even more in their faith. Earlier this month, I went on a retreat with the pastor and some of the leaders from Victory Baptist Church, our second church in Bobo. It was a refreshing and helpful time to plan together for the future of the church. Please be praying for this church and the God to help them reach many lost souls in the part of the city.



The building for the school is advancing and we are thankful to see how God has been working through this project. We have included an update on the school, along with a VBS idea for those interested. Thank you all so much for your faithful love, prayers, and support for the work here in Burkina Faso. We will be praying for you and, if you ever have a special prayer request, please let us know. God bless!



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