

# Lungren Report – Mission Trip to Morocco

February 2008



*The Lungren Family – Bruce, Lauren, Alex & Natassia – are ACOP Missionaries living in Thuméries, France. They recently participated in a short-term mission trip to Morocco with a number of other French believers; Bruce sends this brief report on their trip.*

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It was just after midnight when the five of us landed at Menara Airport in Marrakech, Morocco. It had only been a 3-hour flight, but after a long day of trying to pack (within baggage limits) for 10 days in Morocco and doing last-minute work, we were all pretty glad to step out of the plane and into the balmy 24 degree night.

We'd come to Morocco to join a short-term team made up of French believers, but since there are only two weekly flights between Lille and Marrakech, we arrived 3 days ahead of the others. Alex will be graduating from high school this year and moving back to Canada, so even though he brought his books and spent much of the three days studying for his baccalaureate exams in March, it was great to have a few days to just be tourists together.

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Our team joined us on the weekend, so on Sunday we attended the only legal church we knew about in Marrakech. It's attended by a few European believers, but the membership is made up mostly of black Africans studying in Moroccan universities or carrying out internships with international companies. For a couple of hours we felt that we'd never left Burkina Faso!



During the next two days we helped a handicapped centre by building an outdoors workshop for crafts and gardening. It was a wonderful opportunity to serve Moroccans in a practical way even though time was limited and we didn't have the tools we needed.

One stop was in a coastal city where we were put up for a couple of nights in a gorgeous stone guest house owned by one of the many French people living in and investing in real estate. When we met for teaching and prayer that first evening, our host brought us all down to earth by telling us that the fourteen of us gathered together in one room were the only known believers in the province. We spent the next day walking through the city in small groups praying for a spiritual breakthrough in the city, for the salvation of the Moroccan people who so warmly welcomed us, and for the Lord to supernaturally arrange encounters between the secret believers who hear the Gospel on the radio but who have no contact with other Christians.



We traveled by taxi for the majority of our trip, so we had ample time to view the countryside and chat with the drivers as we drove to our next stop at the foot of the Atlas Mountains. After heaving our backpacks into the Christian-run guest house where we were staying, we headed down to the village souk (market) to buy meat and veggies for the next phase of our trip... a 3-hour hike uphill in driving rain to a Berber village where we would spend the night in the home of a local family. Our guides had brought along two mules and a donkey to carry our packs and supplies and carry those who were too tired to walk, but most of us struggled along valiantly through the rain and mud rather



than admit defeat. As we got higher into the mountains we left the scrubby grasslands, entered into evergreen forests planted by French colonials, and finally emerged onto the steep grey rocks of an Atlas mountainside. It was a relief to finally trudge into the village where we to spend the night, a relief that was partially dispelled as we squished through the muddy, refuse-laden alleys between grey stone sheep pens and grey stone houses. Life seemed very grey at that point!

The house we stayed in opened onto the alley and began with a sort of storage area on the left and a latrine on the right ... the unique family luxury in this poor Berber village. We climbed up a narrow staircase to the open courtyard that was the center of the home. All the rooms were laid out in a square around it, and we were quickly welcomed into the salon, a 3 x 6 metre room lined with a built-in ledge covered in vivid blue cushioning. It was cold, we were all wet, but by the time our hosts came around with mint tea and milky coffee, life began to take on a whole new allure!



The evening we spent with the Berber family was thoroughly enjoyable: we sang a few songs in French for them, ate a traditional *tajine* (meat and veggies roasted slowly in a pyramid-shaped clay pot - picked up with pieces of flat bread held in bare hands) with the young couple, their child, their grandparents, and three neighbours. As the evening wore on we chatted with them via our translator. Around 11:00 pm, one of our guides put a *Jesus* dvd dubbed into their particular Berber dialect on a borrowed TV, but we were all too tired to hold out any longer. The men tiptoed across the courtyard through the rain and mud to the facing room and everyone crawled into their sleeping bags.

The next day we trudged down the trail to the guest house, and while some team members went out to view the town, others went to a local *hammam* (public steam bath) to warm up and relax their muscles.

We've been deliberately vague about places, people, and events in this report because any details made public via the net or church publications can seriously compromise the safety of believers in Morocco. While we felt personally safe wherever we went and

never encountered the Muslim fundamentalism that typifies so many Islamic countries, we know that foreign workers are often expelled when they draw too much public attention. Moroccan believers face the possibility of ostracism at best, or prison and torture at worst.

We will say that the purpose of our trip was to see the people firsthand, to serve in practical ways, to encourage workers and believers we met, and to intercede specifically for a spiritual breakthrough. We were shown hospitality and respect everywhere we went, and we hope that you too will contact us about joining us for a short-term expedition among the beautiful people of Morocco.

Bruce & Lauren Lungren