



<p style="text-align: center;"><i>West Africa Introduction</i> December 2000</p> <p>Part 01, Ch. 25 CRF Media Chronicles</p>	<p>Final: 12/21/12 Time: 18:25</p> <p>© 2012 Carl and Arline Ryan</p>
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Overlay: November 28, 2000

Carl: A few days after Thanksgiving we were in the country of Guinea. We made this first trip to West Africa in the midst of uncertainty and apprehension because of the unstable political situations in the destination countries. Originally, we were scheduled to visit a team in the central part of Guinea but, due to safety concerns, plans were changed only a few weeks earlier. Now, our itinerary was to spend only two days in Conakry, Guinea then fly on to Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire and, from there, take a 400 mile road trip to Dantomba.

In Conakry, we stayed with missionaries Ron and Sharon Hill. They had a well protected home on the edge of the city. While there they showed us around and introduced us to the place and the people.

The country of Guinea is about the size of the state of Oregon but, unlike Oregon, Guinea is not a place for tourists. The political, economic and social condition of this country are serious impediments to visits by tourists. In Conakry, the military and the police are congregated around most intersections. These uniformed officers with machine guns do not want their pictures taken. The government does not want photographs taken of large buildings. Videos through the car window seems to be the only safe alternative. A travel guide has the following to say about the city of Conakry. *A continuous sprawl of urbanization is clawing its way up the peninsula and into the hills behind the city center. Away from the downtown district, the suburbs are animated but morbidly dirty with refuse, mud, dust and slicks of motor oil and heavy with the raw noise and choking exhaust fumes of endless lines of jammed traffic trying to go from one end of town to another. Vehicle carcasses rot on the verges. Conakry has matured into one of West Africa's least user friendly capitals – expensive and virtually soul-less.*

Arline: The main highway out of town is, by far, the best road available. The taxis are all alike – green or yellow. Most people seem to get from one place to another by walking.

Those who are financially better off than most of the population must protect themselves behind locked and guarded walls. Security is always a concern for the visitor. Most enterprises are small like this jewelry shop. This business produces and sells excellent jewelry products. The hand made articles can be purchased at very reasonable prices. Another enterprise is the fresh fruit and vegetable stand. One can find a wide variety of fresh fruits and vegetables here.

Perhaps the activity that could truly be called a micro business is the production of gravel for cement. The operation is simple. A lady with a small hammer breaks up large rocks – one at a time – to make the gravel.

At this store, the owner greets customers with a smile anxious to sell his merchandise consisting of tie-dyed items and fabrics, batik, tablecloths, napkins and clothing.

Despite the unsettling demeanor of the city, God is at work. There are Christians in this predominantly Islamic city. A dedicated servant of Jesus Christ pastors one of these churches. Meet Pastor Felix, his wife Luigi and their daughter.

Carl: Even as we were interested in what was happening with these Christian leaders in Guinea, they were eager to know about us also. They were excited to see how the computer and internet are being used to show that God is at work throughout the world. After an earlier visit, Pastor Felix and his wife are familiar faces. They minister to the Susu People.

Arthur Williams and his wife, Lutu of Nango Baptist Church in Conakry have a heart for the Shamoo People in Sierra Leon. James and his wife, Sarah, are working with the English speaking people in Guinea. Abraham and Elizabeth Bangura minister to the Baga People in Guinea.

Dabrilla is a talented artist with a heart for working with street kids in Guinea.

During our stay in Guinea, it was hot and muggy. The generator at the Hill's home had to be turned off at 10 P.M. Thus, with no electricity there were no fans. Just on the other side of the wall outside our bedroom was a video store. Music blared there until midnight along with very loud talking all making sleep almost impossible.

Our time in the Hill's home ... where it was clean and safe ... was somewhat of a respite from the outside world. All the same, it was a relief to leave this filthy, uncomfortable and threatening city and board the plane for Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire also known as Ivory Coast. Yet, it seemed we couldn't get away from the stench of the city. The plane load of people were mostly from the area and had a strong body odor. The flight was not a pleasant experience.

Arline: Arriving in Abidjan, the commercial capital and a modern city, we were met by our hosts. Steve and Susan Roach had been ministering for about a year among the Toura People living in the west central part of Cote d'Ivoire. This delightful couple had made many friends among their target group. They were also fairly fluent in the language and customs of the people.

Driving to the Mission Guest House, the wide streets and relatively clean city were a welcome contrast to Conakry. The next morning, prior to leaving the city, a stop was made at the supermarket so Susan and I could buy items not available in the smaller towns.

INSERT MAP: Tiassale - Gagnoa – Duékoué - Biankouma

After leaving Abidjan, the road becomes increasingly lonely with only a few small towns. We traveled through several towns arriving in the town of Biankouma approximately nine hours after leaving Abidjan. Steve and Susan have their primary home here; ... a comfortable place with electricity and phone service. Still, it was like a fortress with high concrete walls, steel gates and entry doors. They also had a full-time armed guard. We felt safe under Steve and Susan's watch-care but, nevertheless, it was an unnerving situation.

Not for narration: (See the Welcome to Dantomba chapter for this information) Before leaving the city, we bought food at a local supermarket. Our lunch was packed and we began our long journey toward Man in the western part of the country. Passing by the exclusive hotel on the edge of town, it was difficult to believe that we would make no stops except for gas and we would remain in the truck. The restroom was going to be the bushes next to the road. It was an interesting drive as we viewed a whole different type of life. People were walking in groups next to the road. We even encountered a parade in one city with a leader by the name of Ghagbo standing and waving from a convertible. This was his home area and later he would become the president of Cote d'Ivoire.

At last, we arrived in Man. This was a relatively safe town and we were able to get a watermelon and other things as well as go to a restaurant for a good meal. After leaving Man, 45 minutes later we arrived in the town of Biankouma where Steve and Susan have their primary home.

Arline: For the most part, Biankouma had all that was needed in the local markets. It was just a matter of knowing where to go and what to pay for the items. The Monday market in Biankouma was quite an experience. Looking around, there was a vast array of items to buy.

On camera: “This lady is carrying a bunch of brooms as well as her baby.”

Carl: Arline bought a broom which we have to this day. However, she passed on the pitiful looking okra and also the bunches of fresh okra leaves.

On camera: “These are okra leaves.”

A favorite sauce is made with okra leaves. There were no WalMart bags here. Most things are piled on the head.

Not narrated: Another day we went to a store in Man to look at some wood carvings. We left the African masks there and purchased other carvings to bring home with us.

Arline: About eight miles on a rutted dirt road from Biankouma is the village of Dantomba where Steve and Susan's secondary house is located. They had it built shortly after arriving in the village to begin their ministry. This was a comfortable ...but primitive home with three tiny rooms.

On camera: Susan describing inside of house

It was a real joy meeting the men, women and children of the village and to spend time with them. We were able to observe their lifestyle including preparing foods, harvesting crops, worship practices and various social customs.

In Dantomba, I met a young woman who touched my heart. Clarice and her family are Christians and attended the small church in the village nearby. We made a chapter for our videos called “My Friend, Clarice” that conveys the beauty of “my African daughter”.

I was given a hand woven basket made in Dantomba. The boys tried to teach Carl to whip their tops, called denas. He came home with a couple to show our grandchildren. The basket and denas are treasured items reminding us of people who quickly became dear to us.

Carl: For me, even though we were there for only a few days, the Goodbye Ceremony ... just for us ... was very touching.

The friendliness of the Toura was in stark contrast to what was beginning to unfold in the country. Fighting had broken out in Abidjan and other towns. Our departure was uncertain as we contemplated the nine hour drive back to Abidjan which required daytime travel. A nighttime curfew was in place. Steve checked with the U.S. Embassy several times for instructions. Finally, we were told to pack up and leave at daybreak on December 9th – a day before our original plans. We were also instructed to take a direct route to the capital of Yamoussoukro (ya-mu-SO-kro); ... a drive of about 300 miles with danger all around.

INSERT MAP: Biankouma – Man - Duékoué – Daloa – Yamoussoukro – Toumodi – Abidjan

There would be no stopping until we got to the capital so food was packed to eat on the way. Steve and Susan also told us – just in case of a hijacking, we should leave everything and get out of the truck. All of this was frightening.

Not for narration: So, before leaving the house, we prayed for big angels to be sitting on the hood and top of the small truck with God putting a hedge of protection around us.

We passed through ELEVEN military checkpoints. We DID NOT stop at one very scary checkpoint that was obviously not authorized by the government. The log across the road was pulled back at the last second. Driving on – never looking back – we thanked God for the “Angels” protecting us as we zipped past the confused thieves.

Arline: Those in charge at the mission office in Abidjan had told Steve to stop at the President Hotel in Yamoussoukro and call in before driving on to Abidjan. We were to stay at the hotel until it was safe.

Overlays:

Our Lady of Peace Basilica

President Hotel

Several calls went back and forth until the U.S. Embassy identified a window of opportunity to make the 150 mile drive to Abidjan and the safety at the mission compound.

As we got closer to the city, there were gangs of people burning tires. It was obvious that this was a city of unrest. It was with thankful hearts that we at last drove through the steel gates and were behind the high walls of the compound with other missionary families.

Carl: We made good use of our time despite the sounds of small arms fire in the distance. Susan, a former journalist, had already completed much of the script for the video “Powerless Blood”. During the two days there, we completed the script, had Steve, Susan and other missionaries on the compound to do the narrations and completed a draft video edit.

With the fighting in Abidjan, there was some concern whether the airport would be closed. Again, God took care of our situation. We arrived home on our scheduled flight and very thankful to be safe and sound.

Overlay: Chicago, December 13, 2000

Even the blanket of snow at Chicago's O'Hare Airport and the ice and snow in Tulsa were things we could manage in the United States of America.

During the following months, we finalized the Toura video chapters and distributed several hundred copies on VHS tape as well as 1,000 copies of a replicated CDR of the videos. In 2004, we included the Toura chapters with other West Africa videos in the DVD, "Hope for the Hopeless". Over 1,000 copies of this DVD were distributed.

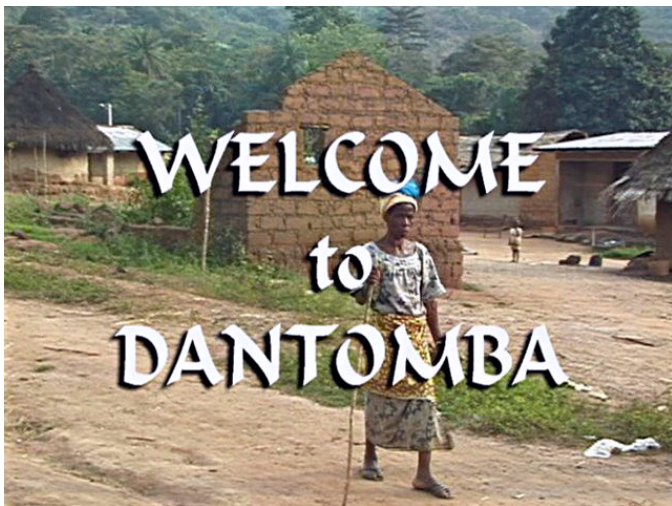
Arline: The peace and tranquility of Dantomba and other Toura villages is only a memory now. Since our visit, the situation in Cote d'Ivoire continues to cause us deep concern. After returning to the U.S. In December 2000, Steve and Susan did go back to the Toura. However, September 2002 brought civil war to Cote d'Ivoire dividing the country. The Roach's were forced to flee their home and to leave the country.

War lasted for 4-1/2 years with continuing ethnic hostilities. February 2011 again brought violence and many deaths. Now, in December 2012, there is still strife in Cote d'Ivoire. Steve and Susan Roach served in another African country for several years. They no longer live in Africa but have returned to America.

Not for Narration: For over a year no word was available concerning the fate of the people of Dantomba. Finally, in October 2003, word came that although many Toura villages had suffered, Dantomba had been spared from conflict. The heartbreaking news was that an undiagnosed epidemic had swept the village and many of the children had died including Zoe and Clarice's precious 4-year old daughter, Rebecca. Clarice, too, came down with an undiagnosed illness and fell into a coma for several days.

The few believers in Dantomba and in other Toura villages continue to grow stronger and are seeking God's will. In early 2004, five of these believers made a very difficult three-day journey by bus traveling across two countries to meet with Steve and Susan. These believers spent a week with Steve and Susan who have been reassigned to another West African country. During this time, these key Toura believers tried to learn all they could about planting churches and teaching others about the one true God.

Overlay: CRF Media © Filmed: 2000



Welcome to Dantomba

Ch. 26 (17:47) Filmed December 2000

... talking with woman who is carrying ax on head

We are Volunteers from the USA who had the privilege of visiting the Toura people of Dantomba, Cote d'Ivoire in December 2000. Our purpose was to produce an advocacy video. This video segment, *Welcome to Dantomba*, is for those people who may also visit Dantomba as volunteers. The following are our experiences as first-time visitors and may be helpful to you. Please remember that as white people, you are going to be the center of attention at first. Many will follow you out of sheer curiosity. They will gather to listen to what you say-- but don't be fooled into thinking they've come to hear your message. They've come to stare at you -- the novelty, the fascinating interruption to

the routine of their lives. If you can show them respect, if you can follow their customs even a little and if you are willing to sit down and eat their rice -- you'll win their friendship. One thing is for sure, your own life will be changed forever.

Abidjan...street/kids/

Abidjan is the modern city where your Cote d'Ivoire visit begins. The Mission has nice guest rooms available here. Prior to leaving on the eight to nine hour drive to Biankouma, a stop was made at the supermarket for supplies not available in the

smaller towns. Susan and Arline got what was needed and we were ready to go.

Road to Man (Mahn)

After leaving Abidjan, the road becomes increasingly lonely with only a few small towns.

It is very apparent to us that having our friends with us is imperative in knowing what to do and how to act here. This is not a trip for inexperienced persons traveling alone. Several military and police check points must be navigated. Some wave us on through. At others we are stopped and asked a few basic questions. Thankfully, we were not detained. We were told that the rule is never to stop unless it is an official checkpoint and even then there may be problems that arise. This trip must be accomplished in daylight. On this route, there are no safe places to stop overnight. A stop is made for gas, our lunch that we brought with us is eaten while traveling and bathroom breaks are a few short stops to visit the bushes.

Scenes in Man... coming back with watermelon

We arrived early evening in the town of Man with about 45 minutes left to reach Biankouma. Man is the closest town where some needed supplies are available. Although the market place has many, many items, do not expect stores here that you would find even in rural America. We will be taking all of our food to eat while in Dantomba. There is a very small grocery store here. She also needed some vegetables available from the street vendor. We also decided on a watermelon to take with us to Dantomba. The common practice at these stands is to barter on the price with the individual who is selling the product. Before continuing on to Biankouma, we had delicious pizza at a nice restaurant operated by an Italian man. This is the only restaurant in town that can be considered safe for visitors.

Outside Man...laundry/swimming hole/bathtub

At this spot about 5 miles from Man toward Biankouma, one can do laundry, go swimming, and take a bath all in one stop!

Biankouma...street scenes near P.O./mayor's place/city hall

Biankouma is the closest town to the village of Dantomba. Our friends have their main home here where they have electricity, running water, and a telephone. They also spend several days a week at their village house in Dantomba. The nicest street in Biankouma is here at the location of the post office, mayor's place, and city hall.

at market Biankouma/ buying fritters market Biankouma

get some of these small fried cakes. Similar to fritters and made with the banana like fruit called plantains, they are really quite tasty.

Transition from market and mountains to Dantomba.

The people of Dantomba walk the 8 miles to Biankouma if they need to come into town for any reason. Monday is market day and several may come to the market to buy or sell items. From the market place in Biankouma, the mountains near Dantomba may be seen. Dantomba is at the end of a very rough road that takes at least 45 minutes from Biankouma.

Dantomba arrival

The arrival of Steve and Susan in Dantomba always causes excitement among the people. On this day, they are particularly excited to see the white couple with them. What an experience to be greeted with such enthusiasm! Dantomba is home to about 300 of the approximately 35,000 Toura people. The homes here are traditional style mud brick with thatch roofs or concrete block with a tin roof.

Greeting Robert'

Greeting is simply essential to life in a Toura village. To you this may seem unnecessary and you would like to get on with the task that you came there to do but you MUST be patient. You would be spitting on their culture and their traditions and their way of life if you did not take the time to greet everyone properly. Your project or agenda will flop. As you are taken around to the homes and you MUST go in each one and shake hands and greet them warmly -- asking them how their homes, families and fields are, thanking them for their work and their wisdom and for welcoming you and for taking care of the village.

boys/denas

The Toura are a people who depend on the seasons to bring them rain for their crops. Even their play is tied to the elements. If their boys whipped their tops, called dena, during rainy season, the skies would close up and refuse to soak the rice fields. The dena are only allowed to spin during dry season -- the season of harvest. To use the dena it takes many hours of practice and the reflexes of the young! My attempts were met with much laughter.

Stream Dantomba ... -- Kids!

Women pounding rice

This first day in the village, some of the people were self conscious and somewhat silly. They wanted to have their pictures made and flocked around. These women pounding rice had a typical reaction to the camera. People eventually relaxed into their normal routines enabling us to get videos of typical village life.

Okra leaves/basket making

Village A.M. ... women/goats/kids going to school

Scenes of village

Chicken house turkeys

Let's climb up the hill to visit John's chickens and turkeys.

Muan Peu washing son

Cutting hair

Here is another example of what happens when the camera is seen. This young man came dancing through this scene until told to leave.

Boy at water pump

Men do not get water. This is a job for the women and children. A shallow well and pump put in next to their house. Drinking water is not available here. That must be filtered and brought from Biankouma. Village friends also use their well.

Women getting water at the stream

Most people in the village get their water as they always have --- from the stream.

Washing clothes

The same stream serves as the Laundromat.

Initiate (scene cut)

Her painted body and dress indicate that this young girl has gone through the rite of female circumcision.

greeting a woman drying coffee beans

Asking this village woman for permission to video her placing coffee beans out to dry. She is happy to show us how this is done as she spreads the beans out evenly.

Elder of village with fetishes hanging all around doorway of house.

The Toura believe that animals, birds, wood, fruit, etc. serve to protect them from the evil spirits. Many homes display these fetishes near the front door.

Men eating

Women and children eating

The women and children eat separately from the men. They also sleep in a different house.

showing pictures

pictures of our farm in the United States. The pictures of snow were amazing.had quite a job explaining what it was to this group.

Clarice mixing banana fritters/Clarice and her mother/Clarice/women with baskets

Robert' giving haircut

Robert' is giving one of the village elder's a haircut.

Village store inside/outside

Muan Peu and John

Meet Muan Peu Gondou and his son, John. Muan Peu is the soft-spoken elder whose name translates "Old White Man" because he has gray hair. He is the elder who has "adopted" Steve and Susan. Steve and Susan have been told that Muan Peu looks upon them as his children. As Grand Fetishist of Dantomba, Muan Peu tries to heal people with charms and offers sacrifices to the spirits of the ancestors. John is a very good friend.

Family compound and town crier

His 4 wives and their children live in this compound with Muan Peu. The town crier is about to call everyone to the Goodbye Ceremony honoring us. Sometimes a council of elders will meet to welcome a guest who arrives in a Toura village. Some of the elders were not able to be there for a welcoming ceremony and instead gave us a special goodbye. You may be offered a meal, and it is so important to at least eat some of it, even if rice and okra sauce is not your favorite food. More than likely, you'll just walk around and greet many people without a ceremony.

greeting elder/Elder arriving for ceremony

In a Toura village, the old men are supreme. Elders only wear this long robe called a *baboo* on formal occasions. As the elders arrive, they sit according to age. The seating arrangement changes as each one arrives. Cola nuts are being passed. They use them when handing out blessings and they use them to sacrifice to their ancestors. Cola has tremendous ritual, religious and social implications for the Toura. They present cola to each other just as a gesture of greeting and goodwill. They love the bitter taste and eat it like candy.

John/chicken

First-time visitors in a Toura village must bring a gift for the chief and often that gift is simply cola nuts. Since we were being given a ceremony, we brought cola nuts and a nice live white chicken. Our friend, John, is participating in the ceremony as the son of Muan Peu. John is receiving the chicken and cola nuts along with our thanks for the hospitality and kindness of the villagers during our stay with them. These gifts are then given to the elders. Notice that only men are participating in this ceremony.

Beginning of ceremony/man speaking Toura – accepting chicken – more of ceremony

Gourd Ceremony

Muan Peu is leading the elders in the special Gourd Ceremony asking for blessings on us as we travel. Cola nuts are cut in half and thrown on the ground to see which way they fall to determine the will of the spirits. The nuts are offered to the ancestors, praying to them that they will accept the gift. A little water is poured out on the ground serving the ancestors a liquid sacrifice. He prays over the puddle, asking for the spirit's favor in response to the drink. Then, those around dip their fingers in the mud and smear a little on their forehead to receive the blessing of the ancestors.

After the Goodbye Ceremony

After about 2 hours, the Goodbye Ceremony is over. See the lone white woman among these Toura men? The male elders conduct the important ceremonies. We should note here that we felt very safe with the Toura people in contrast to other areas where it is necessary to be constantly alert.

Men on electric pole/coming in for close up

There is no electricity or running water in Dantomba, although they have electric poles. The nearby city of Biankouma is working to extend electricity (in Toura it's called "fire rope") out to all the villages along that road. On this day, the men arrived to work on the poles. Change is coming to Dantomba! Life will never be the same when the electricity is turned on in this small village. We pray that change will come to the people of Dantomba as they hear the good news of Jesus. Spend much time in prayer before you visit these people. Pray that you will see them through God's eyes of love.



Powerless Blood

CH. 27 (10:12) Filmed December 2000

Blood runs freely in the rain forests of Ivory Coast: the blood of chickens, goats and sheep, -- blood that our people hope will rise as a sweet aroma to our ancestors. To sacrifice is to honor them, to beg their favor -- to be Toura.

Toura -- we are proud of our heritage, proud of our culture. Seventy-five of our little villages lay nestled among the rain forest covered mountains of Ivory Coast. Each day we awaken to the steady thump of our women pounding the day's rice, the music of the morning. Our daily lives flow under the protection of our departed elders, those who have gone before us. There are only about 35,000 of us walking the earth today, but our fathers' spirits number in the

millions. Aatana, the one good, creator God, watches over us all. Generations have come and gone in this particular little village, Dantomba. Like our fathers before us, we climb palm trees and harvest the nuts so that our women can boil them down for palm oil. Generations have gathered water from this river and carried wood out of these forests. When our young men and women walk our mountain trails to work in our fields, when they carry home the produce, they are walking in the steps of their grandmothers and grandfathers.

We are a people of the land, a people who depend on the seasons to bring us rain for our crops. Even our play is tied to the elements. If our boys whipped their tops, called dena, during rainy season, the skies would close up and refuse to soak our rice fields. The dena are only allowed to spin during dry season -- the season of harvest.

And the harvest is what sustains us. We farm the black soil of our mountains with cacao (cocoa) and coffee, which we sell to you -- in America and in the West. Coffee and cocoa provide nearly all of our yearly income. Think of us next time when you sip your morning cup, when you eat your chocolate bar -- because you are giving us the income to buy clothes and medicine and the necessities of life. But our rice fields are what feed us -- year after year, just as they fed our ancestors before us. The rice harvest is the most important time of the year -- the time we are finally sure we will not go hungry in the days ahead.

Our cycle of seasons -- rainy season and dry -- are all set in place by Aatana, the one high creator God. He is truly the one we worship, but our ancestors are between us -- closer to God than we who still walk the earth. Our ancestors intercede for us at Aatana's throne. When we sacrifice, we do it to please them both -- the ancestors and the one true God. Listen to my brothers explain this to you...

My name is Diego and I am from Dantomba. My father is Ba Seiba, and my mother's name is Tune Peu. We want to explain why we sacrifice. There are two kinds of sacrifices, and the first kind is when you ask God for blessings. You kill a goat, sheep, chicken or a cow and you present it to God -- "Here is your sacrifice," you say. You call all your friends and family into your courtyard to watch, and they will then all stay healthy. No sickness will catch them. If they look for wealth, they will find it. This is the first sacrifice.

The second kind of sacrifice is made when something bad has happened, like if your friend or elder has died. On the seventh day after his death, you kill a white chicken. You take its feathers and you put them beside the road. You then kill a goat, like we did here in Bomba. You offer it to Aatana God and to the ancestors so that they will give your loved one a safe journey to God's home and a good place to live when he arrives. We use livestock to beg God to do this. It is a death sacrifice.

My name is John and I am the son of Muan Peu Gondo. All the people on earth, we all beg God to help us because we know Aatana created all people. We know God created everything on earth. Everyone everywhere begs God to help, but we don't all do it in the same way. Here in Toura land, we do it with sacrifices. All of us are dirty, and so we sacrifice. This is how our ancestors did it. Before the white man arrived here, before the schools were established, our father's father sacrificed. And so we do it that way too. If we don't have any children, if we don't have enough money or whatever issue is bothering us, we can beg God to help us through sacrifices. We can beg God to forgive us through sacrifices.

While we perform sacrifices all year long, three days of our year are more sacred than any other. The Festival of the Yams is our thanksgiving celebration to Aatana for the blessings of the past year. We paint our faces and bodies -- a symbol of joy -- and don our colorful costumes to dance all day and night long. It is during this party that our masks come out to dance -- the holy masks, God's play things, the symbols of his pleasure. All the power of the ancestors resides in the masks, and we worship them, we sacrifice to them and we fear them. Our women are not allowed to look directly upon them, and if the mask heads in their direction, they must run. They have no choice. They must run, for the power of the ancestors is drawing near.

The most powerful, the most feared mask comes out only once a year at night. The women must hide in the houses, they must shut all their doors and windows before it arrives. To look upon it would mean death.

Powerless Blood, it does flow freely among the Toura. But there is light in the darkness. As of December 2000, about 10 churches are scattered among the 75 villages – tiny churches, struggling churches, but they are Jesus' bride none the less. These believers are often snubbed, sometimes ostracized and they don't have a good grasp of how to explain the hope that is within them. But they so much want to learn more, and they have a burden for their friends. They live in a world where salvation is unknown. They live among a people who've never heard of the powerful, cleansing blood of Jesus – the final, perfect sacrifice. Will you pray for the Toura?

...Pray for these Christians. Pray that they would learn to tell the story of God's plan.

...Pray for those who yearn to please God but don't know how to reach Him.

...Pray against the power and worship of the masks. Pray down the stronghold's of animal totems.

...Pray that the Toura would know the truth, and the truth would set them free.



My Friend, Clarice

Ch. 28 (5:24) Filmed December 2000

Arline: Recently, on a visit to West Africa, I met a beautiful young woman. She is not only beautiful on the outside but beautiful on the inside as well. Please greet my friend, Clarice. In the short time that I was able to be around her, Clarice demonstrated to me a true Proverbs 31 woman. Come with me and get acquainted.

Clarice lives with her family in the small Toura village of Dantomba. Her husband, Zo, had such a change in his life after coming to know Jesus that Clarice wanted to know more about this Jesus.

Then, a young white woman moved into the house next door. They slowly learned to communicate with each other.

Susan knew this Jesus. Clarice was amazed that Susan would leave her home in the United States to come and live in her village. Clarice decided she wanted Jesus too.

Clarice and Zo have three children, Jacob, Anno and Rebecca. She loves and cares for her family in tangible ways every day. Look at that beautiful smile...even with a heavy load of wood on her head!

Look at 5 year old Anno copy momma with her wood!

A favorite food is made with mashed bananas. On this day she was making these as a special treat for us. Notice her happy children and watch and listen as she carefully explains and shows me how to make this recipe...

Clarice is anxious for me to meet some of the women and let me see how they live. Aren't these baskets something? The women weave them in all sizes. When Clarice is around, people are laughing ... her happy heart is contagious! It was important for her that I meet her mother. This is momma with Clarice and Rebecca.

One of the important responsibilities that Clarice has is making palm oil to sell in the village. In order to do this, she and Zo take their children and other family members up into the mountains where they have a field. On this day, she had a lovely surprise when her best friend, Susan, came to see her. Once again, Clarice becomes the teacher explaining what she is doing. Watch and listen....

Making quality palm oil is hard work and takes several days to accomplish. Clarice knows exactly what to do. Her family works with her to get the job completed so that they will have oil to sell in the village

A most important part of Clarice's week is Sunday when she can pause from work, put on her nice clothes, stop by for Susan, and walk to Bomba to church. Zo and Steve have already gone since the men and women don't walk together. Singing and learning more about God is so necessary to this young mother. Her heart's desire is for her children and her family and friends to see Jesus in her life and believe in the One who gives her joy, peace, and hope.

Will you pray with me for Clarice as she studies God's Word with Susan? Will you pray for Clarice as she models Jesus before her family and friends? Will you pray that the Holy Spirit will give her divine opportunities to lovingly share Jesus? Will you praise God with me for sending Susan and Steve to this village? Will you praise God with me for Clarice and what God is going to do through her in bringing the Truth to the people of Dantomba? Will you commit to pray daily for Clarice and her family?



The Rice Harvest

Ch. 29 (4:06) Filmed December 2000

I am Robert' (RoBAY). Welcome to my village of Dantomba where I was born and where I have lived all of my life. I own several rice fields and coffee trees located on the slopes of the mountains. Today I will take you to one of my rice fields.

The field that I will take you to is about a two-hour walk from Dantomba. We first walk through the village of Bomba (BOHM-ba) and continue walking to the next village where we turn toward this mountain and a narrow dirt road. We walk past coffee trees and cocoa trees and finally arrive at an opening in the high grass that will lead to the rice field. We must walk this path for about ½ mile to get to the field.

It is good that one of the women's work groups chose to harvest my rice field today since the rice stalks are getting heavy. The work groups are important in a Toura village because you need the help of your neighbors to get your crops in. You also must help your neighbor or you'll both starve because they won't have enough help and then they won't help you.

This is our rest camp. The rice that my daughters are preparing will be ready for the noon meal.

The fields are not far from here. As I arrive, the workers greet me.

One of my wives is picking rice stalks with the other women. Many years ago she helped organize this work group of about 20 women from our village.

This field is in its second year and the soil is getting weak. A work group made up of men will clear a field across the mountain for a new rice crop next year. They do this heavy work after the harvest is completed.

My family usually takes care of keeping the tall grass from crowding the rice plants but they have not had the time to get into this rice field so you see there are weeds growing tall.

Notice how the women carefully pick each stem of rice to make sure that none of the kernels are lost.

One of my wives gleans the field for the rice stalks that were left. She has painted her face because she is happy.

The older children take handfuls of the rice stalks to a pile where my son ties them in bundles. The stalks are cut off to reduce the weight.

The rice is ready for the noon meal. The work group will come here to eat and rest for about an hour before returning to the field.

The work group will be able to harvest this field in one day and then they will go to my friend

Lambert's (LamBAYs) rice field tomorrow. LamBAY's wives and daughters will be responsible for preparing the rice for the mid-day meal.

After completing the day's harvest, the rice is carried back to our village.

When we finally carry all of the rice to the village, the women spread it in the sun to dry for a couple of days. After removing the stalks, the rice is heated in the pots for about an hour. The hulls come off easier after the rice has been carefully dried in this manner.

The women pound the hulls off in the big wooden pots made from tree trunks. After this process, the hulls can be winnowed away.

The rice is then ready for us to prepare a meal and enjoy this harvest.

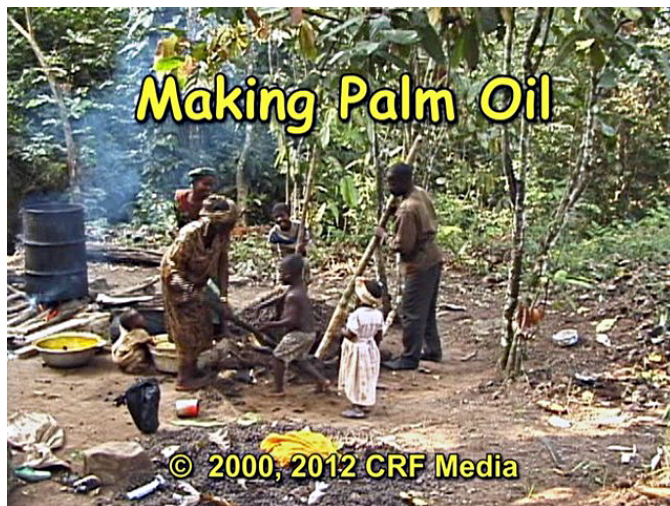
When this harvest is finally completed, members of the work group receive a share of the crop.

The rice harvest is the most important time of the year. The time we are finally sure that we will not go hungry in the days ahead.

When the harvest is completed, the work group pools some of their money to buy matching "uniforms". They don these new clothes and dance through the village to celebrate the completion of the harvest.

EPILOGUE

...PRAY for Steve and Susan as they share Jesus with Robert' (RoBAY), his wives and his family. ... PRAY that the members of the work group will someday sing about Jesus as they harvest the rice. ...PRAY for the Toura ... PRAY for the men, women, and children of Dantomba ... PRAY for those who yearn to please God but don't know how to reach Him. ... PRAY for the Christians in Dantomba that they will learn to tell the story of God's plan. ... PRAISE God for sending Steve and Susan to Dantomba and PRAY for wisdom in how to clearly tell the people of Dantomba about Jesus.



Making Palm Oil

Ch. 30 (3:28) Filmed December 2000

I am Zo and my family owns a place on the mountainside near our village. We have made palm oil there for several years. Getting the oil from palm nuts is hard work but it is important work for my family. We sell the oil to our neighbors in Dantomba who use the palm oil for cooking.

We walk up this small trail for about an hour to reach our camp that is next to a clear mountain stream. The forest gives many different products including bananas, coffee, cocoa ... but we are looking for the palm nuts from these tall trees.

My younger brother, Mark, is responsible for gathering the palm nuts as well as keeping the palm trees producing. First,

he climbs the tree and then trims the bottom branches from the tree before collecting the nuts. We have already harvested the nuts from this tree and I am showing you how he trims the tree.

My family collects the nuts from the tree as they fall and takes them to our camp to be crushed.

We wash the nuts and put them in this rock pit for crushing. We work together to crush the nuts. For me this is the hardest part since the palm nuts have a hard shell and they must be completely mashed to get the oil out.

I am Clarice, Zo's wife, and it is my responsibility to get the oil from the mashed nuts. First, I soak the mashed nuts in hot water to separate the oil from the fiber. I squeeze the fiber to get as much oil as I can. This water-oil mixture is then put in a cooking barrel to remove the water. The water settles to the bottom and the oil is on the top. I maintain high quality oil by filtering out all the small bits of palm nut shells and fiber.

I cut the wood for the fire and Zo puts the right amount on the fire to keep the mixture hot ... but not too hot ... otherwise the quality of the oil will not be good.

This is my family. We will work several days to get about 10 gallons of oil that we will sell to our friends in the village.

...Pray for these Christians,...Pray that they will be a light in the spiritual darkness of the village of Dantomba.



The Coffee Harvest

Ch. 31 (4:17) Filmed December 2000

Welcome to my home in Dantomba. I am Roger' and I have lived here all of my life. My father is an elder in this village and someday I will take his place. Carl is showing us some pictures of his farm and trying to explain what snow is. There is no word in the Toura language for snow. Steve is having a hard time explaining it to us. Just as I have never seen snow, Carl has never watched a coffee harvest. Follow us along as we climb up in these hills to see how this crop is harvested. It is about a mile up this trail.

It is considered woman's work to carry things. They carry wood, water, bananas, and other things. They learn how to balance loads on their heads when they are small children.

This is a cocoa bean pod. Cocoa and coffee provide most of the income for our people. The cocoa beans are taken out of the pods and allowed to dry so we can sell them in town.

We have a lot of these big tall trees in this forest. Some of these trees are very sacred to us and we worship them.

We have finally arrived at the place where they are picking the coffee beans. The owner of these trees is Robert'. He also owns several rice fields. He is a very important man in our village and we must get his permission to take pictures of this harvest.

The men strip the beans from the trees and collect them on mats. This is the only part of the job that the men do. The women then pick out the leaves and twigs from the pile, put the beans in a basket, and carry them to a big pile. Robert' carefully supervises this harvest and takes good care of his workers.

We have been here long enough...the men are beginning to show off in front of the camera and not getting their work done.

We stop for a drink at this small stream and on back down the trail.

The women will carry the coffee beans back down this trail. It is their job to carry things. Men have more important things to do.

It will take us about ½ hour to walk back down this trail to the village.

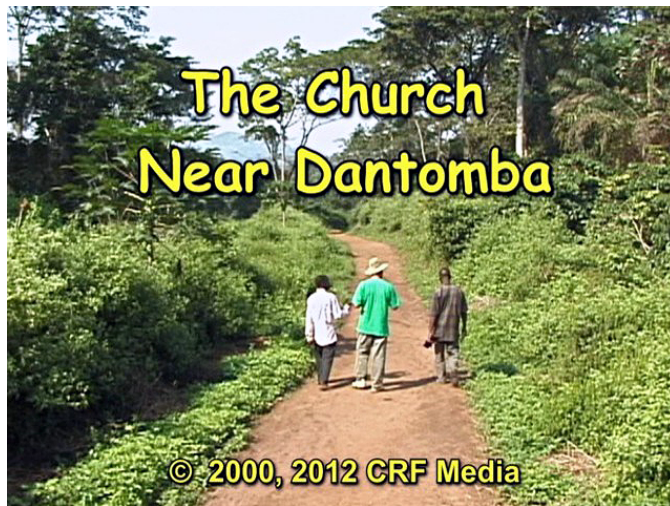
After the beans are carried to the village, they must be dried...a process that requires several days. This first pile is the fresh beans that were brought down from the field today. When they are finally dried, they turn hard and black. A man from the city will bring a machine to hull the beans. Then we will finally be paid for our harvest of the coffee beans.

(Epilogue)

Roger' will someday become a leader in this village. He now has some understanding of what snow is and how one must prepare for cold weather ... but Roger' has little or no understanding of who Jesus is and the difference He will make in his life ... and the life of this village of Dantomba.

...Pray that Steve and Susan will be able to show him Jesus ... just as Roger' has shown Steve and I the coffee harvest.

...Pray that Roger' will become a Christian leader in this village of Dandomba.



The Church Near Dantomba

Ch. 32 (4:34) Filmed December 2000

On this Sunday morning, we are told that the men walk to church together and then the women come. Since there is no church in Dantomba, we must make this easy 15 minute walk down the dirt road to the next village of Bomba. As we turned toward the church, several of the local people greeted us.

Coming from this small church building were voices singing songs of praise to God in their native Toura. We could not understand the spoken language but we could understand the heart language. Their faces reflect their love for the one, true God. Our new friend, Zo Appolone, his brother, and others was leading the praise and worship time. The pastor gave a

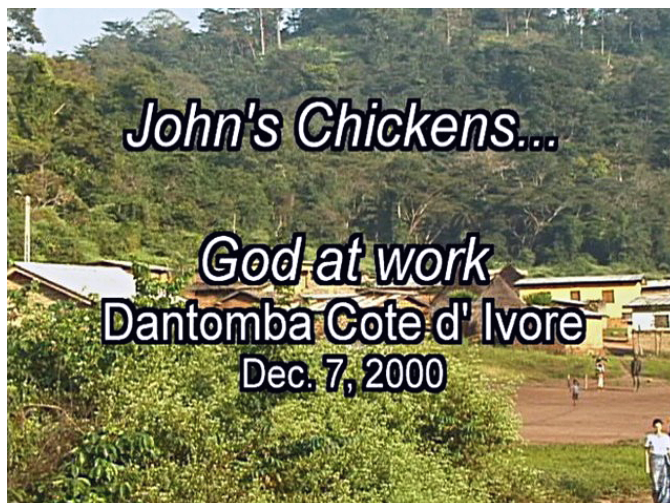
message and a guest also spoke. There were no pews here, no piano, and no organ but these people worshipped God with joy!

At the end of the service, we were greeted warmly by the people. As we began the walk back to Dantomba, I looked across this little village and thought about what a difference Jesus would make here. Zo and his family represent Jesus in Dantomba. I thanked God for his brother who told Zo about Jesus. I thanked God for changing Zo's life in such a way that his wife, Clarice, wanted to know this Jesus. Will you pray with me for this precious family? Will you pray that their family and friends in Dantomba will see Jesus reflected in their lives?

This is one of the secret places where the spirits reside. We must not look or get close to this place. Again, I pray for these Toura people who believe so strongly in their traditions and customs. Jesus can change their lives to one of hope and peace rather than fear. Will you pray with me that the elders of Dantomba will have such a burning desire to know this Jesus?

Will you pray with me for the men, women, and children of Dantomba that they will see Jesus in the Christians they know? Will you pray with me for these Christians in Dantomba and Bomba that they will have opportunities to gently and lovingly share the love of Jesus? Will you pray for the Bible Study in Dantomba? Will you commit to pray...earnestly pray...for the people of Dantomba?

"Father God, I praise you for sending your only Son that we might know the Truth and the Truth can set us free! Father, I pray that the Truth will be revealed to these Toura people. I pray that their hearts will be tender and reaching toward You. Oh, Father, I pray that they would understand and know You. Help me, Father, to look at these people through your eyes of love."



John's Chickens

Ch. 33 (4:29) Filmed December 2000

Speakers: Jean (John) Gondo and Susan
Dantomba, Cote d'Ivoire

PROLOGUE

John Luti is the son of Dantomba's grand fetisher, the village's spiritual leader. His father is the one in charge of making sacrifices to appease the spirits and he is training John to take his place. His family relies on the income they are paid for performing sacrifices. We are desperately praying that John, his father and all of his family would give their lives to Christ. But how -- when their livelihood depends on spirit worship?

Think of the possibilities! If John could start a successful business, he would not have to rely on income from sacrifices. One more barrier to him becoming a Christian would tumble down.

John chose to invest in 10 hens and a rooster. However, in three months, his hens laid exactly three eggs and snakes began killing the hens. The business was headed for failure. Steve and Susan asked him if they could pray over his chicken house – a simple prayer, in Jesus' name – and also ask their friends to pray. He agreed. What happened next was a miracle. He wants to tell you about it himself."

Continue with on camera interview between John and Susan



Toura Update

Ch. 34 (4:29) Spring 2004

Since December of 2000 when the original Toura videos were photographed, many changes have taken place. September 2002 brought civil war to Cote d'Ivoire dividing the country. For personal safety, it was necessary for missionaries, Steve and Susan Roach, to leave the country. For over a year no word was available concerning the fate of the people of Dantomba. Finally, in October 2003, word came that although many Toura villages had suffered, Dantomba had been spared from conflict. The heartbreaking news was that an undiagnosed epidemic had swept the village and many of the children had died including Zoe and Clarice's precious 4-year old daughter, Rebecca. Clarice, too, came down with an undiagnosed illness and fell into a

coma for several days. All the doctors in the nearby town had fled. They were without modern medicine. When a group of Christians prayed over Clarice, she opened her eyes. She is regaining strength now and is able to return to work. God did amazing things during this time.

The few believers in Dantomba and in other Toura villages continue to grow stronger and are seeking God's will. In early 2004, five of these believers made a very difficult three-day journey by bus traveling across two countries to meet with Steve and Susan. These believers spent a week with Steve and Susan who have been reassigned to another West African country. During this time, these key Toura believers tried to learn all they could about planting churches and teaching others about the one true God.

PRAY for these five faithful Toura believers in how to best reach their kinsmen.

PRAY for a church planting movement to begin among the Toura.

PRAY for resolution of the Civil War in Cote d'Ivoire.