

ANDY & STEPHANIE GABLE

Missionaries to **IVORY COAST**

B.P. 189
Abengourou, Cote d'Ivoire
West Africa
Email: Gablecmf@hotmail.com



Andy & Stephanie with (front) Caeden, Ellie, Sage, and (in back) Clay.

September 2007

Hello, all.

We have kept a busy schedule over the past couple of months, but we have also been seeing a lot of progress as a result of the programs going on. Here is some of what has been going on the last several months.

SATIKRAN CHURCH RE-BUILDING - MAY 5 & 12

Early in April, a big storm came through our region. The church building at Satikran was flattened. Since it's a smaller and newer church, the mission and two other churches in our region went out to help them rebuild their building (made of strong wooden posts, bamboo, and palm leaves for roofing). Clay wrote about the trip in his journal (actually dictated to his mom), so I thought I would let him describe our outing for you.

One day there was a really bad storm. The wind was strong and it was blowing the rain towards our house. It felt like a tornado I had in a dream a few nights before. But I knew it wasn't a tornado

because we don't have tornados here in Africa. Our house was okay, but the storm went to a lot of other villages and blew

down the church in Satikran. The roof fell flat but 3 benches were okay.

My dad and I and some other men went to fix the church. We had to go to the forest to cut the bamboo to fix the church. We went on the forest path and we saw a little



Putting up the roof supports.

store [actually a small shelter to escape the mid-day heat] and saw a man sitting inside. It was one of the men who came to help us. He showed us where to find the other men who were cutting the bamboo. I watched them cut the bamboo with their machetes.

Some of it was stuck and my dad told me to get out of the way so I wouldn't get hit. The bamboo fell down with a great crash. We took it to the truck. On the path back to the truck we stopped for a break and I said, "Uh Dad, there's red ants on you." They were fire ants. Fire ants bite really hard and it hurts. My dad took his shirt off to get the fire ants off. The ants are really fast and they were crawling up his pants [mostly the outside, thankfully!]. When he took his shirt off, he had 3 to 10 more ants on his back. Dad got all the ants off him and then I saw some crawling on me. I was throwing a big fit [his words not mine] and it fell off and landed on a weed that looked like corn. Another ant fell off and my dad said to keep walking. We got back to the truck



Andy helping build the Satikran church walls.



Clay with the Satikran kids.

and put the bamboo on top and went back to the old church.

I got to play with the other kids while Daddy helped with the church. They put palm leaves on the roof of the church. Dad taught me how to use a machete on an old part of the church [one of the broken pillars]. It made me very happy and excited to use the machete. My

dad was amazed that I cut the old tree. Then we were done and came home. I learned a lot that day and it was really fun.

LEADERSHIP TRAINING AND COURSE SCHEDULE - MARCH-SEPTEMBER

March through September generally is our busiest time of the year. It is during this time that our church leaders (most of them are farmers) have the time to be away from their work. We have at least one week-long intensive course a month, a couple different conventions, and sometimes one or two seminars on leadership principles. I have been really involved this spring and summer by teaching two courses, helping out with two conventions (general and youth conventions), and organizing/leading two seminars.

Our most mature leaders continue to grow in maturity, both spiritually and practically. When we arrived here in 2004 there were 9 churches, but today there are 16! What's more exciting than that is that the 10th and 11th churches were planted with very little aid from the mission, and the last 5 were planted solely by the national leaders. When we arrived, there were about 20 people in our leadership training program; today, that number is now 43 with 5 having already graduated and 8 more graduating next year.

• Please continue to pray for these key leaders who will soon take over the reigns in planting new churches and training new leaders among the Agni and Attié people groups.

AUGUST VISITORS

We were excited to have Stephanie's uncle, Dale DeNeal, and her cousin, Dustin, here for a two-week visit. They made a couple of village visits with me on the first Sunday, then we worked in the formation center, painting the kitchen. We then shipped Dustin off to the village for a few days while Dale led our Executive Bureau of the Association of Christian Churches in a Strategic Planning Seminar.



Andy and Dale with the Executive Bureau of the Association of Christian Churches during the Strategic Planning Seminar.

The seminar was an incredible

encouragement for our guys and also helped them develop the understanding and know-how in planning for the future and implementing the plan. The whole idea of future planning is absent from the general African mind-set. At times, it can be a large hurdle in the development of the church in Ivory Coast.

The guys did a wonderful job of identifying their core values, developing a mission statement, creating a big, yet achievable vision, and developing a plan in order to attain the vision. It was exciting that they really did the work themselves and developed some really good ideas. It was encouraging for me to see them think and develop things without the input of the mission. It was a big step in the right direction for the Association



Dustin and Dale with Prospere, one of our great young church leaders and Dustin's host and bunk-mate.

and the continuing work of the Lord after the disengagement of the mission among the Agni and Attié people groups.

ABENGOUROU CHURCH BUILDING PROGRAM - CONSTRUCTION TO START SOON



The current Abengourou church facilities.

In our last newsletter I mentioned as one of our prayer requests that the Abengourou Church will start building this year. They are going

to start preparing the land and the foundation in September. They have already bought most of the needed cement, sand, gravel, and iron for the foundation, pillars and walls (\$1,400).

• Pray that they will grow and stretch their faith in this project.

The church continues to grow, and Sunday mornings people are literally out the door. Their current facilities have room for 80 adults and 25-35 kids. In America this same space would be used for probably half those numbers at best. With the success of the HIV/AIDS outreach at the clinic, many new people have been coming to church. The new church building is needed today (if not yesterday!).

The mission has promised to give \$8,000 toward the project. To date, we have \$3,500 already given to the church construction program. We still need more churches and individuals to help us reach our goal. We hope and believe this building project will help not only the growth of the church, but also tie the work of the clinic and the church closer together. Our prayer is that the church will get more involved in ministering to patients and that

the clinic is not just seen as the mission's clinic, but their clinic as well.

If you would like to contribute to the Abengourou building project, send your gift to CMF (CMF, PO Box 501020, Indianapolis, IN 46250) marked "Ivory Coast Construction Fund - Abengourou Church Building."

FAMILY UPDATE

The kids are healthy and doing well.

Sage and Ellie are nearly the same size now. Sage is quickly developing and leaving the baby stage. Ellie is becoming a little girl and, at times, acts very much



Sage feeling patriotic at our 4th of July picnic at the Joneses.

like she is two years old. But, overall, she's still a good girl.

Caeden is growing up, too. Clay finished up kindergarten and has already started first grade. He seems to like school and is doing well. We just celebrated his 7th birthday earlier this week.

We enjoyed our own 4th of July picnic at the Joneses' house, our team leaders. We had a good time cooking out, some three-



Ellie and Caeden on the 4th of July.

legged races, sack races, and some good ole fun. Hamburgers and hot dogs aren't cheap like they are back home,



Clay and Drew Jones were the champions of the three-legged race (even against adults and pre-teens).

so it is a nice special treat. It's a short break from Africa with an afternoon of American activities.

Stephanie and I are doing well, too. The weather has been rainy, thus much cooler. There was more rain this July than we have had since we arrived in 2004. The harvest should be better this year, which would be nice since the past two years have not produced well. Most of this summer has been hotter back in America than in Ivory Coast. I don't think it will last much longer though.

PRAYER NEEDS

- *Furlough preparations in Ivory Coast: closing up our home for a year, selling our truck, and tying up loose ends with the church work.*
- *Furlough preparations in the US: finding housing and vehicle, furlough schedule, and relaxation.*
- *Abengourou church building program.*
- *Association of Christian Churches – taking over the planning and implementing of the church planting and leadership training among the Agni and Attié.*
- *Ivory Coast's elections planned for December or January. Earlier this year, the President and the rebel leader signed a peace deal promising to move toward elections at the end of this year. Though the political climate has calmed down, most people still distrust both the President and the new Prime Minister (the former rebel leader). Free and fair elections are unlikely the quicker things go, and if the President were to win somehow, it's likely that trouble would return. Pray that the elections will lead to lasting peace.*

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INDIANAPOLIS, IN 46250-6020
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