



2018 Mission Trip Report

7th November – 13th December 2018



A work of the Gipps Street Church of Christ (Toowoomba), in union with the Niceville Church of Christ (Florida), seeking to serve God through supporting His work and our brethren in Guinea, West Africa.

From the 7th November to 13th December 2018, Abraham and Maddi Miller, Ruth Niland and Michael Widderick travelled to Guinea and Liberia on behalf of Mission Guinea, the Gipps Street Church of Christ and the Niceville Church of Christ. The following is a report of the trip, major activities and outcomes.

We give thanks to all who supported us before, during and after our travels. Your prayers and thoughts were greatly appreciated and we were blessed with good health and safety while in Guinea.

God has certainly blessed our collective efforts with the substantial progress made toward the Bible College and the ongoing endeavours of our brethren in Guinea.

If you have any questions relating to the report or the Mission Guinea work, please do not hesitate to contact Mission Guinea via guineamission@gmail.com. If you would like to find out more or have an interest in supporting this work, please do not hesitate to get in contact.



Background

In late 2013, Abraham Miller and Michael Widderick travelled to Guinea to:

- meet with the brethren,
- identify needs of the brethren, and
- discuss long-held plans for a Bible training college in Guinea.

In early 2014, Mission Guinea was formed by members of the Gipps Street Church of Christ, in Toowoomba, Australia to support the brethren in Guinea and their desire to have a Bible training college. Since this time, brethren at Gipps Street and other congregations in Australia have supported these efforts generously.

Since Mission Guinea started:

- Total amount of support raised by brethren in Australia = \$79,772.04 AUD
- Total amount of support provided to brethren in Guinea = \$74,686.78 AUD

The total amount of support provided to brethren in Guinea includes:

- Contribution toward the Bible college = \$16,382.20 AUD
- Contribution to evangelists and congregations = \$50,234.03 AUD
- Contribution to other needs (travel, bibles, Ebola and storm recovery) - \$8,070.55 AUD

In addition, we have been working alongside our brethren at the Niceville Church of Christ in Florida, who have in the past had missionary efforts in Guinea for many years and still hold a strong desire to continue supporting the works and brethren in Guinea.

2018 Mission trip goals

The goals of this 2018 mission trip were to:

- Start work on the construction of the Bible training college, and
- Visit with the brethren in Guinea and Liberia.

Table 1 provides an overview of the travel and activities that took place during the mission trip.

Table 1 Summary of travel and activities

Date/s	Activities
<i>November 2018</i>	
7 th – 8 th	Travel to Guinea (Brisbane – Dubai – Conakry)
8 th	Night in Conakry, including provision of gifts to the Cite de L’Air congregation for distribution.
9 th -10 th	Travel from Conakry to N’Zerekore (28 hour drive)
11 th	Worship with Sokoura Church and gift giving. Visitation to the Bible college building site in Samoe. Meeting with the Guinea Bible college building committee.
12 th -13 th	Accessing support through banks and exchanges. Meetings with original lead engineer and builder.
14 th	Market trip to purchase food supplies. Meeting with new engineer and same builder.
15 th	Purchasing supplies for building (shovels, wheel barrows, timber, steel rod etc.). Supplies delivered to Samoe brethren. Signed contract with the new engineer and builder.
16 th – 17 th	Building site. Finalising location of the building and start of manual digging out for foundation.
17 th (afternoon)	Teaching the men and women of Sokoura.
18 th	Worship with Mohomou Church and gift giving. Visitation of their worship hall under construction. Meeting with Brother Antoine (Mohomou preacher).
19 th - 24 th	Foundation holes (33) dug by hand – approx. 2x2x2m. Deliveries of sand, gravel, block rock. Manual carting of water and construction of a water reservoir. Cement and block rocks in base of foundation holes. Purchase and set up of pump.
25 th	Worship with Samoe Church and gift giving. PM – Teaching men and women.
26 th	Cement mixer ordered and arrived. Repair water reservoir. Steel rod installation started in foundation holes. PM – meeting with Mohomou brethren.
27 th – 30 th	Steel rod installation continued with framework and cement being manually poured in. Reservoir filled with water. Digging out between foundation pillars. Cement vibrator hired. Meeting re: continued work on foundation and funds and regarding children’s project.
<i>December 2018</i>	
1 st	Camp Laine (approx. 2 hour drive) and gift giving. Discussion around soap making project for the ladies.
2 nd	Worship with Belle Vue Church. Teaching with the men and women. Quick visitation to Bible college building site to see progress.
3 rd	Camp Kouankan (approx. 2 ½ hour drive) and gift giving, including Braille bible for Philip Sakilla. Discussion with brethren.
4 th	Visitation of brethren in Zombroma and Macenta, including viewing worship hall under

	construction in Macenta. Travel to Liberia, night in Voinjama.
5 th	Meeting with brethren in Voinjama. Travel to Gueckedou and meet with brethren. Travel to Kissidougou – night in Kissidougou.
6 th	Not able to meet with Kissidougou brethren due to poor health and death in local village. Travel to Dabola and meet with brethren and gift giving. Travel to Conakry (arriving 2am 7 th).
7 th	Enquiries regarding purchasing bibles – not in stock. Meeting with Nestor regarding his work.
8 th	Meeting with local brethren.
9 th	Worship with Conakry (Cite de L’Air) brethren. Teaching with the men and women. Visitation of another small congregation in Conakry with Brother George.
10 th	Day off – trip to local market. PM – Bible study with local teacher.
11 th – 13 th	Travel to Australia (Conakry – Dakar – Dubai – Brisbane).

Support

A breakdown of the support provided for the mission trip and for the start of construction of the Bible college is provided in Table 2.

Table 2 Mission trip support amounts and source

Support	Provided by	Amount (AUD)	Amount (USD)	Amount (GNF)
Building Fund	Mission Guinea	\$14,500	\$10,000	\$93,411,750
Building Fund	Niceville		\$10,000	\$93,411,750
Travel fund - Guinea	Gipps Street	\$4,966		\$31,087,786
Travel fund - Liberia	Niceville		\$900	\$8,186,000
Bibles fund	Gipps Street	\$520		\$3,255,200
Children’s project	Gipps Street	\$450		\$2,816,374
TOTAL				\$232,168,860

Through Mission Guinea, a goal of reaching \$10,000USD was set in order to start work on the foundation of the Bible college. The brethren at Niceville offered to match this amount once the target had been reached.

Special contributions were made by both Gipps Street and Niceville to assist with travel expenses while in Guinea and Liberia. While Mission Guinea does not currently support the brethren in Liberia, the Niceville church do and they provided support and requested we visit the brethren in Voinjama, Liberia since it is close to the Guinea/Liberia border.

Brethren from Gipps street provided support for the specific purposes of purchasing bibles and for a Children’s project that could help provide ongoing income for local families of the church. In addition, gifts were taken to Guinea for the children and included underwear, socks, toothbrushes, toothpaste, lollies and toys. The gifts were distributed amongst the ten congregations currently supported through Mission Guinea.

Bible training college

A desire to build a bible training college has been in place for almost two decades. After the 2013 trip to Guinea we brought back with us plans for the construction of a three storey building to serve as a place for training men and women in the bible. With the generous support of brethren in Australia and brethren from the Niceville Church of Christ in Florida, a total amount of \$20,000 USD was provided to start the physical construction of the bible college.

The key purpose of the 2018 mission trip was to build the foundation for the building, as phase one of construction.

The bible college site is located near the village of Samoe where there is a local congregation of the Church. Samoe is an outlying suburb of N'Zerekore and is about a 20 minute motorbike ride from N'zerekore city. Samoe is an ideal location for the bible college as it is quiet and is unlikely to encounter persecution or trouble from the Islamic community.



The parcel of land purchased for the construction of the Bible training college, with plenty of room for other buildings in the future. Note the site is surrounded by dense forest used by locals to grow coffee, palm trees for oil and nuts and tropical fruits.



New and improved plans for the Bible College were provided by the first engineer and are available for anyone who would like a copy.

Work on the bible college started on the 16th November, 2018. Many of the brethren in N'Zerekore gathered at the building site on this day to offer prayers and sing songs of praise to God. Even the workers and the engineer were present and participated.



Brethren and workers gather together to give thanks and to pray for blessings on the work.

Apart from the lead engineer and builder, there were approximately another 25-30 workers on site each day. Much of the work was manual so the workers worked very hard each day.

As the bible college will be three storeys, the foundation needs to be strong. We were continuously impressed with the level of accuracy and professionalism throughout the construction. Although some things are done a bit differently and there is not ready access to machinery and technology, we can have confidence that the foundation will be strong and will stand the test of time.

While the construction of the foundation was not completed during our time in Guinea, the brethren there continued the work and the foundation is now complete.

Below are some photos to show the progress and stages of construction of the foundation.



33 large holes (2x2x2m³) were dug by hand for the foundation pillars (Left). Each hole then had a base of cement and block rock as a basis for the pillars (Right).



Great care was taken to build the foundation with accuracy. The engineer, builders and workers all recognised the need to have a strong foundation so the building will stand the test of time.



Water access was necessary for the mixing of cement. We started out collecting water from the creek in the valley near the building site and carting it up to the site. However, we were unable to keep up with the water demands so a bigger hole for water collection was dug at the creek and we purchased a pump and hose to pump water into a newly built reservoir.



Once the wire framework for the foundation pillars were in place, they were cemented in prior to being framed up and being manually filled with cement.



A cement vibrator was hired to ensure the foundation pillars were strong. Once complete the timber framing was removed and the vertical pillars were linked horizontally with more cement to a depth of one metre. The first floor bricks will be built on top of this cement framework.



Initially all the cement was mixed by hand. A cement mixer was hired and sped up the work considerably.

Congregational visitation

Mission Guinea is currently supporting ten congregations in Guinea and their preacher/evangelist (Table 3). We were able to visit with all of these congregations except for Kissidougou during our travels.

In addition, we worshipped with the brethren at Belle Vue (a suburb of N'Zerekore) where we support their preacher, and visited with the brethren in Zombroma, Conakry (Br. George preacher) and Voinjama, Liberia.

Table 3 Congregations and evangelists currently supported through Mission Guinea, the amount of support and the target for support

Identified need	Current monthly support	Support target
Basic congregational needs (food, clothing, shelter, medicine, self-empowerment)		
Dabola	25	\$50/month
Kissidougou	25	\$50/m
Samoe	25	\$50/m
Mohomou	25	\$50/m
Sokoura	25	\$50/m
Gueckedou	25	\$50/m
Conakry	25	\$50/m
Kouankan refugee camp	50	\$100/m
Laine refugee camp	65	\$100/m
Macenta	50	\$100/m
Evangelist support		
Saa Etienne Millimono (<i>Dabola</i>)	13.33	\$125/m
Antoine (<i>Dabola</i>)	20	\$100/m
Balla Kamanno (<i>Kissidougou</i>)	13.33	\$100/m
Moses Sesay (<i>Kissidougou</i>)	20	\$95/m
Philip F Sakilla (<i>Kouankan</i>)	65	\$125/m
Sam Williams (<i>Samoe</i>)	33.33	\$100/m
Zeze Beavogui (<i>Sokoura</i>)	20	\$125/m
Saa Philip Tolno (<i>Gueckedou</i>)	13.33	\$117/m
Saa Nestor Millimono (<i>Gueckedou</i>)	13.33	\$91/m
Tamba Emmanuel Kamanno (<i>Gueckedou</i>)	13.33	\$87/m
Nestor Tonguino (<i>Conakry</i>)	68.33	\$138/m
Zomy Ce Konan (<i>Belle Vue</i>)	20	\$100/m

Please note the value under the current monthly support is the current support to which brethren have committed. Our support target is the total amount we are targeting for that area.

The congregations each vary in size, ranging from only 13 members to 150 (Table 4) and their circumstances differ. While our time with some of the congregations was limited, below is an overview of each including any items that were raised and discussed, or identified during our visitation.

Table 4 Approximate congregation membership numbers

Congregation	Men	Women	Children	Total
<i>Supported through Mission Guinea</i>				
Laine	10	27 (8 widows)	40	77
Cite de L'Air (Conakry)	25	12	40	77
Dabola	25	10	20	55
Gueckedou				40-60
Samoe	14	13	37	64
Macenta	4	4	10	18
Sokoura	44	54	52	150
Mohomou	9	15	20	44
Kouankan				Approx. 50
Kissidougou	(Did not get to meet with)			
<i>Not supported through Mission Guinea</i>				
Zombroma	1	7	6	14
Conakry (Br. George)	9	2	2	13
Belle Vue	9	15	34	58
Voinjama (Liberia)				38

Overall, the need for preacher support and basic needs is still paramount. Preacher support is required at each of the congregations. Without preacher support, preachers have to seek secular work which then limits the time they can take to spend growing the church. Support for basic needs is required at each of the congregations, but most importantly for brethren in Laine and Kouankan camps.

The brethren in Guinea are hungry for Bible teaching. However this is hampered by the lack of Bibles and teaching material, given Guinea is predominantly a Muslim country.

While visiting with brethren it became clear there are some struggles relating to tribal traditions and pressures from non-Christian family members as a result. For example, if your wife is not able to have children, pressure to take another wife. Also, the pressure for a husband and wife to support the wife's parents, no matter what, and the family forcing the wife to leave the husband if he doesn't comply.

Irrespective of these pressures and persecutions, the brethren are holding firm to the faith. However, these issues make it evident that the brethren in Guinea need our support to continue to hold strong.

Laine

Laine was a refugee camp, which at its largest, had some 38,000 refugees. There are now approximately 2000 people left, most of who are from Liberia. The UN has withdrawn from the camp, along with any support that was being provided. As such, there is no school and no medical facilities. Upon the UN's withdrawal, the land on which the camp exists was returned to the Guinean government. Those who are still living on the land and using it for growing vegetables etc., now have to pay to use the land. Even so, the owners help themselves to the produce that is grown and make it very difficult for our brethren to make any sort of income. The Liberian government are not assisting.

The question was asked of the brethren why they are still in the camp. Ultimately it comes down to the fact that they don't have enough money to leave and even if they return to Liberia (because Guinea will not grant them citizenship) they don't know if their properties still exist or whether they have been taken over by someone else.

The brethren in Laine are extremely well-organised and welcoming. They are doing their very best to educate their children, and the women have formed a group to do this. However, it is also often left up to the women to gather food for the family. As such, while we were in the camp, a suggestion was discussed for the women to start making and selling soap at the nearby town. The knowledge to be able to do so exists and there is a demand for soap. This would enable the ladies to have an income and to have more time to be able to spend educating the children. To start this project, \$3,000,000 GNF was provided for the purchase of materials required for soap making.

The church in Laine need ongoing assistance with basic needs. In addition, their housing and worship place are in poor condition, with tarpaulin roofing.



The Church at Laine and their worship hall

Kouankan

The situation in Kouankan is similar to that of Laine with the UN having withdrawn from the camp and many families stuck in limbo. However, there are many more people still in the camp with over 900 family units. One of the preachers in Kouankan, Philip Sakilla, has a visual impairment and while there we were able to give him a donated Braille bible. The bible was across 14 large books. Philip started reading the bible straight away so it will come in very useful for him and the brethren there. We also gave a CD player and the bible on audio CD. Philip and his wife have three children and one niece that they care for.

As with Laine, there is a need for basic need and improved houses and worship hall. However, we did not hear of the same sort of persecution and stealing of produce as in Laine.

The camp has started school for the children although they call it 'Standard Study Class' so as to not draw attention to the fact that the children are getting some education outside of the Guinean school system.



Philip Sakilla reading the Braille Bible which was gifted to him by a lady from the Gipps Street Church of Christ with the help of Vision Australia.

Sokoura

The largest of the congregations we support. The full-time preacher is ZeZe who with his wife have three children. Also at Sokoura is Brother Amos who is also a trained preacher. Amos assists with the preaching and teaching when required. Sokoura have their own worship hall and are also constructing a residence for visiting evangelists/missionaries. Sokoura also has a weekly radio program. The congregation covers all ages, but it was evident there were many young man stepping up to help in leading worship. Preacher support and basic needs are still needed.

Mohomou

A smaller congregation with more young Christians and their families. The brethren are currently worshipping in the home of the preacher, Antoine. However, with the help of the brethren in Niceville, they have started construction of a temporary worship hall on land lent to them by a local not in the church. The congregations desire is to have their own, permanent worship hall.



Children receive their gifts from the brethren at Gipps Street

Samoe

Sam Williams is the preacher at Samoe and he and his wife have four children. They are very active in hospitality and while we were in Guinea opened their home up for many visitors to stay. The brethren in Samoe worship in a recently constructed and good sized worship hall built on land provided by one of the brethren. Since 2013, they have built the new edifice and use the old one for children's classes. Samoe is the congregation located closest to the Bible college and as such, Sam is playing a major role in continuing construction. Preacher support and basic needs are still required.

Macenta

A small congregation, we got to visit with three of the men there. Currently Macenta do not have a paid preacher so the work load is being shared between these three men. The brethren have been using some of their basic needs support to go toward the construction of a worship hall on land owned by the church. The brethren are in need of a full-time preacher and will be pursuing this in the near future.



The worship hall being constructed at Macenta.

Gueckedou

While in Gueckedou we were able to visit with brother Philip Tolno and his family. Unfortunately, Philip has been unwell for about 4 months and finds it difficult to even walk. He had been to Conakry for treatment. However, they were not able to provide help and were unsure what his illness is. While there are between 40-60 at the Gueckedou congregation supported by Mission Guinea, there are 14 congregations in Gueckedou prefecture/region. On average each of these has about 40 in regular attendance. Preacher and basic needs support are still needed.



Philip Tolno (red shirt) from Gueckedou with his wife, two children and two brothers from the Church.

Dabola

We met with brothers Etienne and Antoine in Dabola. They showed us the place in which they are worshipping which is in a house being constructed by one the brethren in the Dabola church. They have a desire to build a separate, permanent worship hall. However, the community is heavily Islamic so it is difficult to gain land for the purpose of building a Christian worship hall. Furthermore, there are gold mines in and around Dabola, so land is very expensive. The brethren also identified they do not have any form of transport to be able to evangelise in and around Dabola.

Conakry (Cite de L'Air)

The brethren in Conakry are meeting in a small hired worship hall which is full each Sunday. They have been setting aside much of their regular contribution to put toward land to be able to build a permanent worship hall. To date, they have set aside \$28,000,000GNF (Approx. \$4000AUD) for this purpose.

While in Conakry we had opportunity to discuss with the brethren the issues of marriage and relationships and the importance of placing God first not matter what family or tribal traditions dictate.

Conakry is the capital city of Guinea, and as such is a more expensive place to live.



Conakry (Cite de L'Air) Church

Zombroma

A small congregation located in a very small village and consisting of all women and one man. The brother left his teaching job to be able to preach and teach at the church while still doing some teaching more locally.

Voinjama, Liberia

The church at Voinjama have built a worship hall with support from the Niceville church. They are still completing the hall and would like to also replace the current toilet block and possibly purchase the small parcel of land below the hall to enable them to build a residence for future visitors. The preacher is brother Boukai. He is a faithful man doing his very best under trying circumstances.

We discussed some relationship issues that have come into the church and also discussed some governance issues that have come into the church in Liberia. Due to brother Boukai's scriptural stance, he has suffered persecution from others in the Voinjama church and also from those in the wider Liberian churches.

Brother Boukai has a radio program twice a week and a prison ministry where he visits with prisoners each Sunday afternoon.

Belle Vue

A vibrant and young congregation. The preacher Zomy and his wife have four children. The congregation worships in a small, but sufficient worship hall constructed on land owned by one of the brethren. In discussion with the brethren, questions were raised relating to relationships, marriage and divorce, baptism and funerals.

Conakry (Br George).

We had a very brief visit with Brother George, his wife and eldest son. They worship in their home along with a small number of Christians, many of who are students at the university. As such there numbers fluctuate as students finish and arrive.

Children's Project

The brethren from Gipps Street provided support of \$450 for the purpose of starting a project driven by the children in the congregations supported by Mission Guinea. The idea behind the project is to provide a way for the children, and thereby their communities, to make some money to provide support for themselves.

At the start of our time in N'zerekore, we discussed the project idea with the brethren and sought their suggestions. By the end of our time in N'Zerekore, the brethren there had decided they would raise pigs with the provided support. The idea behind the project is to start in the N'zerekore region amongst the congregations there (Sokoura, Samoe, Mohomou, Belle Vue). Over time, the project will be able to spread further.

A report will be forthcoming regarding the project progress.

Bibles

A total of \$520AUD was provided for the provision of bibles to brethren in Guinea. As Guinea is a predominantly Muslim country, it is difficult to access bibles. There is now only one shop in Conakry that stocks and sells bibles. Unfortunately, they had sold out while we were there. There are many denominations in Guinea and they also have a demand for bibles.

The support amount was left with the brethren in Conakry who will purchase and distribute the bibles to the congregations supported by Mission Guinea. The support amount should purchase 94 bibles. The bibles will be distributed evenly between the 10 congregations we support and the remaining four will be given to the brethren worshipping with Brother George in Conakry.

Please continue to keep the work of Mission Guinea and the brethren in Guinea in your prayers. The Mission Guinea working group endeavour to meet each quarter to discuss and progress the works.

After each meeting we produce a brief report on progress. If you would like to receive the regular report, please contact us on guineamission@gmail.com.

Please give prayerful consideration to supporting the work of Mission Guinea as we continue to construct the Bible training college and support our brethren in Guinea. We are currently endeavouring to get quotes for the next phases of construction (first, second then third floor, roofing and internal and external fittings/painting etc.) from the contracted engineer and builder. Our desire is to gain sufficient support to be able to continue the construction ASAP. To date, \$4585.26 AUD has been provided in support for phase 2 of the building project which will be the first floor.

Also, please consider whether you would like to travel to Guinea to assist with future works. While a specific date has not been set for future travel, if you would like to be kept in the loop, please let us know.



On behalf of the Mission Guinea working group and the brethren in Guinea, thank you for your ongoing support.