



Teaching Challenge

By Lisa Nicky



Gabon

After finishing a year of French language studies, I began teaching my first class of nursing school students at Bongolo Hospital in the small middle African country of Gabon.

We are currently in the last months of a 2.5 year

nursing program. In a country where trained medical workers are few and medical needs are great, our students, once graduated, will be asked to work in a variety of departments such as maternity, laboratories, pharmacies, pediatrics, operating

rooms and HIV clinics. They will be asked to consult, diagnose, and prescribe medications much like that of a nurse practitioner in the United States.

So the challenge of giving these students, some of whom never finished high school, enough knowledge and experience in 2.5 years to give quality care becomes nothing short of a supernatural undertaking. And I rely heavily upon his strength to help me daily.

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The Alliance in Gabon

During the throes of the Great Depression, Alliance missionaries from Congo surveyed South Gabon and discovered vast areas that had never been reached with the gospel. The first missionaries entered the

country in 1934.

After a North American ministry presence of more than 70 years, The Alliance national church in Gabon is moving full circle from being a recipient of Christian missions to

being a partner in sending missionaries to unreached people. These churches are fully organized with official recognition from the Gabonese government and are able to support their own pastors and leaders.

"IN 2008 MORE THAN 1,700 PATIENTS RECEIVED JESUS AT BONGOLO HOSPITAL."

Ambari's Birthday

By Lisa Nicky

“THERE ARE DARK FORCES AT WORK IN OUR AREA THAT STEAL LIFE AND HOPE LEAVING PAIN AND DESPAIR.”

One of my greatest joys in teaching at Bongolo Hospital is getting to interact and share with the various families that come, many times from the capital city to the jungle, to get prayerful, God-directed physical/spiritual care.

Ambari, looking at the odds from a medical standpoint, never should have made it to her first birthday. There are dark forces at work in our area that steal life and hope leaving pain and despair. Many parents, prior to coming to Bongolo, spend all the money they have and all the time their child has seeking help from a “nganga,” or what we might refer to as a witch-doctor. The “nganga” promises to consult his spirits to divine *who* in the

family is causing the illness. He then explains the rituals necessary to rid the child of the illness, creating fear, blame, and division within the family. This process

can take months. Precious months are wasted. The child with tuberculosis or AIDS is left weakened with little chance of survival.

Ambari's parents took her to the “nganga” who was unable to cure her of TB and untreated AIDS, leaving her underweight and compromised when she finally arrived at Bongolo Hospital. Unfortunately, we see cases like



Ambari's all the time. I often tell the parents plainly that we will do everything in our power to heal their child with the medicines we have, but that there is only one true God that has created the world and everything in it. This God has power far greater than our medicine. But they can *not* have one foot that runs to the “nganga” and one foot that runs to God for help. This

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Deborah Walker

The Alliance in Gabon

As the largest family of evangelical churches in the country, they are taking the initiative to plant new churches and reach into new areas with the gospel.

By 2008, all church-planting and related missionaries transitioned out of Gabon. The remaining

U.S. workers are connected with Bongolo Hospital, where thousands of people hear Jesus' message of hope in their darkest hours, regardless of their religious background or ability to pay for treatment. Each year, the number of patients who place their trust

in Christ continues to grow. In 2008 more than 1,700 patients received Jesus at Bongolo Hospital.

Ambari's Birthday

God demands their complete faith and trust, and ultimately His will, not that of the spirits, will determine the outcome.

I believe Ambari's parents made that decision to trust God whole-heartedly for the care of their daughter. There have been moments over the last few months where all we could do was pray over this child struggling to breathe on all the oxygen we could give and say, "Lord, fight this battle for us and allow the medicines to work in this child's body."

Ambari is doing great and will soon return to her

village on HIV medications with her very relieved parents. But the experience/healing was not just a physical one for Ambari and her parents. They no longer are slaves to the spirits, but they know the freedom of trusting the one true God in the darkest situations of their lives.

If this ministry were about me, doing good and helping poor Africans, I'd never have the strength to keep going. There is no way one person can meet all the needs, and there are many moments of feeling helpless and out of control. At Bongolo, our focus is

not on us making sick people well. We watch God work miracles according to his plan and purpose. Missionaries are nothing more than weak vessels that God calls to cross borders. The difference between me and any other Alliance woman is nothing but a question of geography. We are all jars of clay and God is calling us to minister to people in our midst, wherever that may be. Jesus heals us, body and soul, does not change and is relevant to anyone anywhere in the world. Happy 1st birthday Ambari! And thank you Jesus!



Renee Valach



Bongolo Hospital



Bongolo Hospital is located south of the equator in the town of Lebamba in the country of Gabon, Africa. The 130-bed facility has a busy Outpatient Department, Surgery, Adult Medicine, Maternity, Pediatrics and Laboratory. There is also a Dental Clinic, Eye Surgery Clinic, and an AIDS/HIV Treatment

Center, all needed specialties in the area.

For over 20 years, missionary nurses ran a small dispensary for treating the medical needs of local Gabonese. In 1977, with the arrival of a team of missionary medical personnel, including Dr. David Thompson, the small dispensary began building what eventually developed into the Bongolo Hospital of the Christian & Missionary Alliance of Gabon.

Missionaries along with over 70 local Gabonese personnel keep the hospital open to serve the local province and all other provinces of Gabon, including patients from the country of Congo Brazzaville.

The hospital Special Projects Account is the lowest our missionaries have seen it for several years. This is the account that the staff relies on heavily to help pay for spare parts, repairs of lab machines, and a host of other semi-emergent needs that impact patient care. If God puts it on your heart to help, go to www.bongolohospital.org for more information.



"WE ARE ALL
JARS OF CLAY
AND GOD IS
CALLING US TO
MINISTER TO
PEOPLE IN OUR
MIDST,
WHEREVER THAT
MAY BE."

Great Commission Connections

Prayer Requests



Carolyn Thornson

“PRAY THAT
THE MAYO
CLINIC WILL BE
ABLE TO OFFER
US ANOTHER
CHARITY SLOT.”

Thank you for your continued prayer support and for giving to the Great Commission Fund that has allowed the medical staff/workers to minister at Bongolo Hospital. Please pray for:

- Lisa and Carolyn as they teach in the Bongolo Nursing School.
- The workers as they develop programs to help the shopkeepers in Labamba to improve their business skills and befriend them.
- The village ministry of Doussala on the Gabon/Congo border. Pray that the truth of God’s Word will be clear and transform lives.
- The 10 nursing students as they continue on into the third year of their training. Pray that they would continue to learn and apply the truth of walking each day in the power of the Holy Spirit.
- That the Lord will continue to give wisdom as the medical workers start providing laboratory tests and anti-retroviral medications at the HIV/AIDS Clinic.
- The Bongolo Hospital chaplains as they meet with patients on a daily basis. Pray for those who accept Christ each week that they will find a body of believers that will help them grow in their faith. Pray for their ministry to those who are enslaved by demons that they would be completely delivered.
- God’s provision in the area of the hospital laboratory. They are praying for another capable person and someone who can do further teaching of the personnel who are there.
- That God will send someone skilled in cutting down the big trees threatening parts of the station at Bongolo Hospital.
- The studies of the nursing students, particularly for those who are on probation and must improve their grades to continue in school.
- Dr. Christine Bataneni, who finished medical school in Congo earlier this year, completed a generalist training period, like an internship, with Renee Valach as instructor. They hope to have more African medical doctors in training in the future.
- Continue to pray for permission from the Gabonese government to purchase Anti-Retroviral medications and start treating the many patients with AIDS that they see each week.
- The “Prevention of Mother Child Transmission of HIV” program, that it would touch many women and their babies, both physically and spiritually.
- That God will give the missionaries more opportunities to bless the Chinese workers and share with them the love of Jesus.
- That the Mayo Clinic will be able to offer us another charity slot and that the Lord will provide all the funds needed for the airfare for the patient and one parent. (Funds may be given to the Approved Special: #47200 Bongolo Heart Send Project.)

Praise

- Praise God for the new laboratory! Pray that God will help with the hiring and training of lab techs, and an X-ray tech.
- Praise God for getting our transformer moved to the center of the campus and for helping the team safely move the huge back-up generator on inadequate equipment.
- Praise God for the arrival of the new lab machines!

Everyday Connections

An important part of making everyday connections with people is being spirituality alert and prepared believers. The missionary story from Gabon reminds us that we need to be the vessels through whom God can work. If we become self absorbed or allow the enemy to entangle us in the affairs of this world, we will be unable to recognize the opportunities God gives us to be used of him to

share the gospel with others. Let's ask God to help us *throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who*

endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart (Hebrews 12:1a-3). May this be our prayer as we seek to be those clean vessels God can use to make everyday connections with people who have yet to make a decision to make Jesus the Savior and Lord of their lives.



Mask used in traditional ceremonies; marriage, birth, funeral

Great Commission Sunday 2010

During spring 2010, the U.S. C&MA family of churches will observe Great Commission Sunday. This will be a day your church sets aside to celebrate the worldwide Alliance movement and to focus on "Pushing Back the Darkness" in new fields where less than 1 percent of the population professes to know Christ.

The Great Commission Fund: The Christian and Missionary Alliance does not require its missionaries to raise their own support. Instead, missionaries and their ministries are financed through what we call The Great Commission Fund (GCF). C&MA church members and friends regularly give to this fund.

Advantages of the GCF:

- It supports the most significant cause in history: reach-

ing lost people with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

- It places missionaries in their countries of service quickly.
- It frees up missionaries to concentrate on their ministries instead of raising funds.
- It develops a stronger team spirit among missionaries on the field.
- It insures that well-qualified missionaries are sent to the mission field.

Because of the GCF:

- Every two minutes, someone prays to receive Christ through the worldwide outreach of Alliance ministries.
- Every hour, three patients, many of them ravaged by AIDS, receive physical and spiritual care through C&MA medical work.
- Every day, via 43 radio broadcasts, people who

have had no gospel witness hear the good news.

- Every week, nearly 3,000 new believers are baptized.
- Every month, 253 churches and church groups join the worldwide Alliance family.
- Every year, 9,635 students are trained and equipped for ministry through 125 overseas Alliance theological schools.

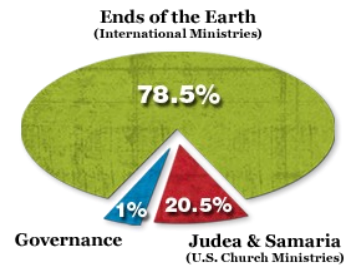
How can I support GCF:

Many individuals give to the GCF by a Faith Promise made through their local church. Some people give one-time gifts. Other people give regularly through our secure online giving page. And still others give through their estate, utilizing the services of the Orchard Foundation.

(For more information go to TOF website www.theorchard.org)



EXPENSES



How your gift is distributed.

(The National Office will send information about Great Commission Sunday 2010 to all C&MA churches.)

Great Commission Connections

Gabon Facts



Flag of Gabon



Gabon is a country in west central Africa sharing borders with the Gulf of Guinea to the west, Equatorial Guinea to the north-west, and Cameroon to the north, with the Republic of the Congo curving around the east and south. The capital and largest city is Libreville. With an area slightly smaller than Colorado, Gabon (103,346 sq. mi.) is mostly covered by dense tropical forest, with coastal lowlands, plateaus, and mountains.

Demographics:

- Capital City: Libreville (661,600 population)
- Population: 1,389,201
- Languages: French (official), Fang, Myene, Bateke, Bapounou/ Eschira, Bandjabi
- Ethnicity/Race: Bantu tribes (including Fang,

- Punu, Nzeiby, Mbede) 88.7%, other Africans and Europeans 11.3%
- Religion: Christian 75%, animist 24%, Muslim 1%
- Economy: Per capita income \$5,900, Inflation 1.5%, Unemployment 21%, Literacy rate 63%
- Government/Political Climate: Republic with multiplicity presidential regime

The Alliance first entered the field in 1934.

Workers:

Lebamba

- Field Director: Dr. David Thompson

Bongolo

- Mr. Paul & Meladee Davis
- Miss Karen Fitch, *Medical/health ministries*
- Miss Lisa Nicky, *Medical/health ministries*
- Miss Carolyn Thorson, *Medical/health ministries/ field bookkeeping*
- Dr. Renee Valach, *Medical/health ministries*
- Dr. Deborah Walker, *Medical/health ministries*

Libreville

- Rev. Timothy & Meredith Brokopp, *Short-term missions coordinators*

Home Assignment

- Mr. Arnie & Cheryl Solvig
- Dr. David & Rebecca Thompson

National Church:

The Christian and Missionary Alliance Church of Gabon: 115 organized churches, 145 unorganized groups, 91 ordained ministers, 11,226 baptized members, and 25,500 inclusive members

Team Initiatives:

- Transfer the vision, leadership, and administration of all institutions to the national church.
- Help the national church become a missionary-sending church within the next two years.
- Establish the Librairie de l'Alliance Chrétienne (Alliance Bookstore) in its new location and transfer management of this ministry to the national church.



Western Pennsylvania District of The Christian and Missionary Alliance

MISSIONS EDUCATION NEWSLETTER

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Great Commission Connections (GCC) is a missions education newsletter. GCC has been designed to provide supplemental missions education material. It is published quarterly and follows the same fields of study as the Alliance Women's Resource material. The CD contains three newsletters for the featured countries and other missions resources that may be helpful for your missions education. The information on the CD is beneficial to you and your church as you seek to promote and provide missions education for your people. We are seeking to serve you and assist you by providing this missions education resource. To subscribe to GCC contact Janeen at the District Office by phone: 814-938-6920 or email: barrettj@cmawpa.org.

"LOST PEOPLE
MATTER TO
GOD. HE
WANTS THEM
FOUND."

We're on the web:
www.cmawpa.org

Helpful Resources

- 2010 Official Directory and Prayer Guide of The Christian and Missionary Alliance
- www.cmalliance.org/resources/av/missions.jsp
- www.cmalliance.org/im/mlocator/missy.jsp?m=190600
- <http://www.cmalliance.org/giv/gcf.jsp-GCF>
- <http://en.wikipedia.org>
- <http://www.cmalliance.org/video/play/161-living-the-call>
- <http://www.bongolohospital.org/>
- [http:// solviglife.com](http://solviglife.com)
- <http://www.cmalliance.org/video/play/84-david-thompson>
- www.cmalliance.org/video/play/18-bongolo-evangelical-hospital
- <http://carolyns-capers.blogspot.com/>



U.S. Embassy, Libreville

Correspondence Guidelines:

Please use precautions to protect our international workers in the field. The workers were gracious enough to write articles for our newsletter. For their safety, they have requested that no one publish any of the material. Do not post on the internet, publish in newspapers, magazines, church bulletins, put on bulletin boards, or advertise on TV/Radio, and no podcast messages. Thank you for your understanding.