

**John & Tammy  
Cooley**

**Jamaica**

June-July 2024

**Back in the Battle!**

[cooleys2jamaica@gmail.com](mailto:cooleys2jamaica@gmail.com)

*Dear Ministry Partners,*

Greetings from Jamaica! Tammy and I delayed sending out this report until arriving back on the field because Hurricane Beryl had the potential to delay our return and throw a monkey-wrench into our plans, but here we are. We're without running water, internet, have had to replace the battery in the car and have the air conditioning repaired, our preferred grocery store is still closed, we have cell service, though our data is too slow to use and it sounds like the person on the other end of the phone is under water, and many of the folks from church are still without necessary services of any kind.

I guess God is just giving us a new initiation to the mission field. Pastor Karl told us on the ride back to Mandeville from the airport in Kingston that he told his wife he was very worried about our arriving back to what he knew would be a very uncomfortable situation until he remembered that we had been missionaries to Burkina Faso at which point he decided we could "handle it".

That said, we have some good news, sad news, and some explaining to do.

First, though we had already concluded it was so based on our monitoring of the church's What's App group chat that Pastor Karl was proving to be the man for the job, it has already become clear that Villa Road Baptist Church is, in every way, genuinely autonomous. Pastor Karl finds confidence in keeping me informed of what's going on, but I reminded him during the drive home that we're colleagues and that he no longer answers to me. He has handled some minor issues that have lingered in the church for many years and, if the congregation will be faithful, we have no doubt that the Lord will use him to build a lively and fruitful church body. In other words, they don't need the Cooleys anymore.

Some of you may remember Benoit Niampa, one of two cousins (Salif was the other) we trained and left to pastor Weenaam Sebre Wendogo (Bible Baptist Church) in Babo, the remote northern village where the Muslim terrorists took over several years ago now. Pastor Keller (Our sending pastor) made a trip to the field to participate in his ordination in 2010. Pastor Benoit, very sadly, fell ill and died the first week in July. We don't know the nature of his illness, but it could have been a multitude of things given that medical care barely exists in the small town (Titao) where most of the church had migrated after being run out of their native village.

Benoit's Baptism  
New Life Baptist Church, Tensuka 2007



Finally, as I explained in an earlier report, Tammy and I returned to the field without a long-term plan. We're going to be moving to Kingston to fill in for our colleagues Rex and Jan Harmon from the first of August through October. We're going to need your prayer during that period both for safety, because their ministry is in a very volatile part of the country, and for direction concerning what we will do when that "gig is up". How to proceed is a little complicated because we will both be 62 as of November, starting a new church from the ground up in Jamaica is, realistically, a 5-to-many-year work, and we know of no prospective new missionaries on their way to Jamaica who could finish what we started if we attempted to establish such a work. We take great comfort in knowing that you're all sharing the burdens of both the challenges on the field and the decisions to be made. Your fellowship in the work is, in every way, indispensable!

*John & Tammy Cooley, Jamaica*