



ACTS MINISTRY – Burkina Faso

“Providing love and hope for mother and child”

News from Burkina February 2019

Pure and unblemished religion [as it is expressed in outward acts] in the sight of our God and Father is this: to visit and look after the fatherless and the widows in their distress, and to keep oneself uncontaminated by the [secular] world. James 1:27

Widows in Burkina Faso are considered outcasts and have little potential for taking care of themselves. Most are illiterate and have no rights of inheritance or support from families. Without literacy they cannot legally start a business or vote. ACTS provides literacy courses which allow women to take government exams and receive the valuable literacy certification.

There are new dangers for widows living near the border of Mali and Burkina Faso.

Widow Bina Diallo* and her sons, Issa and Sambo come from a small village in the area terrorized by Islamists about four hours from the capital, Ouagadougou.



Bina was a Muslim until 2013 when her son, Issa, became gravely ill and was taken to a hospital in Ouagadougou. Hospitals will not treat patients until they receive payment and Binta had no money.

The hospital was about to turn them out when a Christian man came and prayed for the boy. The boy was healed. After thinking over what had happened, Binta decided that if this man was an example of the Christian faith, she wanted to be a Christian too.

She lived for a short time with relatives of her husband in Ouagadougou but she was homeless when they learned she was a Christian. No one would take her in. It was at this time that someone brought her to Joanna Ilboudo, the founder of ACTS in Burkina Faso, who encouraged her to be strong in her faith, prayed for her and provided money for her to return to her parents' home near the border.

Back in her village she was rejected, but a protestant pastor allowed her family to sleep at his church. Her parents were too old and poor to help her financially.

At the end of December 2018, Binta traveled with the Assembly of God pastor to Ouagadougou where he attended a pastors' conference. Binta went with the pastor so she could personally thank Joanna for her prayers and counsel.

In talking with Binta, Joanna found that the area Binta and her sons live has become increasingly dangerous for Christians.

Islamic terrorists have been coming across the border from Mali to Burkina Faso, taking young boys. Binta witnessed that boys taken away come back to kill their parents. She is concerned because Issa is about 15 year old, the age for being taken by the terrorists.

Issa does not want to be part of the terrorist group. He wants to stay with his mom and go to school.

Joanna told Binta that she would be able to live in ACTS' housing and send Issa and Sambo to school at the ACTS Center. There Binta would have vocational training and projects to give her skills to earn income for her family.

*Names are changed for their safety.

Binta must find a way to get the three of them from the village to the ACTS Center, a trip with many dangers for women and children. Please pray for this widow and her sons. Ask the Lord to give her wisdom in how to make her way to ACTS.

ACTS' plan for displaced widows

Isaiah 1:17 says “...relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.” The increasing number of displaced mothers and children compels us to respond to their needs.

The statistics bear out the plight of the people affected by acts of violence in Burkina Faso. These are people that live in areas such as Binta's village.

- 80,000 internally displaced people
- 1,000 schools closed
- 146,000 no access to education
- 676,000 risk food insecurity

ACTS is partnering with a young Fulani pastor who plans to visit a camp where many displaced villagers are living. He will evaluate the situation to see if ACTS can indeed bring hope to those in the camp.

The preliminary plan is to bring hope through literacy classes, soap making for women, games such as soccer for the children traumatized from witnessing the killing of their fathers. They need to see God's love in action that will quell despair.

School begins with prayer and salvations

ACTS dedicated the school year with prayer times with primary and secondary school boys and girls.



The message shared with them, *Have success and God's favor in the 2019 year*, was followed by an

altar call. We thank the Lord that 42 students responded and dedicated their lives to Jesus.

Each student will receive a Bible and learn from ACTS' discipleship course to gain courage. Some are from strong Muslim backgrounds and need to learn how to walk out their faith day by day while living alongside Muslim neighbors and relatives.

Prayer requests and thanksgiving

Our main prayer request is for security and stability in the country. Near the ACTS Center, two terrorists were arrested in early January.

We pray for the Lord to ease the suffering of oppressed mothers and children and to show us the best way to respond to their spiritual and emotional needs.

We are grateful to our partners whose prayers and assistance encourage us and enables ACTS to continue serving the poor.

Our prayer for each one of you is from Romans 15:13. **“I pray that God, the source of hope, will fill you completely with joy and peace because you trust in him. Then you will overflow with confident hope through the power of the Holy Spirit.”**



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