

W5 on Missions

Who... Mike and Kathy Steinborn

Mike and Kathy both came to faith in Christ in their late teens and were very active members in their local church in leadership and Christian Education. Both received their education at Ontario Bible College. They also have extensive language training. They attended the Summer Institute of Linguistics in Dallas, Texas, for linguistic and translation training, and Laval University in Quebec City for French language study prior to going overseas.

The Steinborns have two children, Rachel and Joshua. Mike and Kathy have been involved in speaking and making presentations in Canada in an effort to inform and motivate God's people to help bring His Word to the remaining 2500 Bibleless people groups around the world.



When... Mike and Kathy Steinborn have been serving in Burkina Faso with Wycliffe since 1997. They were co-appointed with Canadian Baptist Ministries in 2002 at the request of Lisle Memorial Baptist Church in Toronto.

Where... Burkina Faso, West Africa

Burkina Faso is a landlocked country located in the middle of West Africa's "hump". It is in the agricultural region between the Sahara Desert and the coastal rain forests. Most of central Burkina Faso lies on a savanna plateau, 200 meters-300 meters (650 ft.-1,000 ft.) above sea level, with fields, brush, and scattered trees.

Annual average rainfall varies from about 100 cm (40 in.) in the south to less than 25 cm (10 in.) in the north and northeast, where hot desert winds accentuate the dryness of the region. The cooler season, November to February, is pleasantly warm and dry (but dusty), with cool evenings. March-June can be very hot. In July-September, the rains bring a 3-month cooler and greener humid season.

Burkina Faso has West Africa's largest elephant population. Game preserves are home to lions, hippos, monkeys, warthogs, and antelope. Infrastructure and tourism are, however, not well developed.

Burkina Faso's 15.2 million people (2008) belong to two major West African cultural groups, the Voltaic and the Mande, whose common language is Dioula.

Burkina Faso is one of the poorest countries in the world, with a per capita gross domestic product of \$440. More than 80% of the population relies on subsistence agriculture, with only a small fraction directly involved in industry and services. Drought, poor soil, lack of adequate communications and other infrastructure, a low literacy rate, and an economy vulnerable to external shocks are all longstanding problems.

What... The Steinborns serve as CBM Strategic Associates working with the 12,000 Bibleless Kusassi people. They spent their last term beginning the linguistic research that will lead to the establishment of an alphabet for the Kusaal language, and eventually literacy and Bible translation.

Update provided by Steinborns:

There have been some major changes. The language project with the Kusassi was turned over to the national Bible translation organization in Burkina when the Steinborns returned to Africa last September and were asked to work in administration. Mike was asked to consider a nomination to the post of mission director for the work of WBT/SIL in Burkina, and ended up being elected. He takes up this new role in March 2010. Kathy is involved in providing informal health care for the people on the mission centre in Ouagadougou, and teaching a health course at the International School of Ouagadougou.

They continue to work with and help the Kusassi anyway they can. The Kusassi have organized themselves into an association that wishes to receive training and help to take charge of their own language development, literacy, and Bible translation. The Steinborns plan to help them do that. They are also still working on the linguistic analysis of the Kusaal language and plan to help them establish an alphabet in the near future. In his new role as director, Mike looks forward to playing a key role in helping the remaining language communities of Burkina move forward in the areas of developing their languages and having translated Scriptures and other useful materials made available to them.

From Steinborn's November 2009 newsletter:

"Our nearly four-week orientation tour in the USA was definitely informative, occasionally exciting, and thoroughly exhausting! We visited Wycliffe headquarters in Orlando, FL, SIL headquarters in Dallas, TX, JAARS headquarters near Waxhaw, NC, and SIL's Office of International Relations in Washington, DC, with a side trip to New York City to visit some United Nations agencies and Burkina's Mission to the UN. Most days were filled with meetings from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., followed by supper with hosts or friends, after which I often spent several hours preparing for one of the various talks and presentations that I was scheduled to give.

Upon our return to Canada, we had a little less than two weeks to get ready to go back to Burkina Faso. We crashed and slept for the first couple of days. Then we began getting our affairs in order, making several last visits to family, friends, and churches, purchasing items and materials we needed back in Burkina... and packing it all up to take on the plane with us."

Why... To help people be able to read the Word of God in their own languages.

Lorna McCain