

YEAR 2011 in REVIEW

Schneidermann-Koné, December 2011, Accra, Ghana
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What a year it has been. We are rejoicing in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ . . . because of his unchangeable character . . . for many wonders He has done . . . and for all the lessons He has taught us. It has been a year of **FIRSTs**.

- ❖ Walking the path of war and conflict with many friends and relatives in Côte d'Ivoire.
- ❖ Rejoicing in God's answer to prayers for more cross-cultural workers on our MMCT teams. We welcomed, Patience Ahmed, our first Nigerian to our West Africa team. Gozié is not an official team member, but he adds another dimension—male perspective as well as Ivorian.

First "Daughter's" Wedding

What a God honoring day! Detours to the courthouse were made due to flooding of the roads. But the rains stopped in time so that no one got wet during the civil and religious ceremonies. Just as the pastors prayed and laid hands on Eli and Djata, please also join us in praying for them.

- ❖ This young couple is very active in their church. Both have servant hearts. May they not let "good" activities replace personal quality time with God and with each other. May their home radiate Christ's love, joy, peace, and hope.
- ❖ Three days after the wedding Eli was given a new job offer. Pray that this temporary contract will lead to eventual hiring.
- ❖ One of the wedding gifts was a plastic baby tub and all the necessary items to welcome one's first child into their home. Djata informed me that it is a common wedding gift in some parts of RCI. A big "HINT" to say the least. ☺



First Christian Funeral in the Village of Tiebila

Our goal for our mother's funeral was to have a clear evangelistic service. God did more than we could have thought or imagined. Rejoice in what He has done and pray for His continued work.

- ❖ In the midst of rainy season, God provided a star studded sky for the all-night wake.
- ❖ Jesus spoke Cebaara in the *Jesus Film*, so all the villages could hear and understand who Jesus was in their own mother tongue.
- ❖ We don't know who God will send to water the seeds sown or when they will sprout, grow and produce fruit. But that is His work (1 Cor 3:6-7). His Word will accomplish its purpose. We have been faithful in sowing. Three new people were in church the Sunday following the funeral.
- ❖ Funerals are VERY important in Africa. The villagers in Tiebila have a new respect for Gozié and his youngest sister, Tiemogo. Lies were exposed. Many have heard, "Christians don't follow all our customs, so you won't be buried well." During the funeral, some of the elderly

women commented that this is the kind of burial they would like to have. To which Gozié responded, *“Follow the Jesus Road and the Christians will bury you well. You are not too old. My mother was 78 when she changed roads.”*



First Wedding Anniversary

Which day should we celebrate—October 28 (civil ceremony, legal date)? or December 18 (religious ceremony, after which we officially began to live as husband and wife)? Why choose . . . celebrate them both! ☺ October found us at the beach even though Gozié is terrified of the ocean. The initial months of our marriage were challenging, especially for Sherri. But by the time our first wedding anniversary came around we found our rhythm and are thoroughly enjoying life with God and with each other. We are blessed.

First MMCT Global Team Retreat

The four members of MMCT-West Africa (Sherri, Marion, Patience & Karen), the two members of MMCT-East Africa (Connie and Dan) and the MMCT Int’l Coordinator, Darlene, facilitated the Member Care Providers Consultation and Retreat (MCPCR) in Ghana the last week of October. We followed the MCPCR with 2 ½ days of spiritual retreat with encouraging messages by Barnabas missionary, Keith Greer. His wife, Bonnie, served us well with her caring spirit and photography skills. Of course, business were also part of our time together. What joy it was to sing, pray, share, and strategize together. Please pray for additional team members for each of the teams, as well as the needed financial resources. During 2011, in West Africa alone, over 135 evangelical missionaries received short-term counseling or debriefing; many Skype and phone conversations provided input and encouragement to mission leaders and our trained peer responders; thousands of emails were written to participants of workshops, those asking questions, and those helping with on-site logistics.



More FIRSTs await us in 2012 – First Home Assignment as a Couple

After Gozié received his passport with his US immigration visa, we began looking at airplane tickets for our six-month home assignment. Lord willing, we will leave Accra on January 12, 2011, (arriving in Sioux Falls, SD, on the 13th) and return on July 10. We are looking forward to connecting with many of you. Our home base will be Sibley, IA. Weather permitting, our first open house (meet the new couple) will be held in Sibley on Saturday, January 21. Exact time and location will be communicated later. There are many things to finalize before departure. Please pray for all the transitions ahead. We both dread the cold. Gozié doesn’t know how people can live in freezer type temperatures and survive. “Layers,” I say, “layers.” ☺

All glory and honor to Him who is “the Alpha and Omega, the FIRST and the Last, the Beginning and the End” . . . the One who was born, who died and came to life again. (Rev 22:13; 2:8)

Have a blessed CHRIST-mas!

Gozié + Sherri