The Harvest Is Plentiful

By Bakary Doumbouya

In October, during one of my recent missionary journeys, I had the privilege of visiting The Gambia, a small West African country largely surrounded by Senegal, with a population of about 2.5 million. My trip centered on Water for Them, a mission I started last year. The aim was to distribute water filters in villages that struggle to access clean water. Waterborne illnesses are common in these villages and have claimed the lives of several children.

During my trip, I connected with local leaders who helped with my stay and travel in the country. As I drove with my local contact, my eyes began to open to a familiar yet surprising sight. Everywhere I went, I saw young schoolgirls walking in hijabs. My heart broke at how many I saw. I was drawn to Matthew 9:36, where Jesus had compassion for the people He saw.

> *"But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd." (Matthew 9:36, NKJV)*

As I began to meditate on the verse, a few observations came to mind.

1. Where was Jesus? He was out in the field, just as I was.

2. How did He respond? His heart was moved with compassion.

3. Why was Jesus touched by what He saw? He saw that the people were lost, helpless, and without direction.

These observations made me reflect on the spiritual state of the country I was visiting. I began to feel burdened and to pray. The journey changed as I traveled with a different mindset. I began praying for children who, I feared, might grow up without the hope of knowing Jesus. I was now on-site with insight, seeing the people around me with fresh eyes. As I continued to reflect, the next verses came to mind.

> *Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest." (Matthew 9:37-38, NKJV)*

Here, Jesus first draws His disciples' attention to the plentiful harvest. Why did He say that? He saw the people out in the field and likened their circumstances to a great harvest with too few workers. Then He called His disciples to act by praying for the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers.

That same call to action comes to us today. About 96 percent of the people in The Gambia are Muslim. I believe we have a part to play in sharing the hope of Jesus with those who have yet to hear the gospel.

In Matthew 10, right after calling His disciples to pray, Jesus sends them out. The call to prayer comes with a call to take practical steps to reach people. Our Lord is calling us to go and be part of the work in the field.

As Jesus did with His disciples, I would like to invite you to join me in prayer and action. My October trip gave me a chance to see the need for the gospel firsthand. My goal is to return from December through January with Water for Them 2 and use the distribution of water filters to open the door for outreach. A local religious leader is serving as a person of peace and helping make the outreach possible.

Our goal is to work with our church in Guinea-Bissau on an evangelism campaign and to start a community of believers in the villages where we distribute the filters.

Will you please pray that the people of The Gambia will be touched by the gospel?

Will you consider supporting Water for Them 2? You can help purchase a water filter for $75 or give this Christmas to help dig wells for people who lack access to safe drinking water.

Last year, thanks to your generous giving, several communities received the blessing of a well and now have clean water to drink. In addition to receiving wells, many people heard and responded to the gospel. Let's continue to pray and reach out to those who need the hope of Jesus. May we continue to be moved by the same compassion Jesus had when He saw the needs and spiritual condition of the people He encountered in the field. Thank you for your continued prayers and support.

His and your servant,
Bakary Doumbouya