

Carina Saarloos in Mali



Newsletter March 2011

Dear colleagues, friends and supporters,

Just a couple more days and I will set foot on Dutch soil again. Of course I am happy to see mother Jo, to meet many friends, to visit my home congregation, to praise the Lord in my native tongue. And yet... I have been in Africa such a long time that I feel more and more displaced in the Netherlands. Where exactly do I belong? Is Africa my home? Well, I do have a house here in Bamako, as well as a car, and my life and work are here. But still there are times I feel like a stranger in Mali. At the moment, there is so much going on in Africa that it makes me pray regularly: "Please Lord, come soon". I can not help thinking of Libya and Egypt, where so much innocent blood is spilled. Or Ivory Coast, where it is not safe while two presidents are fighting for power. Or the horrible images of the tsunami in Japan. "Why does this all happen, Lord? Where are you in all of this?" Or would it be better to say: "Lord, how can I be a blessing to You in both of these completely different parts of the world of which I am part?" The story of Naomi and Ruth comes to mind. Two different women, having a complete different response to being homeless, going through disaster and sufferings. What made them think so different from each other? Where one woman became so very bitter, the other was able to be a blessing. Naomi ascribed all the disasters happening to her, to God. Her bitterness was aimed at God, and in doing so she locked down the source of blessing and could not get passed her questions "why". Her thinking was limited, she was only asking herself: "God was supposed to be there for me, and now see what He did... I counted on His blessing and all He does is disappoint me". Ruth, on the other hand, seems to be one step ahead of Naomi. She encounters the incidents from the self-surrendering perspective: "I want to be there for God", instead of "God has to be there for me". This perspective shines through her testimony in Ruth 1:16: "thy people shall be my people, and thy God, my God". It also shows from her actions. She wants to be there for her mother in law. She wants to humiliate herself to be a blessing for her. It is not Ruth herself who stands at the centre of her thoughts but she puts God and her loved ones there. She just wants to be there for God, regardless the consequences. If God will be the centre of my thinking and my actions it will be coming "home" in the Netherlands as well as in Mali and in both cases it will be good lingering there.

RAHAB CENTRE

I am very grateful things are going well at the Rahab centre. Our "mother superior", or said in Bambara "An musokoroba" Ba Febe truly is a gift of God. She decided she wants to continue living in the centre and be a part of the Rahab team. She is so passionate about the many young girls that wander in Bamako irretrievably and stays with them in the women's prison. The Lord gives her a clear understanding of the deeper issues the girls have. She has a huge knowledge of life and recognizes spiritual battle. At the end of February we said goodbye to five participants of the training program. They are: Mariyama Diarra, Mariyama Thiero, Fatimata, Nana and Chantal.

A couple of pictures of these five women in our Rahab Centre



****Pray that these women will practice what they have learned here these past months, the spiritual as well as the other skills.***

****Pray that they will submit themselves to God and will resist the devil so that he will flee from them. (James 4:7)***

The picture on the left shows Kunba Samake. As of January 2011, she participates in our program at the centre and is very dedicated. She made her choice for the Lord and started going to church. At the beginning of March two more women, Sita Coulibaly en Neema Coulibaly, were added to the training program, so the total of participants is now seven. Of these women, six come to the centre daily, from Tuesday to Friday. Lady number seven, Jeanne Koné (picture in the middle) lives in our centre, together with Ba Febe. She came to live here shortly after Jelika, who was with us for a short period of time in



January, ran off again. Jeanne is a beautiful young woman, living with the Lord. In the short time she lives here she has built a firm connection with Ba Febe. The picture on the right shows our complete Rahab team!



****Pray for persistence and wisdom for the Rahab team, especially for the months to come, when I will be on furlough in the Netherlands.***

PRISON WORK

Every Tuesday our prison team can be found amongst the prisoners of Kati. It has been over a year since the last baptism service was held in the prison because there were only a couple of new believers. However, during these last couple of months several boys gave their heart to the Lord. In the month of April our preacher Siaka Koeta hopes to give a couple of studies regarding baptism in the prison.

Due to a very generous donation we received from SVIK in the Netherlands we were able to buy a substantial stock of medicine (see picture) which we will use for the medical work in the prisons these coming months. The Rahab team, on the picture right, also works in the women's prison. Every Friday afternoon two team members will go and stay with the young girls in this prison for one and a half hours. We sing with them, tell them a story from the bible, pray for them and try our best to be the hands and feet of Jesus to them. A small group of eight girls who gave their heart to the Lord in this past year is very loyal in following the program on the Friday afternoons. Their genuineness is great to see, and so is their hunger for the gospel. Some of their names: Nene, Ramata, La Veille, Denise, Kadiatou and Bintu.

These past weeks I managed to leave behind a sort of preset radio "proclaimer" in all prisons. It is a recording of the complete Bambara bible. You can search for the stories per bible book or per chapter. A beautiful instrument we can use to reach the hearts of many illiterate prisoners.



- Pray for the prisoners of Kati prison, when many of them are ill and weak. Especially pray for Sedou and Ibrahim; they need to undergo surgery for groin rupture as soon as possible.

- Thank for the medicine supply we were able to buy. Pray that they will be used and stored with wisdom and subtleness.

•Thank for the openness of the group of young women in the prison. Pray that they will persist in their faith. Please also pray for coolness in this year's hot season.

•Thank for the "proclaimers"! Pray that many will listen to the stories from the bible. Pray that the Holy Spirit will touch their hearts.

PAINTING

In February my house has been improved. Everything has been painted, the inside as well as the outside. I have to say that I am pretty amazed by the result. To let you enjoy it with me; here are some pictures.



ON FURLOUGH IN THE NETHERLANDS

From the HFC: As most of you know by now, Carina will be staying on Dutch soil from the 18th of March. She will be spending the next three months in the Netherlands. She will visit her mother Jo and family and friends, come to her home congregation, restore bonds and make new contacts. But she will also be there to give lectures and presentations, go to conferences and get training. All in all it will be a busy time for her, so she also needs to take her time to enjoy her holiday and take her rest!

As HFC we would like to ask you to pray with us for a good preparation and completion of her tasks in Mali. Pray for a good flight from Mali to the Netherlands and a blessed stay here. During her furlough Carina will live in the coach-house of the van Dongen family. Sorry for you in the US that you will not be able to hear and see Carina, unless of course if you come for a visit to the Netherlands. But you can support her by praying for her and sending her a short s-mail with your greetings.

Dear people, thank you for your support in any way. I am looking forward to come to the US in the near future and do a tour there and meet a lot of you in person

Warmest regards, Carina Saarloos!

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Gifts for this work among the disenfranchised people are very welcome at: C&MA P.O. box 35000 Colorado Springs CO 80935 For C&MA Mali Saarloos work special account nr. 310240 OR GIVE ONLINE: <http://www.cmalliance.org/give/approved-specials> Mail field ----- Rahab Ministries