

The Case for a Medical Clinic

By Jere Gowin, Former Missionary to Ghana

Bakuri Visits Wa

Bakuri Ahmed was a young teen when he first saw a white man. He lived in the remote village of Gurimbelle, and traveled about two days by foot to Wa, a town of some 60,000 residents. In Wa he was amazed by all the people and the large market full of every kind of delectable goody he could imagine. It was there that he saw his first white man. What a strange creature he was. He had heard stories and wondered if it was true that when they ate the black Kaw Kaw tyou could actually see the food travel through them down in to their stomachs because of their transparent skin. There was so much he wanted to know.

Later, someone came to his village with a strange thing they called a book, and Bakuri realized that a person could communicate with strange looking little scribbles. There was not even a word for the thing in his language. He was such a bright young man, his father consented for him to leave his village for a period of time so that he could go to school. The only books in the school were written in a language called English, but Bakuri was a gifted student with a passion for learning. Eventually he excelled in all his studies, and when he returned home he established a school to teach the village children.

Life in Gurimbelle

Life in Gurimbelle was harsh and deadly. Around the evening fires, the men often told stories about lions and other wild animals they had killed in years past. Yet, when Bakuri was a boy it was not lions, but malaria, snake bites, and farming accidents which claimed many lives each year. In a village of 1,200 souls it would not be unusual to lose twenty people to malaria in a year, and five or so to snake bites.

Generally speaking, the medical care in the Upper West Region is very poor. There are foreign doctors and nurses who are not there by choice and know little of African illnesses. The facilities are filthy and disease-infested. We lost more than one child because the hospital did not diagnose properly. Malaria and typhoid fever have symptoms which are similar yet with appropriate blood tests or simply watching temperature fluctuations a medical worker can easily determine the problem. Because of apathy or neglect many who trust those medical workers die.

According to the World Health Organization, waterborne diseases account for an estimated 1.8 million human deaths annually. They also estimate that 88% of those deaths are attributable to unsafe water supply, sanitation and hygiene. Various forms of waterborne dysentery are very common in Gurimbelle, and I treated it often. Since people do NOT drink enough water in the village the effects of the illness are even harsher.

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The road to Gurimbelle



Inside the hospital in Wa



Bakuri is baptized!



Nurse Oleta Witt is planning to move to Ghana in the summer of 2016, with the goal of administering a medical clinic in Gurimbelle.

Would you like to donate to Oleta's ministry or to the medical clinic? Contact:

World Missions
PO Box 4711
Overland Park, KS 66204
www.coghworlmissions.org

Bakuri Meets Jesus

My initial contact with Gurimbelle was most certainly directed by our sovereign God. Upon my arrival, the people summoned Bakuri Ahmed, as he spoke English fluently and knew a lot about white men. He took me to the tribal elders and though his village was thoroughly pagan, we were welcomed to come teach the people about Christ. The only request was that we try to help the sick.

While in the elementary phase of our communication of who God is in Gurimbelle, Bakuri was at each service, usually translating for me. In addition, he assisted me as I saw to the medical needs of those who attended our services. Our crowds were often near 200 strong, and it took two or three hours to see to them. When necessary, Barkuri would then take me to individual huts where people who were too ill to come to the service awaited the white man and his medicine. We soon found how desperate the medical needs of the people there were.

We taught through the Old Testament, leading up to telling about Jesus. When we introduced Jesus to those gathered at church we also showed the "JESUS" Film to the entire village. Almost the entire village showed up. Many stood for two and a half hours and were dramatically moved by the story of our Lord. Weeks after showing that video, we baptized over 200 believers. Bakuri Ahmed was the first to be baptized and then his dear wife Salamitu.

The Need for a Medical Missionary

Not only is Gurimbelle far from medical access in case of an emergency, they need someone to assist them in making wise medical choices. For example, it broke my heart each time one of our people was bitten by a snake and went to the witch doctor for his, most often, unsuccessful treatment. You see, I had the anti-venom in my refrigerator after once taking a snakebite victim all the way into the hospital, only to be told they had no anti-venom. As a result, the man died a horrible death and left a wife and eight orphaned children. On my next trip to Accra, I purchased several doses of anti-venom and kept them at our home. When the hospital needed some, I sold it to them.

We communicated the availability of the anti-venom to each of our villages, and yet none ever enlisted our assistance. As a result, Bakuri's sister, in addition to many others, lost their lives. Why? Why didn't the villagers have confidence in modern medicine? My theory is that someone needs to patiently live among the people and change their thinking with regards to modern medical practices.

Guess what? A very gifted young lady, Oleta Witt, is about to do just that, and as a result MANY lives will be saved and the Kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ will increase. Praise the Lord!

To learn more, go to www.coghworlmissions.org.