

Harvest Festival 2004

Literacy Project in Burkina Faso



Students make good use of the supplies provided in their packs.
Photo by Laurel Borisenko



Bicycle loans provide the means for many to travel to classes.
Photo by Laurel Borisenko

Burkina Faso has one of the lowest literacy rates in the world today, and the country is among the poorest, according to the UN Human Development index.

The project supported by ELCG Harvest Festival 2004 funds offers literacy classes in the local language (Mooré) and in French to men and their wives who are working with Mennonite Central Committee or its partners and Bon Berger Baptist church in Ouagadougou, capital of Burkina Faso.

The initial intention was to simply hire a literacy teacher and rent a classroom; however, the project was folded into a larger literacy initiative funded by the Canadian government. As a result, the Harvest Festival funds are being used to pay rent at two locations and to subsidize other costs, while the larger project is paying for the teachers.

Benefits for students include: pre- and post-testing; a well-tested curriculum and text books; teachers who receive on-going training through the year; and regular site visits by supervisors. The project has provided a bag of school supplies to the students, as well as classroom supplies for the teacher.

In order to make the participation easier for the men and women, the project has also provided: a meal at each class; loans for bicycles so that women have the means to get to the class; child-care arrangements for women; and accommodation for changing working shifts.

There are classes during the day for night guards and evening classes for those working during the day. Classes began in February 2005. During the first seven months, students studied reading and writing in Mooré. During

the final seven months, a transition will be made to speaking and reading in French. The curriculum also includes arithmetic skills, a very valuable component.

In addition to the regular curriculum, there have been speakers on topics such as reproductive health, general health, and managing personal finances. It is planned to have speakers talk about women's rights and workers' rights. Topics are at the request of the participants. These lectures have been extremely popular. The participants are so thirsty for knowledge, and open to learn. Everything they learn they pass on to their families and neighbours, thus increasing the influence and information dissemination.

There are several unique components to this literary project. It is accessible for people with different working schedules, it includes educational topics of general interest, and it allows husbands and wives to study in the same class.

There is a high level of motivation and energy, and a real spirit of congeniality among the participants. More advanced students help those who struggle. Women have not had any problems participating alongside their husbands as was initially feared.

The feedback received from participants and employers is extremely positive. More than once, a participant has taken the course organizer aside, taken her hand and looked intensely into her eyes and said, "For the first time in my life I can read and write. You have no idea what this means to me and my family." The direct skills the participants gain increase their employability. The additional information presented

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Reflection by The Reverend Lusmarina Campos Garcia

Welcome into the body of Christ in Geneva!

God made us body. God made himself or herself, body. Body is our first destiny; the realization of the Spirit when it wants to smile.

Jesus is the body of God in our midst. But this body is not static, it is dynamic; it is a body expanding. Jesus' body stretches itself, penetrating and inhabiting the whole universe. In his discussions about Holy Communion, Martin Luther says that Jesus Christ is present everywhere, even in the most tiny leaf and in everything that was created, inside and outside, around, below, above, behind and in front. In his argument with Ulrich Zwingli, Luther says that Christ was in the bread at Holy Communion because Christ was also present in Luther's cabbage soup. So, the body of God is a body expanding. And all of us are part of it.

The Apostle Paul used the image of body to speak about the Church and to call it into unity according to 1 Corinthians 12:12-31.

In the metropolitan context of trade and cultural effervescence that swarmed in Corinth at that time, a new community emerged. People coming from different places, cultures, languages and religious backgrounds met and started establishing a community of faith. Have you ever heard about a congregation with these characteristics? :-)

I think the church in Corinth is similar to ours. A diverse community with many differences. It was not surprising that there was so much richness and beauty, and at the same time, tensions. All sorts of tensions: between Jews and Greeks, slaves and free people, men and women, rich and poor, partisans of Paul, Cephas and Apollo, the ones who wanted to use charismas for self-advantage and the ones who wanted to use them for the benefit of the community, the ones who had permissive behavior and the ones who were afraid even to face the issues concerning sexuality or relationship.

Paul called the Corinthians to face their conflicts and tensions and to overcome them. But he also called them to recognize in one another a ravishing gift of God.

We belong to each other. We need each other. The deeper we admit this, the closer we are to being the body God wants us to be. As the Lutheran Church in Geneva, our body is graciously expanding as we recognize we belong together with some new members: Pat and Kathy Bracken and their three daughters, Alexandra, Natalie and Sophie, Desta Melles, Birgitta Westling, Helene Lackenbauer, Les Kojima and Gabrielle Ross and their daughter Sachi, Martin Bush, Sheila Shyamprasad, Tim Fieldsend and Elizabeth Wabuge, Afolabi Odufuwa, Natalie Maxson, Eva-Liisa Luhamets, Luke Smetters, Anucharu Siroros, Ashok Kumar, Packia Princy, Anand Solomon and Hannah Monica Yesudian, Friedrich Lohman, Bernice Elger and their children Vincent, Kilian, Clarissa, Anselm and Celestin.

We are rejoicing because there are new eyes at which we can look and see ourselves, and look and see Christ. There are new faces in which we can recognize ourselves and Jesus.

As we prepare to receive Christ both as a ruler and as a child in Advent and Christmas, we give thanks to God that we are a lively and beautiful part of God's own body in this world. Merry Christmas.



Burkina Faso

(Continued from page 1)

by guest speakers provides practical information on ways to improve their daily lives. The participants have also gained the habit of consistent attendance over a long period of time, of being on time for classes, and the habit of regularly repaying loans for bicycles. But perhaps one of the most important benefits - in particular for the women - is the self confidence that they are still capable of learning new skills, and they have in their control ways to improve their daily lives.

-Laurel Borisenko

Visit our website at www.genevalutheran.ch

Looking for a past sermon? Can't remember a meeting date? It's all on our congregation's website which is updated regularly. It's a great place to find information about what's happening and what did happen if you missed worship last Sunday!

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SECOND SUNDAY IN ADVENT

4 December 2005

Isaiah 40:1-11
Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13
2 Peter 3:8-15a
Mark 1:1-8

THIRD SUNDAY IN ADVENT

11 December 2005

Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11
Psalm 126 or Luke 1:47-55
1 Thessalonians 5:16-24
John 1:6-8, 19-28

FOURTH SUNDAY IN ADVENT

18 December 2005

2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16
Luke 1:47-55 or Psalm 89:1-4, 19-26
Romans 16:25-27
Luke 1:26-38

THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD

Christmas Eve

24 December 2005

Isaiah 9:2-7
Psalm 96
Titus 2:11-14
Luke 2:1-14 [15-20]

THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD

Christmas Dawn

25 December 2005

Isaiah 62:6-12
Psalm 97
Titus 3:4-7
Luke 2:[1-7] 8-20

THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD

Christmas Day

25 December 2005

Isaiah 52:7-10
Psalm 98
Hebrews 1:1-4 [5-12]
John 1:1-14

New Year's Eve

31 December 2005

Ecclesiastes 3:1-13
Psalm 8
Revelation 21:1-6a
Matthew 25:31-46

The Name of Jesus

1 January 2006

Numbers 6:22-27
Psalm 8
Galatians 4:4-7 or Philippians 2:5-11
Luke 2:15-21

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS

1 January 2006

Isaiah 61:10—62:3
Psalm 148
Galatians 4:4-7
Luke 2:22-40

THE BAPTISM OF OUR LORD

First Sunday after the Epiphany

8 January 2006

Genesis 1:1-5
Psalm 29
Acts 19:1-7
Mark 1:4-11

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY

15 January 2006

1 Samuel 3:1-10 [11-20]
Psalm 139:1-5, 12-17 (Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18 NRSV)
1 Corinthians 6:12-20
John 1:43-51

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY

22 January 2006

Jonah 3:1-5, 10
Psalm 62:6-14 (Psalm 62:5-12 NRSV)
1 Corinthians 7:29-31
Mark 1:14-20

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY

29 January 2006

Deuteronomy 18:15-20
Psalm 111
1 Corinthians 8:1-13
Mark 1:21-28

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY

5 February 2006

Isaiah 40:21-31
Psalm 147:1-12, 21c (Psalm 147:1-11, 20c NRSV)
1 Corinthians 9:16-23
Mark 1:29-39

Week 49: 27 November-3 December

Liberia, Sierra Leone

Week 50: 4-10 December

Cape Verde, the Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau

Week 51: 11-17 December

Benin, Cote d'Ivoire, Togo

Week 52: 18-24 December

Ghana, Nigeria

Week 1: 1-7 January

Egypt, Israel and the Occupied Territories including Jerusalem, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, Syria

Week 2: 8-14 January

Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, United Arab Emirates, Oman, Yemen, Iran, Iraq

Week 3: 15-21 January

Cyprus, Greece, Turkey

Week 4: 22-28 January

Algeria, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia

Week 5: 29 January-4 February

Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden

Week 6: 5-11 February

Ireland, United Kingdom

TRIBUTE

Since August 2004, we have uplifted Anu Pradhan in our weekly prayers during worship. On Friday afternoon, 28 October 2005, Anu passed away after having fought her illness so courageously.

Anu was taken to CESCO earlier that week where she was surrounded by the care and love she needed. Though her last days were not easy, Anu passed away in a very peaceful way, surrounded by her parents, her husband Neville, her daughter Rishika, and a few friends, confident that God will take care of her and all of us. The funeral service took place at the chapel of the Ecumenical Centre on Tuesday, 1 November where many people gathered. Prior to this service, one had the opportunity to pay last respects at St George; countless moments of prayer, tears and memories were shared around Anu who was beautifully dressed by her mother and friends in a sari. The following day the pastor, along with family and friends, gathered once more around Anu for a prayer service, after which the coffin was closed and the cremation took place.



Anuradhan Pradhan
28.8.1960 - 28.10.2005

(Continued on page 4)

Regular Church Activities

Every Sunday morning

Christian education programme
3-12 yrs. old, 11:00 *church*
Adult forum, 10:00 *Spaghetti Factory, Rue de la Fontaine 13 (close to the church)*
Sunday worship 11:00

Every Thursday

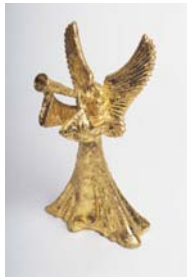
Bible study, 9:30-11:00 *Ecumenical Centre*
Junior choir, 18:30 *church*
Adult choir, 20:00 *church*

Every Wednesday

Confirmation class, 16:00 *third floor of the church*

Monday-Saturday

Open Church, 12:00-13:00 *church*



Third Tuesday of each month

Japanese Bible study, 20:30 *home of Thomas and Koko Taylor, 11 chemin Gamay, Bernex*

First Saturday of each month

Worship in French, 18:00 *cave routée at the church*

Third Sunday of each month

Concerts for Peace, *church*

Every Other Monday

Spaghetti at Night, 19:00 *Spaghetti Factory, Rue de la Fontaine 13 (close to the church)*

Refreshment Duties after Worship

Every week a neighbourhood group prepares refreshments after worship. If you are not sure which group you belong to, please contact the church.

December 4 Group D
(*Grand-Sacconex and Petit-Sacconex*)

December 11 Group E
(*Servette, Paquis, Vermont, Délices, etc.*)

December 18 Group F
(*Centre Ville, Jonction, Carouge, Eaux-Vives, Acacias, etc.*)

December 25 Group G
(*Chêne-Bougeries, Florissant, Cologny, Vésénaz, etc.*)

January 1 Group H
(*Lancy, Onex, Bernex, France Haute Savoie, etc.*)

January 8 Group A
(*Nyon, Coppet, Crans, Gex, Ferney, etc.*)

January 15 Group B
(*Versoix, Bellevue, Chambésy, etc.*)

January 22 Group C
(*Meyrin, Vernier, Châtelaîne, Lignon, etc.*)

January 29 Group D
(*Grand-Sacconex and Petit-Sacconex*)

February 5 Group E
(*Servette, Paquis, Vermont, Délices, etc.*)

CHRISTMAS SERVICES

Christmas Eve, 17:00 church

Christmas Day, 11:00 church

TRIBUTE

(Continued from page 3)

One week later a celebration and thanksgiving of life took place at the Open House, in such a way as Anu had so meaningfully written down as her wish. In Anu's style, it was followed by a potluck. The urn with her ashes was taken to church later in the week where the pastor together with the family held a prayer of thanksgiving. In December, Neville will take her ashes back home to Calcutta where there will be a full service after which the urn will be buried at the cemetery of her home church.

We shall remember Anu and give thanks for her life and faith. We remember so many stories of Anu –

- Her leadership at our congregation as a Sunday school teacher and as member of the Congregational Committee (99-01),
- Her driving spirit behind the Fellowship Concern Group; her extraordinary organizational and cooking skills, which resulted in initiating and sharing many international potluck suppers at the church.
- Her passion to use those skills to reach a wider community, in particular exploring ways to participate in Geneva solidarity care which resulted in the monthly participation and contribution of our congregation at the Soup Kitchen.
- Her place around the Holy Table of the Tuesday Morn-

ing Bible Study where her inquisitive nature always sought to explore more deeply into the Scriptures or stories of faith.

- We remember her wonderful, contagious twinkle in her eyes and how she could laugh until tears would flow.
- Her gift and passion for quilting and home decorating.
- The love and care that she gave to her family, friends and the community.
- Her years of ministry and service with the Ecumenical Women's Group

As the editor of the EWG Newsletter, Anu quoted the following poem. With these words, she continues to help us as we keep up her sparkling spirit and hold her close to us.

*I realize that hope
Was never buried in the tomb
It doesn't wait for tomorrow, or for the after.
It's not the tiny crystal in my quartz watch
That promises hope ahead.
Not the wishing a way for hours or days.
Hope is real, hope is now
Not the future but the present
Here, Now*

Keep Hoping- Anu

-Dorine van Teesling

JUST ASK

Have you been called?

I'm not talking about a phone call, but a "call" from God to do something. Ministers are called to ministry...but we are all called for a purpose. What have you been called to do? How do you discern God's call? Are you fulfilling God's plan for you or your own desires?

Recently, I realized that I have not defined my call very clearly. Since high school graduation, I have wanted to study theology and pursue a life in the church community. What that life would look like was a mystery. I began my theology studies, but then left to marry a wonderful man. The path no longer seemed so clear and certain. Sometimes lost and frustrated, the answers are still hidden from me.

What better way to explore this issue than to seek wise counsel? What better place to find such a treasure than in our own congregation? Have you discovered your call? Still searching it out? Share with us your story so that we may learn and grow together. Email comments, ideas, and suggestions, to jojo.lam@bluewin.ch. I look forward to the journey ahead.



Just Ask is a new forum for sharing insights, seeking guidance, proposing discussion topics, and helping one another to grow in God's will. As the idea evolves, the questions may lead to email dialogues or face-to-face conversations or newsletter articles or even book discussions. Submit your responses to this month's topic or questions about new topics to JoAnne via e-mail

**Where charity stands watching
and faith holds wide the door
the dark night wakes
the glory breaks
Christmas comes once more.**

Phillips Brooks



2006 Stewardship Campaign: Sharing the gifts God has given us all year round

Were you there? Did you miss it? Stewardship was the focus of our worship for four Sundays: 30 October, 6, 13 and 20 November. Members of the congregation should have received a package of information – either in church that first Sunday or through the mail. Did you read it?

We spent four Sundays talking about stewardship – how we care for our church and our community; how we treat our resources of time, money and nature; how we can commit ourselves, our time and our money to the church in 2006. Did you turn in your commitment forms?

Hopefully you found time to talk about stewardship and what the church means to you outside of worship, too - with family, friends or as part of a Bible study. Did you learn something new?

Stewardship is something we should be thinking about all year round, not just for four weeks. We have been blessed by God with a multitude of resources. Are we using the time God has given us wisely? Do we use the talents we have been blessed with to their fullest? Are we spending our money in ways that glorify God?

We had some goals for the stewardship campaign. When we met a goal, we lit a lamp during worship. Here were some of the goals (there were 17 in all!):

- We have ushers committed for 39 weeks next year.
- We have 12 people committed to teaching or helping in our education program.
- We have 40 people committed to praying each day for 10 minutes for the church & the world.
- We have 50 % of our budget pledged.
- We have 50 % of our households making commitments of time, talent, or money.
- We have people ready to work in the soup kitchen for 6 months of lunches.
- We have 10 households ready to invite newcomers to their house for a meal.
- We have 15 people ready to welcome visitors after church on Sunday and to follow up.
- We have people signed up to be offering counters for 39 weeks.



By the final Sunday of the campaign, we had lit six lamps in church. What a glorious sight! How brightly are we letting our lights shine for God all year round?

Receiving your commitment forms is really important for the church to function. It helps our leaders to plan better and to use our resources wisely. Being a good steward as an individual helps the church as a community to also be a good steward. Thank you for turning in your forms. The ELCG appreciates it. If you indicated an interest in a volunteer task, you will be contacted. We are not going to let this information be forgotten; your participation in this way in the life of the church is valuable.

As we move into Advent, we should not forget about stewardship. God calls us to be good stewards all year round, caring for our resources especially in this season when gifts are plenty. Let us celebrate all the gifts that God has given us together! - Sarah Padre, Coordinator of the 2006 Campaign

Wachet auf

(Continued from page 8)

of its connection to the Parable of the Wise and Foolish Bridesmaids. “Come forth, you virgins, night is past; the Bridegroom comes, awake; your lamps with gladness take: Alleluia! And for his marriage feast prepare, for you must go and meet him there.” The image of the marriage feast comes again and again in the text.

Nicolai was a Lutheran pastor. The hymn appeared as an appendix to Nicolai’s meditations on death and eternal life, “The Mirror of the Joy of Eternal Life,” written in the midst of an outbreak of the black plague in Unna, Westphalia in 1598. If bird flu becomes the next pandemic, maybe we will need to revisit the theologies of those who endured mass dying, and yet were able to write masterpieces of the Christian faith for centuries following.

It is amazing in such a context that the hymn is not dour. Nicolai even played with the words. He honored a friend and old pupil, Count Wilhelm Ernst, by making the lyric a reversed acrostic. Verse 1 W(achet); verse 2 Z(ion); verse 3 E(hr und Preis) which is Ernst zu Wallenstein in reverse. This information comes from the *Companion to the Hymnal* written by Austin Lovelace for the Methodist hymnal. It must take some work for people to figure these things out. Or maybe Nicolai announced the connection after a few moments of keeping the riddle.

So “with harp and cymbal’s clearest tone”, and maybe with guitars and drums, we sing before God with new rhythms and sounds mixed with the old. We can hear again the ancient call to wake up and get ready for the coming of the Christ. Advent begins again.



Congregational Retreat 2005

*singing
playing
worshiping
conversing
sharing
laughing
loving*

as the body of Christ....



Photos by Stephen Padre

Wachet auf by Terry MacArthur

Although well-known and loved in Lutheran circles, the hymn, “Wake, awake, for night is flying” was totally unknown to the evangelical wing of the church in which I grew up. I first sang it in seminary and instantly fell in love with it as the perfect start for Advent. My best friend from seminary was braver than I was after graduating. He was pastor in a rural United Methodist Church in Ohio. His first Advent there, he introduced “Wake, awake.” He had practiced with the choir and given the organist enough time to get the hymn down because he knew it was totally unknown to his congregation. Full of energy, he launched into the hymn the first Sunday of Advent. As he tells it, he got through the first verse, when the organist slammed the hymnbook shut, announced very loudly, “Well, that’s enough of that,” and stopped play-

ing. It was the end of “Wachet auf” at Palmyra United Methodist Church.

It is true that the music is not easy in either its original rhythm or in its rather straightened out version by JS Bach. It works better with a pipe organ than it does with the wheezing sound of the electronic organs under which many small churches used to suffer. Now they suffer under wheezing synthesizers. But with practice or with familiarity it becomes the essential hymn for Advent. Lutherans coming from North America probably would not think they had entered Advent without singing this hymn.

It was written by Philipp Nicolai for the twenty-seventh Sunday after Trinity based on Matthew 25:1-13. We sang it on 6 November because

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Copies of the newsletter may also be
downloaded as a pdf file from our website.



See inside for more photos from the 2005 Congregational Retreat -
“The Promise of the Rainbow: The Wolf and the Lamb Will Graze Together.”