

LATEST NEWS # 499, April 3, 2008

The following news concerns Mali.

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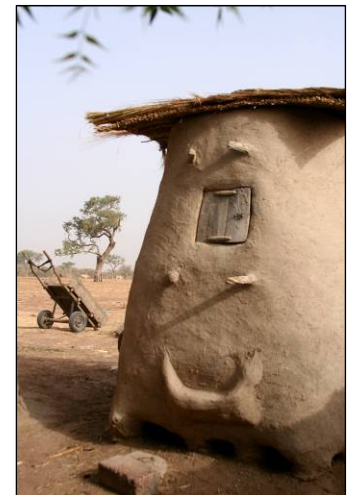
'Late into the night, local ministers continued to come and register for the *FCBH* program'

MALI — All kinds of vehicles were rushing towards the remote village of Zamana, in Ségou, on March 7. There were some cars, but most of the vehicles were carts pulled by donkeys, bicycles and mopeds. And many of the 300 delegates had simply walked to this rural area of Mali.



Zamana, 550 km east of Bamako, the capital of Mali, was hosting the annual meeting of the Evangelical Christian Church in Mali (ECCM), at which the *Faith Comes By Hearing (FCBH)* program in Bamanan would be launched. Jacques Dembélé, General Secretary of the Bible Society of Mali (BSM), and Elkana Théra, the coordinator of the *FCBH* program, were present for the occasion.

As the Zamana chapel was under construction at the time, the service took place in a makeshift shelter that had been erected between the future chapel and granaries belonging to a leader of the local church. In his presentation, Mr Théra emphasised that the *FCBH* program in Bamanan must be an encouragement, a "missionary powerhouse" for the Boomu program which would soon be launched, and the Dogon program launched in early January. The material they would be offered (the New Testament in Bamanan on audio cassette, on MP3 files or in Proclaimer format) would allow church leaders to consolidate the Christians' faith and to present the Gospel message to non-Christians.



"The launch of *FCBH* is part of the four major strands of the BSM's present and future ministry in the area, with its Alpha (literacy) program, 'A l'écoute de la Parole' (*Listening to the Word*) and perhaps in the not too distant future, if finances permit, 'Le Bon Samaritain' (*The Good Samaritan*)," Jacques Dembélé went on to explain. He assured the church leaders that the Bible Society would join them in training promoters and leaders of the *FCBH* listening centres.





“Even though it’s already late we won’t leave here until we have registered for the *FCBH* program,” said one of the pastors. This gives an idea of the enthusiastic reception given to *FCBH*. Christine Mounkoro, who runs an ECCM training centre for young Christian women in Baramba, a village in the Sikasso region, expressed interest in following the *FCBH* program with all the young women in the centre.

The conference finished around 11pm, when many pastors sought out Mr Théra to ask for clarification, to find out how the program would be used in the churches and to register.



“They continued to come and register for *FCBH* late into the night,” said Mr Dembélé. “We received 37 registrations immediately following the service, and the Bible Society is still receiving more. The native Boomu-speaking ministers are impatient to have the *FCBH* program launched in their language.”

“I thank God for protecting me on the journey home,” he continued. “The next day, while I was driving to Sanékuy

village for a Boomu translation progress meeting, the old Bible Society 4 x 4 got stuck in the sand right in the middle of the forest because of my carelessness. Fortunately, two hours later, some passing villagers helped me to get the vehicle out.

“We give God all the glory for this successful launch in Ségou. We ask you to join us in prayer that the *FCBH* program will have a major impact on the lives of each Christian community in the area — and on the whole of Mali.”

Photos:

MAL08DJ-224: Carts pulled by donkeys in the San region of Mali. (United Bible Societies/Joachim Dassonville)

MAL08DJ-180: A granary in the San region of Mali. (United Bible Societies/Joachim Dassonville)

MAL08DJ-404: Pastors from the Evangelical Christian Church of Mali in the Tominian region signing up for the Faith Comes By Hearing program with Elkana Théra (left), the Bible Society of Mali’s Faith Comes By Hearing coordinator. Zamana, Tominian prefecture,, Mali, March 2008. (Bible Society of Mali/Jacques Dembélé)

MAL08DJ-405: The Bible Society of Mali’s vehicle stuck in sand near Sanékuy, San region, Mali. (Bible Society of Mali/Jacques Dembélé)

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