



# God Opens Eyes of the Kuranko

By Beth Heiney

The Family of God is amazing! We learn that just about every time we host a team from the U.S. here on our home turf in Guinea, West Africa, where we've served for the past 22 years. This past November we were privileged to once again host an LWML eyeglass team from MOST Ministries. Seven very experienced sisters in Christ arrived in Conakry, our capital, early in the month. God was about to use the next week and a half to glorify His Name in amazing ways!

We'd planned to visit three strategic areas in which our church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Guinea (EELG is our French acronym), is at work. We'd let MOST know ahead of time that this would be a tough trip. The roads around that area of the country, known as the "Forest Region," are some of the worst. We weren't sure about housing, only that there would be a place to sleep each night. There would be little to no electricity, flushing toilets, internet, or running water — all those things Americans are kind of addicted to! But we promised that there would be a very positive eternal impact on each area. This was a great opportunity to help the church in this part of the world.

After a day to rest and repack in Conakry we headed out. The EELG, with the help of Risen Savior Lutheran Church in Wichita, Kansas, now has two missionaries that have been sent outside their home areas to begin ministry. We would be visiting those two areas as well as another area where LCMS work really started years ago. But I want to focus on one in particular.

James M. has been with the Lutheran Church for many years. He was a refugee from the horrible civil war in Sierra Leone, came over to Guinea, and met some of our Lutheran

evangelists. He learned very quickly, and this past year was ordained as a Lutheran minister. James is a Kuranko (koo-'ron-ko) and has a heart for his people. He could have returned to his home country a long time ago but decided that he would not return until he saw an active church planted among the Kuranko people here in Guinea.



James began making visits into the Kuranko villages but came up against a lot of resistance. After a while, James began to get the full story of what had happened in that area. Some years ago, a local Christian group visited many of these villages with a big evangelism campaign. At the end of their presentation, they asked who was interested in becoming

Christian and some people raised their hands. However, there was no follow up and no teaching. After the team left, those that raised their hands were left in the lurch, made to look like fools. This pretty much inoculated the area against Christianity.

After his training, James approached us with the idea of moving his family into the Kuranko area to continue the work he had started among these unreached people. We've had a heart for Kurankos for many years as well, so agreed to pray about where God might be leading. Right after that conversation we were approached by Risen Savior. They were looking for a project that would involve reaching an unreached people group! God seemed to be leading the two together, and a 3-year program was set up to get James established in the area and provide funds for him to be able to support himself and his family once the project is finished.

It's been tough going for James and his family. Satan is not happy when Christians start interfering in his territory, and he let it be known! Upon arriving in his new village

James was informed that he could live there and plant churches elsewhere, but he was not to plant churches there! He's struggled with family issues himself. His son had an eye injury that threatened his sight. But he's worked hard to show the love of Jesus all over that area, reaching out to the sick and providing other unmet needs. And he was eventually able to plant churches in other villages.

Enter the MOST team!

Our visit there was not without its bumps and bruises. On day two the truck with all our glasses and other supplies broke down, causing a two-hour delay. Because of the location of the villages deep in the bush, we had to sleep about two hours away from the villages, which meant a daily four-hour drive back and forth on top of the six-hour clinic. Our ladies were incredible, however! They kept working well into the night and never had a cross word for anyone. At every clinic, we started with the message that physical eyesight is important to us, but someday that will end when our eyes close for eternity. We need to know Jesus so that we can spend our eternity with Him!

The reports since that team visit have been exciting! Immediately after the team left, James's village chief said that he is welcome to plant churches there. Because of the work James has done and the visit of this team, the people have seen that our church is serious and is not going to leave them without guidance again. This past Christmas Day, James baptized 31 people in several villages and expects many more. God is blessing James's faithfulness and perseverance, and definitely used this MOST team to open doors that were previously shut.

God can use you, dear sister, no matter your situation! What I didn't mention about this LWML team that made such a difference? Their ages ranged from 55 to 74! Don't ever say that God can't use you. All you need to do is be willing and available! He can do the rest, and He will! The difficult things fade quickly, but there's nothing like knowing that God has used you for His eternal purposes. Just say YES! [Q](#)



*Older customers are often the most appreciative since they've usually struggled a long time with poor eyesight. This man was leaping with joy at being able to see!*

