

Free Methodist World Missions
PO Box 57170
Indianapolis, IN 46251
800-342-5531

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HEARTBEAT

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WINDSOR, ON N9A 6J5 CANADA
EMAIL: CPCRETURNS@WDSMAIL.COM

*Free Methodist World Missions makes disciples by mobilizing the global church and empowering international leaders
to establish transformational churches.*



HEARTBEAT

FEBRUARY 2024

Lord, Here I Am!

Stephen's Story

Kibogora Community Program

Photo: Kevin Austin

Lord, Here I Am!

"Moses saw that though the bush was on fire it did not burn up. So Moses thought, 'I will go over and see this strange sight — why the bush does not burn up.' When the Lord saw that he had gone over to look, God called to him from within the bush, 'Moses! Moses!'"

And Moses said, 'Here I am.' ...

The Lord said, 'I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering. So I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey ...'" (Exodus 3:2-4, 7-8).

By Aaron Wells and Kaylene Smidderks

People in Guinea Conakry are suffering and in misery. Pastor Francois Lamah sees this suffering and is deeply concerned. Like Moses, he has said to the Lord, "Here I am."

As a recent graduate of the Wesley Missionary Institute in Lome, Togo, he was one of 25 church-planting trainers trained through the Church Development Network during an encounter weekend at the Lome Free Methodist Church in August 2023. During this weekend, participants learned about vision casting and drawing prayer maps. They were anointed and commissioned for the harvest.

Praise the Lord! Seventeen people responded to the call to plant churches. Pastor Lamah heard the call and joined the movement. Returning to his home country, Guinea Conakry, he built a prayer shield, began doing prayer walks, and mapped out the fertile areas.

Since August, Pastor Lamah has been praying and sharing with others. During September

and October, he initiated several church plants around Dubréka, Guinea Conakry. He also led his first encounter weekend through the Church Development Network. Church planters are being multiplied. Praise God! Pastor Lamah has been called, equipped and joined the movement. He is walking predictable steps of an unpredictable path, training church planters and planting churches. Pastor Francois Lamah is responding well to the cries and suffering of people in Guinea Conakry.

The ground in West Africa is fertile for the multiplication of church-planting efforts.

Please pray and ask God to send others to those in Guinea Conakry who are crying out. Pray the ground will continue to be soft and fertile for planting. Like Pastor Lamah, if the situation you face seems hard, ask God to send you as a response to someone's cry.

Aaron Wells is part of the Church Development Network, and Kaylene Smidderks is a member of the FMWM-Africa team.



Stephen's STORY

By Vickie Reynen

Have you ever become good friends with a taxi driver? When Mike and I lived in Kenya, Stephen became “our” taxi driver — taking us to and from the airport and various places. We became good friends. When we return to Kenya, Stephen is usually our driver. Rides to and from the airport have been filled with lively discussions about faith. Once, Stephen stated quite firmly, “You won’t convert me to becoming a Christian.” I quickly told him it wasn’t my job — that was up to the Holy Spirit. We enjoyed our discussions and would pick up where we left off on each visit. Between trips, I often shared devotionals, songs or sermons that had impacted me, and Stephen was always grateful.

In August, I traveled to Kenya with a team of 15. Since we were a “group,” I needed to arrange for vans rather than Stephen’s three-passenger taxi, so there was no “plan” to see him. However, one team member needed to leave earlier, so I called Stephen to ask if he could take her to the airport. He agreed but reminded me, “We haven’t picked up our conversation this time.” His remark caught my attention, and I arranged my schedule so we could meet at a coffee shop.

As soon as we sat down, I could tell there was something different about his demeanor — more humble and a bit uncertain, not the usual confident and friendly debater. Obviously, something was on his mind. As we

talked, he shared how the “things” I had been sending him via WhatsApp were disturbing him. He talked about living differently, living the right way, not living a lie — wanting to be a good example to his children. He spoke about the challenges and difficulties of life and the need for help. He was genuinely unsettled and looking for an answer to “life.” I shared about the Lord here and there, and at one point, it seemed fitting to say, “Stephen, it sounds like you need to give your life to the Lord and trust Him.” Stephen’s response was, “That’s why I’m here.”

It was a Holy moment.

What a privilege to partner with the Holy Spirit in leading Stephen to the feet of Jesus right there in the coffee shop. August 18, 2023, was no ordinary day in his life. I shared how, from that day forward, his life would be forever changed. He called me his spiritual mom, and I joked that I wouldn’t let him forget it!

Stephen has connected with other believers, helping him grow in his faith, and I still share devotionals, songs and encouraging words with him. He has repeatedly remarked, “There’s no turning back.”

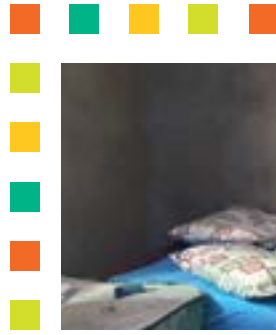
Stephen shared that when he was younger, and people asked him what he wanted to be when he grew up, he would say, “Either a preacher or a politician.” I believe he’ll become a preacher!



MAKING AN IMPACT –

Kibogora

Community Program



By Rachel Nzungize

The fruit of longtime ministry is evident in many places throughout Rwanda. One of those places is Kibogora Hospital. One program initiated in 2013 by retired missionary Sheila Etherington is making an impact. Sheila initiated a community program to assist elderly and disabled people around Kibogora Hospital. The aim was to share the love and care of God with the most vulnerable members of the community. Currently, the program has 25 people enrolled and is headed by Aloys Habimana, a hospital social worker. Aloys and two other hospital employees, Tamar and Karen, make monthly visits to the home of each beneficiary, assessing needs and meeting those needs through the provision of health care, housing, food, furniture, home repairs, transportation or even small animals. The program is funded by hospital partners, including the Central Africa Healthcare Organization (CAHO), Kibogora Initiative and Free Methodist World Missions (FMWM).

Recently, we interviewed Aloys about this program. My husband, Emmanuel, and I had begun working together, along with Sheila, to determine if the program is continuing to meet the needs of the beneficiaries enrolled. I asked Aloys how client needs are prioritized and met. He explained several ways, including the fact

that clients are given a chance to decide and express their needs and determine their priority. Aloys said, “We have a saying here, ‘Whatever you do for me, without me, you do against me.’” The client participation in decision making has been a key.

We also interviewed beneficiaries of the program to learn from them how well their needs are being met and what opportunities are there for improvement. We were struck by the hospitality and hope of each person enrolled in the program. They were always happy to receive us along with the social worker. The resounding message they wanted to share with donors and friends of the program was one of gratitude. One young, paralytic man whose parents have died shared how the program plays the role of his parents. Another expressed his thanks by saying, “If I was not paralyzed, I would carry them (donors) on my back.”

The work of Free Methodist medical missions in Rwanda and other places in Central Africa are bearing fruit by providing healing and transforming hope in the lives of individuals and communities.

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FEBRUARY PRAYER GUIDE

01 > **Thursday** | **Cameroon**

People in Cameroon are being internally displaced due to conflict in certain areas. The FMC in Edea is reaching out to the children and their families. Pray the love and compassion shone by the church will cause many to seek Jesus.

02 > **Friday** | **Thailand**

Thank the Father for zealous pastors in Thailand who are sharing the good news of Jesus. Pray for knowledge and wisdom as they lead people to a deepening faith in Christ.

03 > **Saturday** | **Europe**

Pray for the newly established Ministerial Education & Guidance and Appointments Committee (MEGA) for Francophone ministries. This committee will oversee ministerial development in Belgium, Denmark, France and Sweden.

04 > **Sunday** | **Creative Access-X**

Pray for the Holy Spirit's leading as this annual conference prepares for a new superintendent.

05 > **Monday** | **Liberia**

Praise the Lord for providing water hand pumps in three villages. As people experience the benefits of clean water, pray they will also come to know the One Who is the Living Water.

06 > **Tuesday** | **Middle East**

Pray for the gospel peacemakers in churches, Bible studies, trauma programs, schools and sports programs as they communicate hope to those around them and demonstrate the way of Jesus that leads to peace.

07 > **Wednesday** | **West Africa**

The West Africa Area Fellowship meets February 7-14. Pray all African and U.S. participants will be encouraged in their work. Ask God to shine His light upon new ministry steps.

08 > **Thursday** | **Bulgaria**

Praise the Lord for five new church plants in the Plovdiv area. Pray for the leaders being trained and for the discipleship of new believers.

09 > **Friday** | **Creative Access-PN**

In late November, a group of 350 in one village gathered to hear the good news about Jesus. More than 100 gave their lives to Jesus. Praise the Lord! Pray workers will continue to proclaim the gospel boldly.

10 > **Saturday** | **Middle East**

Hany serves as the assistant area director. Pray for his efforts in training leaders and planting churches. Ask the Father to help him find good balance between ministry and family. **Birthday: Hany**

11 > **Sunday** | **Costa Rica**

The mission district in Costa Rica is beginning a new ministerial training course. Pray for the students who will receive training related to head, heart and hands.

12 > **Monday** | **Cambodia**

Pray leaders will have wisdom and creative insight in determining ways to reach out to the Chinese migrant population in Cambodia.

13 > **Tuesday** | **Malta**

Praise the Lord for two congregations in Malta. Both are composed of Ghanaian immigrants. Pray for the members of these two fellowships who face many social and political challenges as foreigners.

14 > **Wednesday** | **Middle East**

Ask the Lord to give Dale and Dawn wisdom and discernment regarding the timing and details of any travel to the Middle East. **Birthday: Dawn**

15 > **Thursday** | **Brazil**

Pray for students, staff and faculty of the Free Methodist seminary in Sao Paulo as the new academic year begins this month. Students from 12 Brazilian states are now attending in person or online. Ask God to give Dan Owsley wisdom as he teaches and serves as academic director.

Birthday: Dan Owsley

16 > **Friday** | **ICCM**

Thank the Lord for 138 sponsored children in nine different provinces in Creative Access-VN. Pray the Lord will provide sponsors for 30 waiting children.

17 > Saturday | Sierra Leone

Ten new believers were baptized in Kenema in late November. Pray for the spiritual growth of these new believers and the continued church-planting efforts in Sierra Leone.

18 > Sunday | Oceania

Pray for developing work in several countries within the Oceania region. Ask the Father to continue opening doors and establishing fruitful partnerships among Indigenous groups and immigrant populations.

19 > Monday | Puerto Rico

Pray for several evangelism projects, particularly those reaching out to youth and children.

20 > Tuesday | Spain

Pray for the continued development of the John Wesley Seminary in Spain. Ask God to give wisdom as leaders explore a potential partnership with another seminary.

21 > Wednesday | Zambia

Pray for one community school and a leadership institute in Zambia. Ask the Father to strengthen the FM churches as they minister in nearby communities, cities and villages.

22 > Thursday | Haiti / Portugal

Haiti: Haiti continues to face critical social, economic and political challenges. Communities are plagued by kidnapping, killing and rape as gangs destroy communities. Pray the Holy Spirit will move in the hearts of those bent on evil and destruction, bringing light in the middle of deep darkness. **Birthdays: Dan Snyder**

Portugal: Pray for international missionaries Eduardo and Cindi Angelo as they nurture leaders and seek to establish new church plants in Portugal. **Birthdays: Eduardo Angelo**

23 > Friday | Set Free Movement

Children who are abandoned, orphaned, living in poverty or have no access to education are especially vulnerable to traffickers. Pray for God's protection of these children and for the Set Free teams who are taking action to help.

24 > Saturday | Ukraine

Two years ago today, Russia invaded Ukraine, escalating a longstanding conflict. Pray for God's peace to come. Pray believers will continue to find hope in Christ.

25 > Sunday | Creative Access-VN

At the annual meeting in November, two new elders were ordained, and five new ministerial candidates were received. Pray these leaders will reach many for Christ and train other new leaders.

26 > Monday | Latin America

Jardy Castro (Chile) serves as the prayer coordinator for the Latin America area. Pray for her as she establishes regional networks to encourage churches and individuals to form intercessory prayer teams.

27 > Tuesday | Senegal

Praise the Lord for the growing work in Senegal! Nine conference ministerial candidates and three local ministerial candidates are now working in 15 villages with established churches or church plants. Pray for members of the Genesis Conference who are helping train leaders.

28 > Wednesday | Creative Access-LO

There are 109 unreached people groups in this nation. Pray for this country's small group of 90 Free Methodists as they work with leaders from two neighboring countries to boldly proclaim the gospel.

29 > Thursday | Egypt

There are now more than 5 million Sudanese refugees in Egypt. Pray for believers as they seek ways to serve this group of people and share the love of Jesus.

"We never know how God will answer our prayers, but we can expect that He will get us involved in His plan for the answer. If we are true intercessors, we must be ready to take part in God's work on behalf of the people for whom we pray."

– Corrie Ten Boom