



**April 2011**

# Nuts & Bolts

*The Sim family prayer letter*

Our newsletter's title alludes to basic components that hold things together. Back in 2001 we talked about being part of the body of Christ – one body, many parts (1 Cor 12). 10 years since we left Australia, we still recognise the validity of our original mission call. It's really important to keep the basic stuff running well – loosen a few nuts and bolts and the whole thing becomes wobbly and may fall apart! That is why we both firmly believe in our roles on the mission field – and why we are thankful that there will be people coming to replace us.

## Working in Administration— the Nuts & Bolts of mission

Keeping the books for the SIM Benin Togo team has proven to be a rewarding experience for Lisa. She enjoys the routine of the office and creating order out of the paperwork that streams in. Sure it's taken time to learn the system and there have been many frustrations as she battled with unfamiliar terms and processes, however, she's also really enjoyed working it out. She feels far more competent now than when she first started and is very thankful for that progress.

Neil has been involved in Administration since 2006

as Project Coordinator and Office Manager. Since March, he has again assumed the role of Acting Director while Clara has her cataracts removed in Canada. At the moment, many of our missionaries are out of the country and so we are "holding the fort".

Even though we're busy, we want to be sure we leave our jobs ready for the next person. Lucie Golay arrives in May to take over the GH; Lee Phillips will be here around May 2012 as Treasurer; and Sil Ruddle will be in Projects by July 2012—God willing! Pray the SIM Benin Togo team will cope until these folk arrive.

## Project work: Fulani Bible New Testament dedicated

On January 29th 2011 Benin's Fulani New Testament was dedicated in a small village just south of Parakou. It was hard to tell how many people were there, but over 500 New Testaments were sold that day!

There was obvious joy on the faces of many people. These included Neil, who as Projects Coordinator, has searched high and low for funding, and also Pastor Isaac Matchoudo who was head translator this project for many years. He

has been the National President for the UEEB (SIM's partner church) since 2007, but was still able to still contribute to the translation team to see the NT finished.

This New Testament is one of several being done in the varied dialects of the Fulani people from all over West Africa in conjunction with SIL. Pray this translation will generate a keen interest and understanding of God's Word in the Fulani Christian church here in Benin. The Benin Fulani Transla-

tion team are planning to continue with the Old Testament. (Project # BJ93415)



May God's Word be in carried in their hearts – not just on their heads...

## Projects on hold: Pastors' Book Sets...

The Pastors' Book Set (PBS) project has consumed Neil's time since late 2010. Only days away from actually beginning the inscription process in March, the SIM Benin Togo leadership decided to place the project on hold.

We received word that the books would not be arriving as envisaged in Feb/Mar 2011, meaning the project could not be completed

before Neil's departure in July. This also means that the Mission will be short a Project Coordinator and Treasurer for at least 12 months from July. These two roles are crucial for a project like the PBS, and SIM Benin Togo wants to do this project well.

This was not an easy decision, especially as so much had been organised and planned already, but

God's Word speaks very clearly about not starting something unless your foundation is right. The nuts and bolts have to be in place.

Pray for wisdom on where to store the book sets, either in France or in Benin. Funds are still being sort by the International project (Project # MD99644) if you would like to contribute.

## The road much traveled



Exciting! There are graders, trucks and bulldozers back there!

As many of you know the 600+ kilometres we travel each way between Parakou & Niamey is quite

an ordeal—and it's been getting worse. Recently though there are signs that change is coming—yes, just as we are preparing to come home!

There is major work underway just north of Parakou, but even more amazing is that fact that the worst section of road in Niger is about to get a face lift too. Bright shiny new equipment has appeared at a worksite just north of the border. We had to stop and take a photo.

It now takes us up to 12 hours to make the trip due to the roadwork. There are lots of detours, some of

which are better than the old road actually — new bridges are being built and asphalt being laid. Now and then we get to drive on a newly surfaced section, which gives us hope!

We are so thankful for our 4WD car which has made these trips so much more bearable.

Pray for us as we travel north in May to see the Josh and Bethany perform in "Godspell" and again one last time when school finishes June 10. The rainy season will start soon and this will impede the progress on the roadwork...

## Our kids' are Baptised

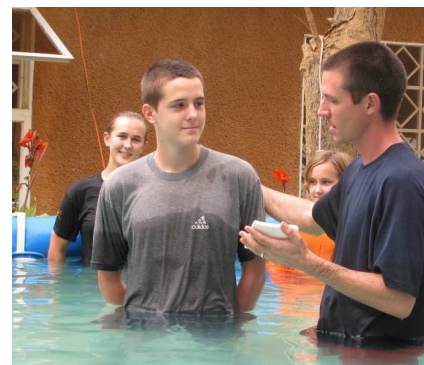
They say that good things come in threes! We have to agree... Our kids are a real blessing to us. Even so, nothing prepared us for when all three of our children decided to be baptised at Sahel Academy on April 4th.

Pastor Dave, youth pastor for the school, led the event which was held behind the kids' dorm in the above-ground pool. In a short, but poignant ceremony in front of their school friends and family, Bethany,

Joshua and Hannah, along with 8 others, made a public commitment as followers of Jesus Christ.

We are very thankful for God's work in our children's lives. We also thank the many of you who have been praying for them over the years. Beth will be 16 in May, Josh is 14, and Hannah will be 13 just before we leave.

Please keep praying as they say good bye to their life in Africa.



Making a public declaration. Josh with Pastor Dave. Bethany & Hannah are just behind him.

## What's the plan? Good question!

The short answer is—we're not sure. It's hard to decide what the future is when we are so busy in the present.

We do know we leave Benin late July and arrive in Australia on August 30th. We will need to spend several days at our head office in Sydney before we get back to Mel-

bourne. We are discussing our options at the moment and praying about possible future opportunities with SIM in Australia.

Our plan is to move back to our home in Burwood, Melbourne and the kids will start the 4th term of this year in a nearby school. Please pray for their transition.

We'll be on Home Assignments until the end of February 2012, by which time we hope that our future will be a lot clearer.

We are so thankful for the many of you who support us prayerfully and financially. *We would ask you to please continue that at least until the end of February 2012.*

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