

June 2005, *Equipping*

## **A Moment for Celebration: A Mission Moment**

*We invite you to share the following story with your congregation. It should take no more than 2 minutes to read aloud. You might also wish to include the story in your church newsletter.*



Edward & his child

### **BENIN: A Tale of Two Men**

#### **Edward Tachin**

In a village in central Benin called Daho, Edward Tachin struggled with his desire to become a Christian. He was a great singer and when he came in second as a head singer or “groit” in a village folklore group competition, he refused to enter the competitions that followed. One of his children had died shortly after the first competition, and when he sought to find out the reason for the death of his child, he was told that someone was jealous and had cursed his child, causing her death. Therefore, he quit singing, on order to spare his other children!

This insight into world views gave Phil & Christine Lindell-Detweiler, Mennonite Church Canada Witness workers in the region, opportunity to share on a number of occasions the hope that we have in Jesus.

**François Okoumassou** is a village health promoter who works in Edward’s village. Phil and Christine went to have a meal of pounded yams with François’s family. The Okaoumassou’s have seven children of their own, but usually, there are a few others that tend to be around the house as well. This time, there was a small girl that Phil and Christine didn’t recognize. They learned that she was Edward’s daughter.

François is a Christian, and has been a good example in the communities where he works. People have opened up to him. François’s living example as a follower of Christ allowed him to talk with many about Christ. François explained that Edward was afraid for the life of this young daughter and had approached François to take his little girl into their home so that no harm could come to her, adding that he knew she would be safe in the home of a Christian. François tried to explain that Edward could also accept Jesus as his Savior, and that Jesus would walk with him and his family too! However, Edward did not feel ready. Thus, François agreed to keep Edward’s daughter for ‘a couple of weeks’.

Last spring, Edward decided to follow Jesus. So François told Edward that he needed to publicly confess his intention and burn his “gri-gri” (the amulets and charms in which followers of voodoo place their trust). One Sunday in April (a year ago), Phil & Christine and many others gathered and watched as Edward burned his gri-gri.

Later that day, François came to say that Edward’s youngest child had been in the hospital since the evening before. The child died the following day! How could this be? How could God let this happen? Would Edward be able to continue to walk with Jesus in light of this particularly untimely tragedy?

A year later, Phil and Christine report that Edward and his family attend Sunday services regularly. Edward has been able to ‘stay the course and continue to walk with the Lord’! May and Edward’s steadfastness, and François’s readiness to live out his faith, encourage each one of us to participate in sharing this radical gospel of love.

*Written by Kathy Fast, Executive Assistant for Mennonite Church Canada Witness (Adapted from Phil & Christine Lindell-Detweiler’s newsletter, March 2005)*