

SELLERS SEQUEL

April 2006

EASTER!! The greatest story of life and death and new life!! As life goes on for us here in Cote d'Ivoire, we have seen death and new life in various and new ways.

March 24-25, we heard stories of **New Life in Christ** as delegates from throughout the country gathered for the General Assembly meeting of the Church of God in Cote d'Ivoire. Two new churches were recognized, bringing our total to 12 churches and 7 cell groups. More than 50 new believers were baptized over the last year, bringing active members to nearly 800. The meeting was held for the first time in the new meeting place in the upstairs of the Yamoussoukro building, also being used as sanctuary by the local church. In addition to the annual business meeting, we were thankful to add one full day of teaching and hope that next year we can increase to 3 days of teaching.



New Life is being breathed into the literacy ministry as it moves to a new level of development. This month, the Yamoussoukro Church has taken over the literacy program with 3 levels presently meeting there. They have 3 highly qualified teachers, who are committed to helping others know the joy of reading. There is also one teacher who will specialize in writing skills and one who is a substitute. These young persons are also committed to helping other villages and communities see literacy centers. We see literacy as the first step in helping many Christians grow in their knowledge of the Lord.



Over the last two weeks, it has been a joy to watch **eighteen boys, ages 13-17** commit themselves to study God's word and learn to live their **NEW LIVES** in Christ. Please pray for these young men who are seeking to know God more personally. Pray also for their leader, a young man in the Church who has felt the need to help these boys be prepared for the future. We are still in need of a Christian married man who can help mentor these boys along with their leader. We are excited about the young girls who are in this same age category, as they will also begin their group this month. These two groups make up our **new Junior Youth Group** in the Yamoussoukro Church of God congregation.

As the winds from the Sahara continue to blow our way we are seeing more and more air-borne illness affecting this area, most notably meningitis, bringing with it **DEATH**. Since Christmas we have been involved with three cases of meningitis in which two babies died and one young boy was discovered early enough and has fully recovered. We fear that more cases of this and other deadly diseases may be forthcoming as we move into the hot rainy season. We find ourselves spending more and more of our time dealing with health needs of church members. In recent months several pastors' families have been seriously hit by illness. Our pastor here in Yamoussoukro lost his wife in January after a short period of illness. She was one of our most promising up and coming young leaders at only 33 years of age. Two other pastors' wives have now recovered after serious illnesses as well. We are also beginning to see more cases of AIDS-related needs in the church.

Even in the midst of heavy responsibilities with the Church, we had the opportunity to have **Laura home with us for two weeks in March**. Though we did not take any trips, we did spend some memorable family times, playing games, watching movies, swimming, and having fun. Though it is still difficult having our family split up across West Africa, we are learning to adjust to the changes in our family dynamics. **We have had to make the difficult decision** to send Lee to Senegal next year for school with Laura even though he is much younger, only 13 years old. Though we are not ready for the empty nest syndrome, we feel it is the best for his schooling and social needs. At least he will be there with Laura for her senior year.

It never ceases to amaze us how closely tied **LIFE is to DEATH** especially here in Africa. At about the same time that our pastor's wife died, another pastor's wife gave birth to her 11th child. We will dedicate this NEW LIFE to God on April 23rd. And then in March, the father of a young teacher in the church accepted Christ and received **NEW LIFE**. This was after living his life steeped in African tradition and fetishism. He had three wives and at least 14 children. He died two weeks later, likely of AIDS. **LIFE to DEATH to NEW LIFE forever!!**



Rejoicing in New Life,

Larry, LeAnn, Laura and Lee