



"I would prefer to be blind..."



Soldiers, blinded by gas during the 1st World-War. A sad and intriguing picture of 'blind leading the blind'. I thought of it while reading *Blindness* by Nobel prize winner José Saramago. He tells the story of an epidemic of blindness afflicting nearly everyone and the social and moral breakdown that follows.

Not much does scare us more than getting blind. Saramago was not the first to write about this kind of a pandemic. Similar stories were told by J. Wyndham (*The Day of the Triffids*) and H.G. Wells (*The Country of the Blind*). Interestingly, all three accounts make the reader identify himself with the one person who still sees, but is surrounded by the blind.

Strangely, at times **all three express that they prefer to be blind like all others**. It appears to be difficult to be different and see the results of social and moral decay. They get tired of warning the others. The Bible tells us of prophets and preachers who feel **desperate and lonely because of their knowledge of the truth**. Some consciously closed their eyes and stopped talking about dangers. They decide to share sweet lies instead.

Today the threat of *Swine Flu* frightens us. But Scripture informs us about a more devastating pandemic: spiritual blindness. As Christians we know that "where there is no vision, the people perish". But like the prophets, we may be tempted to stop talking about it and just affirm the blind by sharing sweet stories. Moses and Jeremiah knew the temptation. So did Jesus. But praise God, He did not give in, although 'the blind' spit Him out and crucified Him. Focusing on his Father's will He opened the grave, giving to the blind a glimpse of heaven.



Let us recommit ourselves to God so that He can use us to give sight to the blind. A higher vocation is unthinkable, no brighter perspective imaginable!

Arie Verduijn,
Executive President AWF

New Union of Russian Churches

Approximately 700 Churches were represented at the First Congress of the *All-Russian Commonwealth of Evangelical Christians (ACEC)* held in Moscow in April. ACEC connects churches which until now were not part of any All-Russian union. The National Alliance Churches played an important role in the integration process, which already led to joint conferences and training seminars. Mission has been adopted as a strategic goal.



Regional Coordinator *Vernon Rehmann* (photo, 2nd from the right) represented the AWF during the Congress. In April, the National Alliance Church also elected *Alexander Kornev* as their new president, to replace *Alexei Yeropkin* (2nd left).

The AWF Europe ME Region is involved in a social project for Russian speaking citizens in Israel.

African Alliance Youth Conference

Young people from many African countries will gather in Côte d'Ivoire to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the National Youth Movement and to be taught by renowned speakers. God has used this movement, called UJAC in French, to encourage young African men and women to dedicate their lives to Christ. Main speaker this time will be Rev. Isaac Keïta, dean of FATEAC in Abidjan and Regional AWF Coordinator. He will speak on: "The role of Christian Youth in a time of Crisis".

Pray for the preparations of this important event which will take place in capital city Yamoussoukro, August 16-21.

Youth events in Spain and Israel

A 3rd Almeria Youth camp in Spain is scheduled for August 5-19. There will also be an AWF work camp in Israel, August 3-13. Alliance young people from around the globe are invited to participate! For more information see: awfoutreach.net

In the name of Allah / In the name of Jesus

We traveled 2500 km by road in West-Africa. A lot happened, but let me start with the most unexpected. While in Guinea, we zigzagged slowly between the holes in the road. Then suddenly we heard a deafening bang. The rear-window of our minivan bursts in uncountable splinters. On the asphalt we see a man-in-gown, lying beside a broken moped. Getting on his feet he says: Sorry, my brakes do not work. His bonnet lies between the splinters in our van, but he himself isn't hurt badly.

Our team of six, decides to take the man and the moped to the next village: Bissikrima. Immediately a tribunal is

set up at the police station in which the seniors of the village play a key role (photo right). After hours of palavering it is determined that the man-who-lost-his-bonnet (on the photograph in yellowish green) will have to pay for our window, but they add: "He doesn't have a penny".



We realize that if we stick to our accusation he may end up in jail, which doesn't really help us. So we decide to forgive without payment. Isaac Keïta, our AWF coordinator, communicates the outcome to the tribunal, beautifully packed in a Gospel-message; *we forgive because we have been forgiven*. Everyone starts shouting with joy and a village-elder spontaneously utters a long prayer in which he thanks in Allah's name for the attitude of the Christians. Then Isaac adds a prayer in the name of Jesus.

It took us many hours, but we hope that our testimony in Bissikrima will result in openness for the Lord Jesus. As far as we know, there is not even one Christian in Bissikrima.

Our trip started in Abidjan and took us to Mali and Guinea. We met with many workers who made a deep impression on us. Among them teachers, evangelists and medical staff. In Conakry we had a meeting with the new Government Minister of Religious Affairs (center photo left). He is Muslim, but very open to collaborate with Christian Churches.



Finally we visited a clinic where many patients are being treated with Christian love. Some of them found Christ in this place! We encourage you to thank God for the open doors in Guinea and ask for prayer for the government which took office last year. And please pray for Bissikrima.

May Christ be known and glorified in this village as well as in all the others yet unreached.

Dr. Roger Lang 'AWF Ambassador'

Together with other organizations the AWF participates in the *International Training Alliance*, which offers so-called *Leadership Matters Courses*. Many Alliance leaders went through these courses and speak highly of the positive impact LMC has had in various areas of their ministry. The AWF Executive Committee asked dr. Lang to serve as their Official Liaison to LMC, which he gladly accepted. Roger has been teaching at many LMC events. For more information go to: www.leadershipmatters.ws

AWF Quadrennial Convocation 2012 in Canada

For the first time Canada, the native country of our founder, A.B. Simpson, will host the Quadrennial Assembly of the AWF. The year 2012 marks the C&MA's 125th Anniversary which gives special reason to praise God for what He has done in the past and to rededicate ourselves to His will. The AWF Executive Committee gratefully accepted the invitation of the Canadian Church. Since 1975 Quadrennial Assemblies have taken place in: China/Hong Kong (2x), Peru, the USA (2x), Côte d'Ivoire, South Korea, The Netherlands and Chile.

Revision of the AWF Constitution

The Executive Committee of the AWF is working on a revised version of the constitution. The document has "grown" over the years with various modifications being made from time to time. Because of these it lacks uniformity and some things seem to be out of place. Beyond that there are substantive issues that relate to how the AWF is structured and administered. This has to do, for instance, with membership requirements, administrative structures and financial issues. The members will be informed and asked for their input in the coming years. It is the hope of the Committee that a completed revision of the constitution and by-laws will be ready one year prior to the 2012 Quadrennial Convocation, when a vote will be taken to adopt it or not.

Chinese Global Gathering

The *Chinese Canadian Alliance* organizes a Joint Mission Conference (JMC-2009) July 1-5, 2009. It takes place every four years and generally draws over 1,200 persons. AWF president Arie Verduijn will be one of the speakers. The Chinese branch of the C&MA in Canada consists of 78 churches and some 30,000 believers. JMC-2005 was attended by two thousand delegates from Canada and around the world. The theme of JMC-2009 will be "All for Jesus". The intention is to bring to Canada all of the branches from the Chinese Alliance World Fellowship, CWAFF, which was established shortly after our AWF 2004 Quadrennial conference in the Netherlands.



MEETING POINT: Who is who in the AWF-Family?

Name: Dr. Samuel Kamano

Born: June 11, 1958

Family: 3 daughters, 1 son

Function: President of the National Alliance Church in Guinea & Professor at the Theological Institute in Conakry,

Churches / believers in Guinea: 525 / 83,000

What impacted you most?

When I was 6 years old I played being a pastor. I preached to my friends and baptized them. As a teenager I promised the Lord that I would seek to share the gospel at school as often as possible. Again I was called pastor, but began to dislike a future in a full-time spiritual ministry. In that period I heard a sermon about Es.6 and was convinced that God was actually calling me!

Favorite bible passage:

Isaiah 6, because the Lord used it to lead me into serving Him full-time

Favorite book:

'The Pilgrim's Progress' by John Bunyan

Biggest challenge:

Many Christians do not know the fullness of Christ. If they would, the Church would have much less problems. The challenge is to lead in such a way that the Guinean Church will crave for that fullness again.

What is your dream:

That in 10 years all People Groups in Guinea will be reached with the gospel by a renewed Church

AWF Week of Prayer

*The AWF invites all members to pray for the world and for each other. To promote prayer we urge Alliance Churches to set aside the **first full week of May** as an annual "Alliance World Week of Prayer", culminating in an "Alliance World Day of Prayer" at the end of that week. Several national Churches already choose this particular week of the year. For others we propose to set this week apart, beginning in 2010. Dates for this year are: May 3-10. For **2010**: May 2-9; **2011**: May 1-8 etcetera.*

*May this event lead us to cry out to God for a world in need and to celebrate what He is doing to further His Kingdom. The AWF also strongly recommends all churches to join in other prayer events like the "International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church" (see the special website: www.idop.org). This event takes place during the first full week of November. In **2009** this is on **November 8***

FYI: AWF Members, please take note of the Treasurer's Letter (p.4)

Chile and Ecuador prepare for sending workers to countries in the 6th Region, in collaboration with AWF

May 26-31: General Council C&MA USA in Louisville, Kentucky

June 4-6 EMERALD Regional Conference in the United Kingdom.

June 25-27: AWF-APAC Region will hold a Presidents Gathering, in Thailand

July 1 – 5th, 2009: Chinese Conference JMC 2009 in Canada

August 25-29 CLA Meetings in Colombia

From the Treasurer to all AWF official members:

Greetings in the precious name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

I am glad that we had the opportunity to meet last year in the beautiful city of Santiago, Chile. I am certain that you will join me in expressing our gratitude to the Chilean team whom brings about such a well prepared quadrennial conference.

However, due to a short fall of the value of the US dollars, at the conclusion of the Santiago conference, we have a deficit of \$25,000.00 US. I am thankful for many of our members who forfeited their travel expense and partners who made additional gifts to the AWF in 2008.

Finances should not dominate my communication with you. But since I am the treasurer, I must remind you that the AWF cannot function without each member to meet their obligations of our membership at AWF. I must appeal to you to take your responsibility and pay your Membership Fee without delay.

2009 Is the beginning year of our new "Quadrennial" cycle. Hopefully, in 2012 we will be meeting in Canada. We are grateful that some members have already forwarded their membership fees at the first quarter of this year. Many of you will no doubt re-examine your own membership record to clear your debt from the past as well as making a new contribution. Regretfully, I must inform you that your membership is only current as to your faithfulness in meeting your obligation each year.

Should you need to be reminded as to the amount which we agree upon (2004 in Holland) as to membership fees which was set as follows:

The amount for membership each year is: "one tenth of one percent of the national church budget, or \$500.00 US per year whichever is the larger amount".

Remember this: "Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously." II Corinthians 9:6.

May the Lord bless according to His riches.



Together in Him,

J. Wilson Kaan

Rev. Wilson Kaan
Treasurer

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Funds for AWF sent to: Account number: 5079941
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Zipcode: 3951 LC Town: Maarn, Netherlands
Name of the bank: ING
Address bank: P.O. Box 1800
Zipcode bank: 1000 BV
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IBAN = NL 36 INGB 0005 0799 41
BIC/SWIFT = INGBNL2A
