

# **Columbia Presbyterian Church and our Senegal Ministry Partnerships June 2024**

Columbia Presbyterian Church began its ministry work in Senegal in 1999. The 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 was called to. The original and continuing purpose of the ministry is to work through indigenous Christian organizations to establish an indigenous Wolof church (which has 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 of Lake Oswego, Oregon began a similar ministry with an adjoining Wolof federation three years prior to CPC's involvement.

Specific goals were established by the Wolof federations (Columbia and Lake Grove) and World Vision. In 2008, the two federations combined to form a single federation known as Kollore Gui. At that time, the leaders of the 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. Construction of a building began, with the intent of housing a missionary family. While no family has yet been placed there, CAPRO has staffed the mission post with two single men- Martin and recently, he was joined by Ibrahaima. Columbia has been providing financial support for CAPRO's work, which involves the area around Baba Garage, not just the Kollore Gui federation. Funding for CAPRO was initially to last for three years, but the church decided to continue to support CAPRO until now. Funding for CAPRO was reduced in 2023, and discontinued mid-2024. The Senegal Ministry Team (SMT) is working with our trusted partner and ministry liaison, Leopold Diouf, to identify another Senegalese mission group to take over the work of CAPRO in Kollore Gui.

Five years ago, Leopold began an evangelism project, Project Nicodemus, in the area of Baba Garage. He has brought in various Senegalese Christians to assist him and also had used Nicodemus in hopes of training 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.

In mid-2022, the president of the Kollore Gui Federation filtered a request through Leopold, asking that CPC fund an agro-forestry project in the village of Thiagal, part of Kollere Gui. The Senegal Ministry Team (SMT) vetted the request and agreed to partially fund the project. A similar garden project, funded by Lake Grove Presbyterian Church, is underway in a different village in Kollore Gui. Both projects are to be self-sufficient within four years of the project beginning and funding decreases each of those four years.

Many years ago, CPC became aware of Inter- Senegal Mission, an evangelical ministry involved in church planting. ISM, like our other ministry partners, is a holistic ministry meeting real earthly needs as well as spiritual needs of the people with whom it works. One of the largest arms of ISM is the Barthimee 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 and Barthimee is now associated, but financially independent from ISM.

When World Vision withdrew from Kollore Gui, the World Vision Country Director, Eric Toumieux recognized CPCs history in and long-term commitment to the people of Senegal. Because of this, he suggested that Columbia continue to work in Senegal with a different unreached people group, the Serer, while continuing to support 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) to read and perform basic arithmetic. This literacy ministry was the idea of Pastor Ngor Faye, a Senegalese Presbyterian minister, who worked in coordination with World Vision to direct the literacy program and the associated children's recreation activities (kids clubs). Pastor Ngor and his family live in Diakhao and Columbia provides personal support for him and his family. Today, World Vision has completed its work in Diakhao and the literacy centers are now self-supporting. Columbia members who sponsored children in Diakhao through World Vision, can now sponsor children in another Area Project in the village of Lour-Ribot. CPC is funding a special project here that supports a small market garden through World Vision.

After completing five years as country director for World Vision. Eric Toumieux returned to SIL (Wycliffe), where he put most of his energy into a project known as Beer-Sheba. Eric was able to acquire 250 acres as the project's home for very little money as the local people consider it "cursed". At Beer-Sheba, native vegetation has been regenerated, an ample supply of water has been discovered and an elementary school established. Recently, Columbia began providing the salary for a teacher at this school. The curriculum teaches young Senegalese men and women sustainable and organic farming techniques for use in arid climates while also teaching them basic ministry skills and Bible knowledge. Students at Beer-Sheba reside at the complex and are known as interns. They learn the farming techniques by hands-on training and the theological piece through daily classes and Bible knowledge. 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 Beer-Sheba, our Go Teams have been so impressed by the spiritual and earthly potential of this ministry that Columbia has been supporting since the project's inception. Beer-Sheba is now expanding into Mali and has a US Partner called the Global Poultry Initiative.

Another long-term ministry partnership is with Wolof Christians, Malick and Feluine Fall. Malick has a widely listened to radio ministry and Feluine works with women and children in the north Senegal city of St. Louis. Through Feluine's work, young women are 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 turn them over to Muslim religious leaders – imams- 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. Many times, they are abused, are in poor health and have little food other than what they can garner while begging. This ministry has also been supported by Lake Grove in the past and has multiple funding sources including Columbia.

For many years, Columbia has been involved in child sponsorship in World Vision Area Projects. Many members of Columbia would like to be involved in international mission, but cannot or do not want to travel. They want to do more, however, than just contributing money to missions through the church. Child sponsorship is a way for people to be involved in the ministry by directly supporting and building a relationship with their sponsored child. Today, we encourage selecting a child in Lour-Ribor, Senegal, in order to leverage our collective impact. Those who sponsor a child in Senegal through World Vision typically have the opportunity to meet their sponsored child/children if they become a member of the CPC Go Team.

Since the establishment of our ministry in Senegal in 1999, Columbia has sent a "Go Team" to Senegal in all but five years. The team is normally comprised of 6-9 people and is a blend of previous Go team members and those new to the making the trip. The purpose of our trips is to support our missionary partners and the indigenous Christian church in Senegal. These individuals work with the Wolof and Serer people groups to build relationships and share their faith. Relationships are valued very highly by both the Wolof and Serer people group. The Christian community in Senegal looks forward to our periodic visits and asks that we

continue coming as it reinforces that they are “not alone” and that there are many Christians here in the United States praying for and supporting their work.

The cost of the trip is funded three ways:

- Go Team members contribute 1/3 of the cost themselves
- Fundraising both within the church and outside makes up 1/3
- CPC’s Mission Team budgets travel funds that make up the final 1/3.

If more funds are raised than needed for a specific trip, the overage is kept in a reserve account. This money may be used for future trips, bringing visitors from Senegal to CPC or special needs that arise during the year. Trip funds are managed by the Senegal Ministry Team.

Notes: Missionaries/mission groups who receive funding from Columbia are selected based on need, potential and must be involved in holistic ministry with the goal of bringing the Word to the unreached.

#### Rhythm and Impact of Senegal Ministry:

- January thru February – Go Team to Senegal
- March – Feedback to the congregations, small groups, children/youth groups, etc
- June/July – Soliciting and selecting the next Go Team
- October thru December - Go Team training, fundraising, recruiting prayer partners
- January-Prayer Partner Dinner and commissioning of Go Team in Worship-Both services.

#### Impact in Senegal

While there is not yet a Wolof or Serer church has been planted as a direct result of CPC’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. These partner ministries have been successful at planting churches and continue to reach out to the unreached. Significant development has occurred through our funding.

#### Impact on Columbia

Since our first trip in 1999, eighty-two individuals - 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 returning, many *Senegalistas* have become a significant part of 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.

Matthew 28:19-20a The Great Commission

*Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe everything that I have commanded you.*