

Hippo Tracks

Praise and Prayer Mali

August 31 , 2006 Vol. 4

Friends and Intercessors of Mali

Greetings from Bamako. Thanks to all of you who continue to hold us up in prayer. These have been full months with the opening of the hospital, College of Prayer, and lots of people coming and going, short-teams as well as missionary colleagues.

In this issue of Hippo Tracks we want to tell you the story of ministry among the disenfranchised people of Bamako. I am sure that you will be moved to pray even more for this ministry once you have read about what God is doing.

Carina Saarloos, from CAMA-Zending in Holland, is part of the C&MA team here in Bamako. She has been leading this work for the last number of years. Carina works closely with Pastor Yiranou Traoré and has done very well at putting a team together from the larger Evangelical community here in Bamako. The main focus of the ministry to the disenfranchised people of Bamako is prisoners and prostitutes.

In April Carina attended a conference in Wisconsin. The conference brought together people from all over the world who are ministering to prostitutes. We are encouraged by the doors of ministry that God is opening. I will let Carina (see photo below) tell her own story.

Believing God together,

Joel Bubna



Ministry among the disenfranchised people of Bamako:

1. The prisoners

Sharing a small cell with 45 other men is quite normal in a prison in Bamako. The living conditions are bad, the men really suffer.

That's why we started a holistic ministry to the body, soul and spirit. In our team we have a doctor, a social worker, a pastor and lay helper.

We believe in the Words of Jesus as written in Mark 2: 17 **"It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners !**

We've seen much fruit. With medical help and food in their stomachs the prisoners are more receptive to the Word of God.

In the prison of Koulikoro, 12 men gave their hearts to Jesus in 2005 and followed in baptism classes. In September of that year 8 of the men were baptised in front of the 150 other prisoners.



In the prison of Kati, 18 men took the decision to become Christians and 7 of them were baptized in April 2006. These are great highlights knowing that they are free for eternity !!

We continue to disciple these men so that they grow in their faith and learn some spiritual tools.

Another fact is that 8 out of 10 men don't make it in society after they are released from prison. Within 3 months they are back in prison for another crime .

That's why we are very excited about the half-way house that we are building, named "Centre Philémon": a rehabilitation place for the men in a safe Christian environment.

We have built a wall, a well, and a dormitory and are now building a multifunctional room. We also need to build some workshops that will serve for a blacksmith, for chicken farms and a vegetable garden. We don't have the money for that yet.

We ask you to pray for the work among the prisoners and also to see what you can do financially to help us make this Centre Philémon a reality !

2. Prostitutes

They come from all over West Africa, each with a dream, drawn to the glamour and promises of success in the capital city.

Until last year over 120 of them lived and worked out of cramped 8 x 10 foot windowless cubicles, behind the crowded Sogoniko bus station.

After the government destroyed this place the ladies were all scattered all over Mali. Most of their dreams have long been forgotten replaced by the simple need to survive. They rent their cubicles for 8 dollars/ day hoping that they will have enough clients to cover this basic cost.

Some are obligated to join with others in order to split the cost of housing. Drugs are often used to fend off the cravings of sleep because nighttime is when the workload is the most profitable. Nutrition and food intake is not a high priority and one's health is rarely considered.

This description fits professional sex workers of just about any capital city in West Africa, but these are located in Bamako, Mali. Many of the young girls are simply looking for quick cash since their families aren't able to help them.

On the other end of the spectrum are the widows, completely abandoned by their extended families, yet responsible for raising a number of children. With nearly 70 % of Malians living below the poverty line, desperation plays a major role in prostitution.

Unfortunately ALL are exposing themselves to the AIDS virus, an epidemic throughout Africa which has significantly increased the risks of their profession. It is believed that 25 - 40 % of prostitutes in this part of Africa have the AIDS virus.

Together with my small team of people we are visiting the ladies at their workplaces and sharing the love of God with them. But this is not enough !

These ladies see prostitution as a business, a way for money so we need to come up with a good business program to help them.

We have been looking for ways to help those seeking freedom from the bonds of prostitution and seeking to start a new life (spiritually, socially, and economically).

That's why we opened the Rahab Center in June of this year.

Rahab Center

Rahab Center is a drop-in place, a welcome centre for the ladies. A place where they can stop by to talk, to pray or to watch a Christian movie. We want to separate "the sheep from the goats" and find out which ladies are serious about leaving prostitution.

At the Center we also have an interview with them and offer them a training program in making

soap or tie dye (painting material). We have a partnership with the ladies prison here in Bamako. This prison has a trainings center that is all set up for these two workshops. I believe by offering the ladies this training we are teaching them skills and a job at the same time.

At the end of the month we will pay them a small salary so that they can pay their houses and feed themselves.

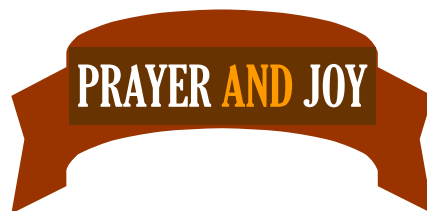




Early August we started a partnership with the women's prison to train 20 women. Twelve of them are prostitutes, 5 are ex-prisoners and 3 are widows.

Each weekday they come to make soap. Once in a while the women embroider or crochet, as learning various skills is part of the program.

Friday is a special day, just for education. The women are taught from God's Word, and special speakers are also invited, to cover other important topics. For example a doctor to explain things regarding AIDS.



We ask you to pray for our Rahab Center, pray for Aya, Bassira (on photo) and Carina as we talk with the ladies and share God's love with them.

- Pray that those who want to give their hearts to Jesus and want to stop with prostitution will come to our Center.
- Pray for our partnership with the ladies prison so that we can start the first training program for 20 ladies in August 2006.
- Pray for enough funds to pay the ladies their salaries at the end of the month.

Thanks for serving together,




Greetings Carina Saarloos

If you want to help Carina in this work among the disenfranchised people of Bamako your gifts are welcome to :

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