

Columbia Presbyterian Church Senegal Ministries (December 2020 Update)

Columbia began its ministry work in Senegal in 1999. Session had responded to God's call on Columbia to reach the unreached by determining, after study and prayer, that Senegal was the country the church is called to. The original and continuing purpose of the ministry is to work through indigenous Christian organizations to establish an indigenous Wolof church (since expanded to include the Serer people). The ministry began by working through World Vision to help a small federation of Wolof villages accomplish development goals such as clean water, improved basic health care and better education for children. Lake Grove Presbyterian Church had begun a similar ministry with an adjoining Wolof federation three years before Columbia's involvement.

Specific goals were established by the Wolof Federations (Columbia and Lake Grove) and World Vision. In 2008 the two federations combined and formed single federation known as Kollore Gui. The Leaders of the Kollore Gui federation determined that the goals that they had set with World Vision and the churches (Columbia and Lake Grove) had been accomplished. As a result, World Vision withdrew from active involvement in Kollore Gui and recommended that the Christian Witness activities within Kollore Gui be turned over to CAPRO Ministries, an indigenous African evangelical organization. During the last few years of World Vision's involvement in Kollore Gui the leaders of Kollore Gui helped in the acquisition of a piece of property in the market town of Baba Garage and the construction of a building to accommodate a missionary family. CAPRO has staffed the mission post in Baba Garage and the longest currently serving missionary is a single man named Martin. He has since recently been joined by Ibrahima, another single man. Columbia provides financial support for CAPRO's work which involves all of the area around Baba Garage, not just the Kollore Gui federation.

Two years ago our trusted partner in Senegal, Leopold Diouf, began an evangelism project, Project Nicodemus, in the area of Baba Garage. He has brought in various Senegalese Christians to help him and also uses Nicodemus to help train the CAPRO missionaries so that they can become more effective. The Wolof have a saying in their language that to be Wolof is to be Muslim. Therefore to spread the Good News among the Wolof is a long term effort which will be done by little steps.

Concurrently with the original work among the Wolof the church became aware of Inter-Senegal Mission, an evangelical ministry in Senegal, involved in Church planting. ISM, like the other organizations with which we partner, is a holistic ministry meeting real earthly needs as well as spiritual needs of the people with whom it works. One of the biggest portions of ISM is the Barthimee clinic/hospital located in Thies where medical care is provided for a nominal fee in the "Name of Jesus". ISM has gone through recent leadership and governance changes. ISM is a partner in Project Nicodemus.

When World Vision withdrew from Kollore Gui the World Vision Country Director, Eric Toumieux recommended that Columbia continue to work in Senegal with a different unreached People Group, the Serer, in addition to supporting CAPRO's work among the

Wolof. This led to our funding and supporting a special project among the Serer people in the area of Diakhao to teach adults (primarily women) how to read and do basic arithmetic. This literacy ministry was the idea of Pastor Ngor Faye, a Senegalese Presbyterian Minister, who works with World Vision to direct the literacy program and the associated children's recreation activities (kids clubs). Pastor Ngor works with but not for World Vision so has very little support money. Columbia provides support funding for Pastor Ngor and his family. He lives in Diakhao. We anticipate that his ministry there will continue after World Vision completes its work in Daikhao in 2021. The church is now supporting economic development in Diakhao through Vision Fund, a provider of micro-enterprise loans. A number of church members sponsor children in Diakhao through World Vision.

When Eric Toumieux went back to SIL (Wycliffe) after completing five years as country director for World Vision he put most of his energy into a project known as Beersheba. Beersheba runs on a roughly 200 acre piece of property which Eric was able to acquire for very little since it is supposed, by the local people, to be "cursed". At Beersheba native vegetation has been regenerated, an ample supply of water has been developed and a school established to teach young men and women modern farming techniques for use in arid climates while concurrently teaching them basic ministry skills and Bible knowledge. Students at Beersheba reside at Beersheba and are known as interns. They learn the farming techniques by doing and the theological piece through daily classes and Bible study. At the conclusion of their training the interns go back to their home villages to do a project and to teach what they have learned and spread the gospel. There are between 10 and 20 interns annually. During visits to Beersheba our teams have been so impressed by the spiritual and earthly potential of this ministry that Columbia has begun to fund the work there. Beersheba is now expanding into Mali and has a US Partner called the Global Poultry Initiative.

Malick and Feluine Fall are Wolof Christians. Malick had a widely listened to radio ministry and Feluine works with women and children in the north Senegal town of St. Louis. The radio ministry continues through recordings but new programs are not being done. Through Feluine's work women have been trained in life skills, job skills and literacy. She also has a children's ministry and both she and Malick reach out to the Talibe, a group of young boys whose parents, primarily from the Fulani people group, turn them over to Muslim Imam's to be trained in the Koran. They often learn very little of the Koran and end up begging for support money much of which is turned over to their Imam. This ministry has also been supported by Lake Grove in the past and has multiple funding sources including Columbia.

Jose and France Lise Oliviera are Christian missionaries who we met at first when Jose served as the Executive Director for ISM. They are no longer involved with ISM but instead, after a year's break from Senegal, work to train Christian leaders throughout Africa from their home in Thies. Jose is from the Cape Verde Islands and France Lise from somewhere in the Caribbean.

Christian Women's Retreat. The retreat is an annual event for Christian Women from West Africa, mostly expatriates. The retreat occurs in the fall in Dakar and provides an opportunity for Christian Women, many of whom live in remote areas with no other Christians around, to come together for personal and spiritual renewal. Christian women from a number of West African countries attend. This ministry has also been supported by Columbia's United Presbyterian Women.

Child Sponsorship. Many members of Columbia would like to be involved in mission but do not want to serve on committees or take mission trips. They want to do more, however, than contributing money to mission through the church. As a way to get people to put "their toes in the water" the church has encouraged people to sponsor children, normally through World Vision. If they sponsor children in Senegal through World Vision and then find their way onto a team going to Senegal they are often able to meet their sponsored children.

Senegal Mission Travel: Since the establishment of our ministry in Senegal in 1999, Columbia has sent a team to Senegal in all but three years. The team, known as the Go Team, has one continuing purpose-to support the indigenous Christian church in Senegal and the missionaries who work there with the Wolof and Serer while building relationships with members of both people groups. The team is normally 6-9 people and is a mix of people who have travelled previously and those new to the ministry. We fund various activities in Senegal as shown above but do none of the physical work ourselves. Both Wolof and Serer people place a very high value on relationships. The Christian community in Senegal looks forward to our periodic visits and asks that we continue them since they bring them a feeling that they are "not alone" and that there are many Christians here in the United States praying for and supporting their work. Team members fund raise to pay for the trip and contribute 1/3 of the cost themselves with the church nominally providing 1/3 of the cost. The church provides \$7,000 annually to support the trip. Money raised and not used for a specific trip is held in reserve for the next year and may be used to support other Senegal Activities such as bringing people here from Senegal to speak to the church. Trip funds are normally managed by the Senegal Ministry Team.

Notes: Recipients of Columbia Funding are selected based on need, potential and must be involved in holistic ministry with goal of bringing the Word to the unreached.

Rhythm and Impact of Senegal Ministry:

Rhythm: January-February-Go Team to Senegal

March-Feedback to the congregation.

June-August-Selection of next Go Team

October-December-Go Team Training, Fund raising for travel, recruitment of prayer partners.

January-Prayer Partner Dinner and commissioning of Go Team in Worship-Both services.

Impact in Senegal: While there is no Wolof or Serer church which has been planted as a direct result of Columbia's involvement there the encouragement which we give, both financially and by our visits, is a great source of inspiration to the Christian Community in Senegal which has planted some churches and continues to reach out to the unreached. Significant development has occurred through our funding.

Impact on Columbia-Just short of 100 members and staff of Columbia have been to Senegal. The experience on the ground and with the Christians there is nothing short of Life Changing. Upon return Senegalistas have taken a significant part in the life of Columbia serving as Elders and Deacons, leading ministry teams, supporting local ministries, and supporting the two missions the church supports in Haiti.