



# FACE TO FACE

WYVA HASSELBLAD

CRWRC-Senegal B.P. 5323 Dakar-Fann

sencrwc@orange.sn

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**“There is a candle in your heart, ready to be kindled.”**

*-Jalal al-Din Mohammed Rūmī, Persian poet 1207-1273*

*The following is an excerpt from a conversation that TearFund (a British Christian community transformation organization) recently had with young American Christian activist Shane Claiborne. When I can adjust to the new generations' phrasing, I find that he has some profound things to say:*

**TEARFUND:** *How do you reconcile the massive need in the world, the suffering, the large scale injustice that Christians are called to tackle, with also just doing the stuff round the corner?*

**CLAIRBORNE:** I was with some folks talking about all the major issues in the world...water, poverty, AIDS, all these things, and they [asked], “What’s the most important social issue.” [I responded that] I think the temptation is to choose issues instead of people. What we should be careful not to do is not to choose which big social issue to take on, but to choose a group of people to live alongside, and by doing that the issues bubble up out of the relationship... We can hand out social justice flyers like Christian tracts at the mall but if we don’t have any human fleshing out of that then it’s not very transformative. The people who have been revolutionary change makers in the world have been people whose ability

lay in their relationships, like Mother Theresa, Dorothy Day, Gandhi, and Dr. King. They were people who lived amidst the struggle. As Mother Theresa said, “It’s very fashionable to talk about poverty but it’s not so fashionable to talk with the poor.”

If we really care about the poor we can call them by name.

One of Jesus’ best stories about the poor is the story of Lazarus (Luke 16). Jesus names Lazarus, the only character in any of his parables whose name is given. The rich man in the story is not portrayed as an evil person. He just had difficulty in really seeing a person in need just outside his own front door.

A man named Badji sits outside in front of our office and regularly comes to me with monetary needs. He isn’t sick, he has a small job, but he just can’t keep up with his family bills. To tell you the truth, I don’t know if I am doing the right thing in acceding to his requests. For sure, I will never succeed in teaching Badji to manage his resources, and he will never be one of those amazing stories in which, so we are told, a gift of money to someone turned the person into a successful entrepreneur. Nevertheless Badji is a part of my life, now. He knows my name, I know his.



*Aliou,  
Medoune,  
Aly,  
Mocktar,  
Abdou,  
Lansana,  
Diedhou,  
Demba*

**Canada:** 3475 Mainway, PO Box 5070, Stn Lcd 1, Burlington, ON L7R 3Y8

**USA:** 2850 Kalamazoo Ave., SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49560-0600

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## PASTORS AS CHANGE AGENTS?

*April 15, 2008:* We sat in a circle, 14 pastors, a youth worker and me. They came from many church backgrounds and did not share the same doctrinal understandings. Many were not used to being in groups that included people from outside their own church or denomination.

They were waiting for the session facilitator to stand up and begin the lesson. Getting pens and notebooks ready, they prepared themselves to take notes.

"What is a shepherd?" asked the facilitator. Blank stares all around. "Let's make a list of what shepherds do." A few hesitant responses were volunteered. Gradually the facilitator led the pastors to reflect on their pastoral purpose, and a Biblical model of leadership. Pens and notebooks were forgotten as dialogue and exploration took over.

As the session proceeded they began to ask

questions, to reveal uncertainties and challenges. Less guarded, their masks of perfection began to give way to honest probing. An atmosphere of empathetic listening became more palpable. "Knowing and being known" began to take precedence over being right.

Though the pastors have not yet articulated it, they are taking the first steps towards welcoming change instead of fearing a loss of authority.

The facilitator in this unfolding story is Rev. Harold Kallemyn who is bringing a new kind of learning to pastors in our network in Senegal. After two years of laying the groundwork, we are seeing the dream of "Excelsis training" starting to be realised. At the end of the week, the pastors planned how to move this initiative forward in Senegal -- not as a programme of theological training but as a way to learn how to be pastors of God's people.

### PRAYER CALENDAR:

**-Our CRWRC AIDS task force will soon be considering applications from partners for funding for AIDS programs. We need discernment to make good recommendations; we continue to pray that the funding will become available.**

**-We hope to have an intern in Senegal by September to work with the inter-church AIDS programme. Please pray for the candidates for this position.**

**-The world-wide food crisis is growing. In Senegal and Sierra Leone as well as in many other countries, people have taken to the streets to protest against prices that are drastically rising. Prayerfully consider what you can do about it.**

**-Please pray for the pastors in the Excelsis training; that they will teach each other and be greatly blessed and encouraged.**

### REMEMBER TIBET

"Our earth is wounded. Her oceans and lakes are sick; her rivers are like running sores; the air is filled with subtle poisons. And the oily smoke of countless hellish fires blackens the sun. Men and women, scattered from homeland, family, friends, wander desolate and uncertain, scorched by a toxic sun...

In this desert of frightened, blind uncertainty, some take refuge in the pursuit of power. Some become manipulators of illusion and deceit.

If wisdom and harmony still dwell in this world, as other than a dream lost in an unopened book, they are hidden in our heartbeat.

And it is from our hearts that we cry out. We cry out and our voices are the single voice of this wounded earth. Our cries are a great wind across the earth."

*-from the Warrior Song of King Gesar, the Tibetan epic of the king who, in 1000 A.D., advocated for justice and goodness*



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*Living Justice, Loving Mercy*

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