

Flash on

Mali

ÉDITORIAL

« ... You will be my witnesses!»

(Acts 1.8)

For several years now, the emergence of religious extremism has created a lot of difficulties among Christian Churches, targeted by Islamist fundamentalists who violently demonstrate their hatred and intolerance. It is the case in Mali where Christians are a minority and who suffer the bulk of the virulent opposition of Boko Haram, especially in the North of the country.

This systematic persecution in no way discourages our Malian brothers and sisters who remain, despite all the opposition, faithful **witnesses** of Jesus-Christ and pursue their mission with faith and conviction throughout the country knowing that the Lord accompanies them: "... In the world, you will have tribulation. But take heart, I have overcome the world" (John 16.33b).

This situation leads us to ask some basic questions: how to evangelize under such conditions/circumstances when the adversary is raging and how to make good use of the biblical resources that the Lord has provided?

A short historical reminder: in a similar context, about 3 200 years ago (cf. Judges 6 -7), the land of Israel was occupied and devastated by an inflexible people, the Midianites, who came from the desert, ravaging everything on their path, leaving in Israel neither food, nor animals, nor vital resources. They forced the inhabitants to **hide** and caused extreme misery among the defeated people compelled to live in appalling conditions.

To hide! No doubts, but the Lord never forgets his own: he awakens the faith of a young man, Gideon who was thrashing wheat in a press.



Projected partnership: on the left, Pastor Mohamed Ag Infa and his spouse, from the Evangelical Baptist Church in Tombouctou; in the middle: Mohamed Ibrahim Yattara and his spouse, Audio Vie-Mali director; on the right, Pastor Samuel Yalcouyé and his spouse from the Evangelical Protestant Church in Koulouba.

God's message is clear: wheat = **God's Word/oil press = the Holy Spirit**: two resources that are essential to raise up a man, a family, a tribe (Manasseh) able to defeat the enemy... 300 men finally reconquered the country following fierce fighting!

In this story, a third vital element must be emphasized to explain the Israelite's complete victory and the resounding defeat of the Midianites: **Faith!** Faith that removes mountains (cf. Mat. 17.20), takes hold of that which is elusive (cf. Heb 11.1) and enables remain firm in the Lord in the middle of this world's most unbearable circumstances.

May these fundamental resources (**Word – Holy Spirit – Faith**) remain rooted in the heart of all the witnesses of Jesus-Christ who are persecuted and may they be, for our Malian brothers and sisters, effective "spiritual weapons" in their mission of evangelization.

Pierre Blond

PRESENTATION

FOR A FRUITFUL PARTNERSHIP TO THE GLORY OF GOD

With an area of 1.240.190 km², Mali is a continental country in the heart of Western Africa. It shares its borders (7.420 km) with seven neighboring countries: Algeria to the North, Niger to the East, Burkina Faso, the Ivory Coast and Guinea to the South, Senegal and Mauritania on the West. In 2018 the Malian population was estimated at 19 million people. It is made up of many ethnic groups: Bambara, Fulani, Tuareg, Moor, Senoufs, Sarakole, Songhai, Malinke, Bobo, Minianka, Toucouleur, Somono, Bozo, Dogon, etc. 78 languages and dialects are spoken and recorded. Mali is a land of old civilizations. It was the seat of three large empires: Ghana, Mali and Songhai. Tolerance has always been a characteristic of these people. On the religious level,



Audio Vie director with young people in the open air.

94.8% of Malians declare themselves to be Muslims 2% are Christians 2% are animists and 0.8% do not belong to any specific group.

Since January 2012, the country has experienced an unprecedented crisis that affects the Church, its witness, its growth and evangelization. The sociopolitical context has known a deep change: principle of religious neutrality and tolerance are threatened and challenged by small Islamic groups. It is within this conflictual crisis that the Audio Vie-Mali (GRN-Mali) has come into being in order to answer the need to spread the Good News in partnership with the Churches, thus helping them to reach the Malian people. Audio Vie (GRN) has at its disposal some simple material adapted to touching the unreached people, of oral and written cultures, with the purpose of making disciples of Jesus-Christ among the ethnic groups of Mali.

AUDIO VIE'S (GRN) COMMITMENT IN MALI

Audio Vie-Mali works in the town of Bamako; it offers its services and its competencies to the Churches for evangelization projects or in view of strengthening new converts. Inside the country, in regions that are at risk, among the Tuaregs and the Fulani, it offers to the local believers:



in partnership with the Evangelical Protestant Church of Mali. Bougouni is a district of 26 towns totaling more than 600.000 inhabitants. Most of these people speak Bambara, the most spoken language in Mali. It seems like a paradox that the majority of Churches in Mali conduct their worship services in Bambara, while it is the most unreached ethnic group. That is the reason why they are the group aimed at by this evangelization and church planting project. They are Muslims and open, but extremism progresses every day, taking advantage of the poverty of the population and the inertia of the state.

The specific objectives are:

- To preach the Good News in the villages and districts of the urban community of Bougouni;
- To gather and strengthen the new converts;
- To establish three Churches before the end of 2023.

SUPPORT THIS PROJECT

In order to realize this experimental project, the Church in Bougouni has asked for the help and partnership of Audio Vie. To reach the objective of planting churches, Audio Vie will organize large evangelization campaigns, film projections, going door-to-door, messages on media, distribution of tracts, Bibles, small radios with memory cards. Twenty people, in the designated area, have already been trained for this work of evangelization and follow-up. Results obtained up to now

Groupe d'étude biblique à Bougouni avec le partenaire Audio

Christian booklets, Christian literature, memory cards and small radios containing tailored messages recorded in 23 languages.

Since the first trimester 2019, Audio Vie-Mali has been working on an evangelization program, planning to plant churches in all the villages of the district of Bougouni,

are encouraging: more than 1.400 people have heard the Gospel in home cells. Six people have been converted in Massabilia, thirteen in Sogola and about ten in the local prison.

As evangelization progresses in the region of Bougouni, other efforts of evangelization will also spread to the North and to the Center of the country, inhabited by the Tuaregs, Moors, Songhais and Dogons. Mali is a vast and difficult missionary field, but it is still open in spite of the



An auditor of Audio Vie messages in his native tongue on his cell phone.

growing powers of evil hindering the work of the Churches.

Your prayers, your participation and partnership are appreciated to spread the Good News across the whole country.

AUDIO VIE

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