

Special edition - Visit to Burkina Faso

Welcome to this newsletter concerning our imminent plans.

We are presently preparing the usual "Diary" of our 2024 visit to Burkina Faso and hope to have this ready fairly soon. However, we thought we would use this newsletter to highlight some of the places we visited, and the programme of drilling we have just embarked upon.

This visit was excellent. We were able to visit many places – and many of them were much in need of water.

We also saw one well being drilled – and others were also drilled while we were there. Please pray that there will be spiritual as well as physical blessing as the local pastors and evangelists preach the gospel in these places.

The bougainvillea outside the bungalow (which is called "Bougainvillea") where we stayed in the former mission compound in Ouagadougou was a lovely sight to wake up to every morning in the sunshine!



Big news – Well number 300 on the horizon!

We ask for particular prayer on this Saturday - 27th January. In the will of God, we will be drilling at a place called Nionwarbin. This is a densely populated area a little way north of Ouagadougou. The pastor at the church here is a nurse at the hospital in the mission compound where we stay – as is his wife also. They are building a small clinic by the church and hope to open it before the end of the year.

Although there is a government provided water point about ½ km away, it is unreliable and, in any case, inadequate for the number of people living there. Some photos of the area:



On the right is the small clinic building that they are hoping to complete, subject to funding. It would certainly be a good facility as the nearest other medical facility is some way away the other side of the busy main road. The pastor is standing at the front. £2,500 is needed.



2 upgrade projects completed

There are places where the demand on the water, at wells we have provided in the past, has increased dramatically. One is the original first well at Zongo school. The another is at Yagma – a huge suburb of Ouagadougou – where, during a visit in 2020, we saw over 200 containers waiting to be filled. So, we decided to replace the hand pump with a solar powered pump and water tower at both these places. The hand pumps will be reused at future wells. Here are some photos from these two new water towers.

Yagma

We stayed here for about 30 minutes. There were people coming and going the whole time. Christine assisted some with filling their containers from the three taps.



Zongo School

Zongo School used to be on the edge of Ouagadougou. It is now completed surrounded by houses. The original school was just three classrooms. It is now about 16, including the three-storey block in the photo. The new water tower is very useful not only for the school but also for the people now living in the area.



Here, the President of the school PTA and the school caretaker are using the taps. The caretaker makes sure that the children leave the tap area clean after they have used it!

Places where we plan to drill NOW ...

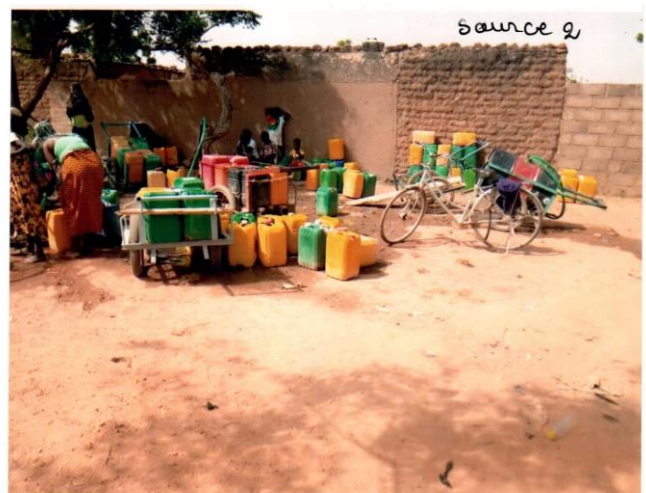
... SO SOMETHING SPECIAL TO PRAY FOR JUST NOW.

We have asked Christine to proceed with seven more wells at the moment. There are many other places equally in need, but we must wait until the Lord provides further funds before committing to further expenditure.

Here are some details of the locations.

Guidssouassa

This is a place on the outskirts of Ouagadougou. The nearest water is 45 minutes' walk away and there is a charge for using it. The next nearest water is a similar distance away and free – but you may have to wait an hour or more to be able to use it – see the photo below. 120 families will benefit from a new well here.



Koanga

There is a well here which was provided by an Arabic organisation – but it is nearly always broken. The pump handle just hangs loosely. The other source of water is owned by the village chief who allows rationed water to be used by the people. They have to go there (20-30 minute walk), leave their containers and go home. Then they will be told when it is their turn – so have to return. We will check to see if the well is repairable, but, if not, then will try to drill another one for them.

This is the broken well –



Dapoya

Dapoya is on the outskirts of Koudougou, about 60 miles west of Ouagadougou. It feels like a place that has just been forgotten. They currently have only 2 open wells. We went Dapoya about 5 pm when the light was beginning to fade, but we spoke to two elderly men – one 70 (which, thinking about it, is NOT at all elderly) and one who is 89. They both went to fetch gifts of chickens when we left. This had no affect on our decision to drill here! They just need a well.



Which one is the 89-year old?

Tansobentenga

Again, not far from Ouagadougou. There is a proper drilled well about 3 km away, but the time taken waiting for a turn to use it is such that they just go to the river instead.



Nabmaneguema

Nabmaneguema is a large crowded area on the outskirts of a town to the south of Ouagadougou. The nearest water is about 25 minutes away. This is not a great distance compared with some places, but the sheer number of houses already built (with others being built) means water is needed. We were shown around by a young couple – Luke and Natalie, together with their young baby Charlie. We asked them what a difference

it will make to them if we put a well there. All they said was, “It will help the older people. The younger ones will be able to grow vegetables to sell.”



Please pray about this place. The ground where the well needs to go is privately owned. Christine will need to obtain permission and also guarantees about future access.



Places where we want to drill when funds allow.

On two days, we spent a morning listening to pastors who had come to Ouagadougou to ask for wells in their villages and districts. Some had come about 150 miles to talk to us. The situations are all very similar. Some came from the north where the terrorist problem has meant their towns and villages have grown dramatically. As the Lord makes funds available, we will certainly be drilling in some of these places. Here is an example from a village near Ouahigouya in the North, near the Mali border. There are about 15 similar places that we know about.

Fourma

This is a large village. The area that needs the well has access only to three open wells. Even these are some distance away – over a mile – and is it sometimes necessary to wait to be able to use them.

This photo shows the state of the water that comes from one of the open wells.



A word about security

The government travel advice remains the same as it has been for about 4 years – only go to Ouagadougou for essential travel; don't go beyond the toll booths just outside Ouagadougou.

While we were there, we followed local advice and felt totally safe. We were able to go to Koudougou, 60 miles west of Ouagadougou and also Saponé and Kombissiri 30/40 miles south.

The news reports of terrorist attacks during the last 12 months have been considerably fewer than in the previous 12 months. The regime is still the military, following the coup that took place about 16 months ago (and that's after a coup that took place 9 months earlier). However, the general opinion among everyone we spoke to is that they support the new leader. The military has made steps towards being much more proactive in their efforts to contain the terrorists and to drive them back, apparently with a measure of success.

There is a slightly worrying turn of events in that Burkina Faso has signed agreements with Russia for military aid. This follows the expulsion of all French troops and the eviction of the French ambassador. A report this week tells of a contingent of 100 Russian troops now being in the country to give training. It was well known, but also denied, that the Wagner group were in the country for 2 or 3 years, but this now appears to be regular Russian troops. It was noticeable that the Russian flag was flying in the towns we visited.

Please pray that this turn of events will not lead to some obvious undesirable outcomes and that the Christians in Burkina Faso will be kept safe and still free to preach the gospel.

Praise and Prayer

- Praise for the wells that have been drilled recently and all who have become Christians as a result of wells being drilled.
- Pray as we decide on the places where we will drill as funds become available.
- Pray that the provision of clean water will be a witness to God's greater blessing of salvation through faith and by grace.
- Pray for safety for the drilling teams in areas where security is not guaranteed, and pray that the security situation will very soon improve.
- Pray for safety of Christine and her helpers based in Ouagadougou.
- Pray for wisdom in making decisions about which places are the most in need of water.

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