

Testimony of Maximin, a Former Fetish Priest in Benin, Now a Happy Servant of Jesus

As told to Lorella Rouster, 2008 in Benin at Cotonou seminar

At the age of 12, I went through a fetish ceremony to make me priest of my father's shrine. My father, a government worker, had become so fearful of witchcraft that he ran away, so it fell to me, the oldest son, to take care of the shrine.

I was ready. My father had taught me thoroughly in the ways of sorcery. He even gave me a book about it, although I later burned it. It was in French and was called "How to Consult the Spirits." It described 16 kinds of spirits.

We worshiped Sakpata, the god of the earth. It was a very strict god. If you made even a little mistake in your method of worship, it would kill you.

After awhile, my father became sick with a serious throat illness. He was in the hospital for two years. He believed that someone had killed 16 children and was also trying to kill him. He did all kinds of magic, but it was useless. I heard that my father died. After his death, I practiced all sorts of magic. But I thought a lot about his death. He had done all he could through magic to protect himself. Yet it was not enough, and he died.

Then I too became sick. My sickness lasted for ten years without relief. One of the fetishes told me I must die, but that first I must kill the person who caused my sickness.

It was then that someone took me to a place where they were preaching the Gospel. Hearing that Christ could make me free, I gave my life to Christ. Jesus healed me of my sickness instantly, and after two months I returned to my village.

I called my brothers and asked if they wanted to continue worshiping Sakpata, since he had never helped us. I told them that as for me, I was now saved by Jesus Christ and would no longer be worshiping the fetish. If they wanted the idol they could continue with it, or if not, we would burn it. They didn't want it with all its fear and its strict taboos.

One of my brothers became a Christian. We started eating foods that had been forbidden to us by the idol. We didn't die and nothing bad happened to us.

My mother was always afraid we would die because we had defied the idol. After a month, my mother visited to see how I was doing. She could see I was doing fine, but she was still afraid the idol might attack and kill me.

The only problem was not the retribution of the idol, but the reaction of my family. They were angry and afraid when they found out I had destroyed the idols. I explained that the idol had not protected my father or me. So then they relented and let it go.

I came into the church after being a Christian for about three months. I began by going there every Thursday to pray with the other Christians. The church I attended specialized in helping people who had been enslaved by the demons of idol worship. They gave me a questionnaire to fill out asking about my experiences. They used that to guide them in praying for me. After their prayers, the evil spirits left me and never came back to attack me ever again.

I am now married to my lovely wife, Bernadette. God has blessed us with two boys: Josue and Triomphe. I am now a pastor of a church. It is not only I alone who have turned from idols. I also have two other men in my church who were also formerly fetish worshipers, but we are all now worshipers of Jesus Christ.