

Demonstrating our Dreams at the Yonent Mame Ibrahima School in Senegal

Benedicte Suzuki
July 2015



Students of the Yonent Mame Ibrahima School

My husband Hidéo and I were blessed among the 1,275-couple blessing group. We have four sons and live in the north of France. Thus, we are members of our church's northern regional community. After Heavenly Parent's Day and the Foundation Day anniversary, I was thinking deeply about how we can develop our tribal messiah work more. We are somewhat distant from our physical families, so it will take time to restore them. On my husband's side, his parents passed away when he was young, so it has been difficult to connect with his family in Japan.



The Yonent Mame Ibrahima School, funded in 2008 now has more than a hundred and fifty pupils.

I have been thinking about how to create our tribe from among our friends first and then to go to our families. With this in mind, I have taken part in many different activities, looking to create relationships with people.

With my job in a market as a natural medicine small business seller, I have contacted many people and created a list. Some people had even come to my home to study Divine Principle but when I closed my small market business, we did not interact very much afterward.

Yet, with our children in school, we have made some very good friends, including through a taekwondo club that our sons all attended over many years. We were able to bring the taekwondo teacher and his wife, Christophe and Anissa Meurisse, who are Muslims, and a

young couple, Caroline and Thomas Carret, who have two young sons to a Blessing Ceremony in Paris on Foundation Day three years ago. The young couple succeeded in their three-day ceremony in August 2014 and became a "real" blessed couple.

They come to Sunday service whenever they can and help our children very much, as well as other youth in our community. They were among many of our friends that had become peace ambassadors, but they were the first peace ambassadors from our contacts to go to the blessing and in the one case, to complete the three-day ceremony.

Truth in action

At the beginning of the year, I felt how important it is to be able to connect all these people together to create some kind of group to whom I could share about True Parents more. But I feel that young adults

today are more attracted by concrete and substantial action before sharing spiritual things.



Ambroise Diagne (leader of Senegal) in classroom

March 4 have been doing various activities.

Among them, we sell secondhand goods in the market and donate the money to UPF-NEPAL, collect clothes to donate to a charity in Morocco and collect vitamins and medicine to donate to a small school in Madagascar. I also taught a three-month French language course to Moroccan women.



Benedicte Suzuki (left) and her contacts receiving an Ambassador for Peace certificate from Jacques Marion and Dominik Dedours

devoted sister from the Philippines. I asked around among the youth to find those who would like to go in August to renovate the classrooms. Victor Vanalderwelt, a second-generation member from our northern region, was very enthusiastic to go there, so the project started to take form.



Delaila Diagne, wife of the national leader

I created a page there explaining the situation of the school and what was needed (fr.ulule.com/9classes-senegal).

I felt that as blessed members, we should know what humanitarian and education activities other blessed members are doing. Of course, we have large providential associations, such as UPF, FFWPU and WFWP, but we do have many blessed members in the world trying on their own to create projects to help people. I felt that it would be nice to have a place where we could see all the good work our members are doing and where we could help even with as little as \$7 or €5.

Caroline, with our second-generation members, had already organized a mobile soup kitchen to give hot soup and sandwich to beggars at night during the winter in Lille. It was very good experience for our youth.

So I decided to create a small association with the wives of the two couples who had been to the blessing and two other friends of mine, one a blessed wife who is a longtime member and the other a friend from my last child's school. We created Femmes au Secours de la Paix (Women Saving Peace, which Anissa's husband Christophe devised) and registered it with the north region prefecture. Thus our team was born. We subscribed for membership of the organization with WFWP in Paris and since

Members active in Senegal

One day I read an article on Facebook about a school run by Delaila and Ambroise Diagne, our national leaders of Senegal. Delaila was looking for sponsors for a school they funded near Dakar, in Senegal. I asked her for some pictures and when I saw how pitiful the classroom were, I felt we could do something, such as sending some young people there to renovate the classroom and the desks. They had no blackboards, so they painted some walls black, but it does not work as a proper blackboard.

I started corresponding by Facebook with Delaila, whom I found to be a wonderful and devoted sister from the Philippines. I asked around among the youth to find those who would like to go in August to renovate the classrooms. Victor Vanalderwelt, a second-generation member from our northern region, was very enthusiastic to go there, so the project started to take form.

Finally, after having prepared what was necessary, I sent a letter to the UPF leader and national leader in France. The national leader of Senegal also sent a message to our French national leader explaining how we could help them. Unfortunately, the project became known to UPF too late for them to get involved in. They had a project planned in Tunisia, but next year, I was told, we can do a wonderful youth service project in Senegal. I will help in the preparation of that.

Meanwhile, I found a wonderful website created by young people called ulule.fr, a

L'école Yonent Mame Ibrahima

Ambroise and Delaila founded their school (named above, in bold) in 2008. At that time, they had very few students, so they started with only three classrooms; now they have a hundred and fifty children.



With a new first-generation blessed couple receives their Ambassador for Peace certificate

A Korean NGO had been helping them, but this year it suddenly stopped doing so. This year has therefore been very difficult for them. Ambroise and Delaila deeply desire to help these children have happy, healthy futures. They hope they become pure leaders for Senegal. Later, when she can, Delaila, who has a diploma in teaching English, would like to build an English institute, which will be another means of helping poor children and should bring financial independence to their school. For the moment, though, the school has nine pitiful classrooms, as well as desks in need of repair, blackboards that need to be built and around fifty children that need sponsoring.

For the future of Senegal Delaila is teaching the kids about character development; as Senegal is a Muslim country, they have to be careful how they approach the topic. In order to teach this, Delaila is in need of a video projector. This item, which is outmoded in our countries, would bring wonder to the children's eyes and help Delaila in her character development courses. I have read several stories about those children that brought my heart to tears -- about how those poor children have dream of becoming someone great even though they live in extreme poverty.

(One little girl, living in great poverty, dreams of becoming a midwife!) Of course, not all the children are poor, but many are, and many cannot go to school because their parents cannot afford it.



Ambroise Diagne, visiting the family of a little girl in need of a sponsor

We would be extremely grateful for you to spread an explanation of this wonderful project and to encourage our members to donate to the site by August 2, the end of the campaign, or to the bank account of the school, which I will send to you upon request. I could also give you the address and phone number to call in Senegal. We have the goal of collecting €3,000 on ulule.fr by August 2, in order to do everything for the school. It is not a huge amount. Victor will need to buy paint, brushes, wood, etc. With some second-generation members in Dakar, he will paint and renovate the school.

We would like to conduct another project there next year, this time with UPF and RYS young people, as well as one STF team, if possible. I am grateful to share this experience with our members. I hope that increased communication about projects to make a better world, one more closely resembling Cheon Il Guk, which our members are initiating, can rapidly become concrete and successful.

If you want to donate to the campaign by August 2, please visit fr.ulule.com/9classes-senegal to donate any amount beginning from \$7 (€5). If you want to sponsor a child, please visit our website, femmes-au-secours-de-lapaix.com, send us an email so we can introduce you to a child that needs sponsoring.

If you want to connect with Ambroise and Delaila, visit their schools' Facebook page by searching for the word Facebook and Yonent-Mame-Ibrahima Dakar. If you wish to contact Ambroise and Delaila or send money directly to a bank account for their school, email me at (hidebene2020@free.fr).