



Witness Mercy Life Together      Witness Mercy Life Together      Witness Mercy Life Together  
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Praise God for the amazingly successful meeting of francophone Church leaders!

Pray for the safety of all missionaries and all Christians in the path of militant Islam!

Ask God to work powerfully through the women Steph is training up be Proverbs 31 women in their own culture.

Beseech our Good Lord to cause the righteousness of the region's strong leaders to rub off on the weaker leaders, rather than the other way around!

## The Winds of Change!..

Dear Christian friends and ministry partners,



As the plane descended to land at the Lomé airport on a clear mid-February day, suddenly our craft was enveloped in a seemingly endless deep dark cloud. Once we were on the ground, it became clear that the dark floating sludge making everything max hazy was due to a very late Harmattan Wind bearing literally tons of sand from the Sahara Desert along with cool, dry air (well, in the steam bath that is normally Lomé, sort of dry anyway). Usually the season of Harmattan is mostly over by the end of

January. Mid-February is really pretty late, especially for such a thick coating, especially so far south, especially on the coast!

We were told these winds of change had blown in just the day before. Two thoughts immediately crossed my mind. First, I thought, "man, I hope this lasts just a few more days so we don't emerge from our three days' of meetings in Dapaong fully cooked on all sides from the crushing 100-degree humid temperatures that are normal this time of year." Next I thought, "I hope these natural winds of change bring about positive spiritual winds of change in these meetings that I've actually been dreading for the last 6 weeks." It turns out, by the grace of God, both of those wishes were lovingly granted!

I was dreading the 2020 CAU (the annual meeting between the faculty of the CLET, our international francophone seminary in Northern Togo, we missionaries, and delegates from each of the dozen or so Churches in eight countries who have been sending men there for missionary pastoral training over the last 24 years) because the word on the street was that three of our least faithful leaders were planning to petition the LCMS for the removal of all missionaries or some such nonsense.

None of that happened! None of it! In fact, it was by far the most peaceful, unified, and fruitful CAU I have ever attended! And you wanna talk about the Spirit borne winds of change!...

1. A newly elected governing board. The President, VP, and Treasurer are all wonderful men! The Secretary, unfortunately, is one of the three we were worried about. Oh, well, 3 out of 4 ain't bad. And he's just the Secretary – no real power to abuse. I think there was some strategizing among our more faithful delegates with that election.
2. Re-purposing of the CAU to act as the governing board, no longer just of the CLET in Dapaong, but over all of the new CLET's too (so far CLETCO in the Congo, and CLET Guinea), plus as an agent of inter-Church cooperation in all other areas of ecclesiastic and missionary activity. This is huge! Or as President Trump says, hyuuge!
3. No more CAU's to be held in Dapaong! This makes me a little sad from a nostalgic point of view (we lived and worked there for 11 years and I actually oversaw the construction of the CLET), but mostly it makes everyone ecstatically happy! No more 13-hour bus

rides from Lomé up to Dapaong. The thought is next year's will be held in Brazzaville.

4. I announced, to no one's real surprise, the planned departure of our missionaries from Dapaong at the end of this academic year due to the daily increasing threat of Muslim militancy descending from neighboring Burkina Faso, the place we just had to leave. Rev. Jacob Gaugert will be joining us in Brazzaville. The future for Rev. Micah Wildauer and family is not as clear. Please keep him and his family in your prayers. They are both excellent missionaries!



While the men were rejoicing in Spirit-borne winds of change both temporally and spiritually, Steph was doing her usual good work trying to bring positive winds of change to African society through the women. Here's what she wrote about her time...

*I was blessed to be able to teach 15 women, a mixture of wives of students at the CLET and members of the local Togo Lutheran Church, for the three days we were in Dapaong. On Monday, we talked about "Why Knowledge Is Better Than Medicine" and "Being Light To Your Community". We also talked about "Accident Prevention". The highlight for everyone was learning and practicing the Heimlich maneuver! On Tuesday we finished up our lesson on "Accident Prevention" and went on to talk about "Colds" and "Acid Reflux". Over time, during the Mercy Medical Teams, I've learned what a prevalent issue acid reflux is here in the region. We talked about ways to prevent the problem and also things one can do to reduce symptoms. Everyone was very interested in that lesson.*

*Then, on Wednesday, we learned about ways to "Control Mosquitoes and Flies" and finished up with a lesson on "Hygiene". This was the first time I've taught an entire seminar alone. My French held up OK but, toward the end, when I was getting tired, I realized that English was creeping in. For example, when I showed them the wrong picture, I said, "Oh, Sorry!" Everyone laughed, but they all knew what I meant.*

*I really do love being able to share information with the women of the Lutheran Churches and pray that they will in turn share what they have learned with their neighbors. Those who know me well know that I am an incorrigible optimist, but I honestly believe that, with these simple lessons, these women can change their world!*



Interestingly, the day we left Dapaong, the world did change! The desert winds started to blow away again and the oppressive heat and humidity returned.

Thank you, Jesus! You are so good! However, I would have gladly roasted on all sides all three days (we're actually kind of used to it) for the positive changes the Spirit wrought in that time and place! **Thanks, as always, for your partnership & prayers!**