

Sellers Sequel

Larry and LeAnn Sellers

Missionaries to French-speaking Africa

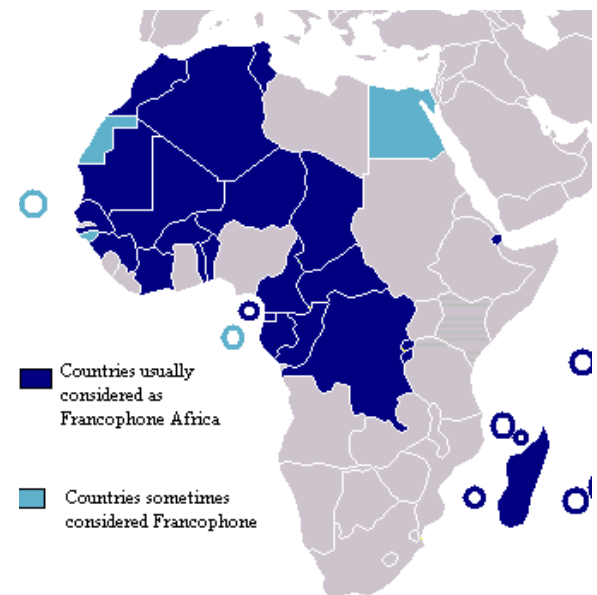


The saying, "Wherever dreams dwell the heart calls it home." This resonated with what we felt as we arrived into Gisenyi, Rwanda, a place we called home over thirty years ago for only a short time. Gisenyi borders Congo (DRC) where we used to serve as well. Though we could not enter the DRC due to unrest there, we could see into the city of Goma as we drove along the border. Our minds were taken back to the road as it was when we left twenty-nine years ago, filled with refugees and victims of unspeakable hatred. Due to the circum-

stances in Rwanda at that time, it seemed unlikely that we would return there some day.

But twenty-nine years later, as we returned to Rwanda, the memories of what we used to call home came racing back into our minds, of the people we had to leave because of a genocide that would change the whole trajectory of Rwanda. Our dream of returning to this amazing place in the heart of Africa was being fulfilled. Our dreams and longing hearts for these people brought us back home to them. God never forgets the dreams that He has planted in our hearts. And so we were filled with anticipation and awe of what we would find on the journey on April 7, 2023, as we came back home to Rwanda. One of the first things that we noticed upon our arrival at Kigali was signs posted everywhere with the word, KWIBUKA, meaning "remember" in the Rwandan language. We then realized that our arrival coincided with the 29th anniversary of the genocide. KWIBUKA was a national call to remember the past so as not to repeat it but to build a better society of solidarity and mutual respect. We felt like God had orchestrated our arrival just to help us remember our past relationships in this country and to rekindle his dreams in our hearts to come to reality.

Church of God Global Strategy and the **All-Africa Assembly** called on us to assume this responsibility of working with the church in both Rwanda and Congo, in addition to Côte d'Ivoire and Burkina Faso and in the future, other French-speaking countries in Africa, as part of a new initiative called **Africa Francophone Ministries**. Much of our involvement will be in teaching church leaders in these countries. But it will also include pursuing new opportunities to plant churches in other French-speaking African nations. Global Strategy has established a **new project** to support this initiative, called **Africa Francophone Ministries** under project number **42.30161**. We earnestly seek your support for this far-reaching project. We will hold our next training seminar in **September 2023 in Rwanda** and will need at least **\$5000** before then to carry it out.





IBAO Graduation 2023

While our new responsibilities will call for much more international travel across Africa, we continue to carry out responsibilities for leadership training in Côte d'Ivoire on several levels, including at IBAO. On **May 24**, we traveled to Yamoussoukro to prepare for the graduation of three students from the four-year program of pastoral training. Their graduation ceremony took place on May 27 with another six former students, (see insert) having made up some courses, also receiving their diplomas. This was a great time of celebration and recognition of the hard work of students who will now be taking on pastoral positions in local churches in Côte d'Ivoire.

Ivorian Mother's Day

On June 4, we celebrated **Ivorian Mothers' Day** at the Niangon Church in Abidjan. It was a time of joy and thankfulness for the mothers present, expressed in great African fashion with dancing, singing, and gifts. This church has a lot of new mothers who have recently given birth to their first child as well as older "mamas" who serve as mentors and counselors to the younger ones. For this occasion, the women selected a "pagne," a particular printed cloth that they each dressed in using their own creative patterns and designs, to wear for their special day! This added rich color and festivity to the celebration.



Some mothers in the Niangon Church in Abidjan. Esther Sia preached.



Africa Team Meetings

In June, missionaries from around the world gathered for regional team meetings before attending the Church of God Convention in Tampa, Florida. We were pleased to be a part of this with our Africa team under the leadership of regional coordinators John and Gwen Johnson. They did a superb job of leading us in a balanced time of spiritual, physical, social, and intellectual engagement with our colleagues. We were blessed by being able to spend some time with our fellow missionaries from other regions as well.





All Missionary Connect

On June 22, Global Strategy held a gathering of all missionaries present for the Tampa convention. It was a great time to reconnect with old and new friends and colleagues as well as Global Strategy personal with us!

Church of God Convention and Global Alliance in Tampa, FL



On June 21 in Tampa, we joined with many others from the Church of God around the world for stimulating preaching, teaching, and strategizing during the convention. We were overjoyed to see many of you, our faithful supporters and friends, while there.

Then the two days following the convention, Larry attended the historic establishing of the **Global Church of God Alliance**, a new voluntary cooperative body, bringing together leaders from the Church of God in every world region to encourage and facilitate greater cross-global cooperation.

Africa was represented by two members of the All-Africa Assembly as well as several missionaries from the region. The first manifestation of this global cooperation took place while in Tampa with leaders from Africa, Latin America, and the USA meeting to explore a proposal to send Brazilian missionaries to Portuguese-speaking countries in Africa. We hope to see more of these kinds of cooperative efforts in the future through the Global Alliance.



Teaching Children God's Word



LeAnn continues to encourage Sunday school teachers and seek new materials that might be helpful to them in reaching children for Christ. Despite very limited resources and often minimal and poor space, teachers are engaging more children with the gospel in creative and effective ways. Vacation Bible School was also held in Yamoussoukro in July for more than eighty children from the central region. This was a camp experience for kids that also served as a training time for teachers from the whole region to go back to their churches and duplicate what they did in Yamoussoukro. It was so encouraging to hear the leaders and teachers excited about how the children responded and helped each other.

Please
consider
supporting
our newest project:
Africa Francophone
Ministries
Project #42.30161



Prayers for:

- Believers in Rwanda and DRC who have lost their homes, livelihood and family members due to heavy flooding in May.
- Children learning God's Word in Sunday school and at home.
- Our upcoming trip in September to Rwanda to finish teaching the Church Doctrines course to national leaders in Rwanda and DRC.
- LeAnn as she starts a new teaching with the pastors' wives in Abidjan.
- Recent IBAO graduates as they are placed in churches to begin serving.
- New students to answer the call to be trained at IBAO for ministry.
- Young girl having surgery in August for severe intestinal issues.

Praise God for:

- The renewal of relations with the Church in Central Africa during our April trip to Rwanda after 29 years since our last visit.
- A new generation of well-educated mature young leaders serving the Church of God in Côte d'Ivoire at many levels.
- Many local churches are doing a better job of supporting their pastors and the national ministries in Côte d'Ivoire.
- Flood victims in Rwanda and DRC and Congolese refugees, forced from their homes by attacks on their villages, have received food, bedding, and supplies through the Disaster Relief and Restoration program of Church of God Ministries. We thank you for your compassion!

CONNECT

Email: LarrySellers@chog.org

Facebook: [LarryNLeAnnSellers](https://www.facebook.com/LarryNLeAnnSellers)

Call: Prefer a Zoom meeting or phone call? Email us to arrange one so we can set it up.

PARTNER

Project No. 42.10074

P.O.Box 2420,

Anderson, IN 46018

Choglobal.org ~ 800-848-2464

www.facebook.com/choglobal



**GLOBAL
STRATEGY**