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## December Newsletter 2012

By SOM News on December 10, 2012 7:51 PM | [↑](#)

### Fearless Christmas Love in Senegal Bringing the Holy Days to Prison

Written by David Witt



Both Jose and Zeneide are presently in prison for their work with an orphanage in Senegal.

**Pastor Jose Silva and Zeneide Moreira (Brazilian natives) are bringing the good news of Christmas inside a prison in Senegal, Africa.** A startling enthusiasm and reception is growing among the Muslim inmates for the Gospel message. This was not their original plan for the holidays. Both Jose and Zeneide are presently in prison for their work with an orphanage in Senegal. The orphanage is part of the Obadiah Project which was started in 2011. Pastor Jose has served in Senegal for 22 years now and founded the orphanage last year. Zeneide is considered, the "Mom" of the orphanage. They were arrested on November 6, 2012 and are facing charges of "Association with Harming the Children". If found guilty, they face 3-5 years in prison. A fundamental Muslim was upset when he found out that the Muslim street children at the orphanage were learning God's Word from the Bible.

At first their surprise arrest was not very welcomed. The prison conditions are severe. The jail is overcrowded. Pastor Jose is in a cell with 35 other inmates. There are no windows, a place to sit or bed to sleep. "The cell is filthy, to sleep we arrange ourselves like sardines on the ground," shares Pastor Jose. There is little water or food and two inmates recently died of starvation. They are also affected by abundant mosquitos and intense heat. Zeneide shares, "the insult hurts the most. It is not easy being humiliated and called, 'someone who harms kids' after giving your whole life to serve people you love so much."

The street children in Senegal are called "Talibe". Talibe means "student of Islam" and the students study under a religious teacher called a Marabout. These are all boys who come from poor Muslim tribal areas all over Northwest Africa. The parents of the children are promised blessings of Allah (Muslim God) as they give their children into Islamic study and work. The parents are told that the children will be taken care of and will have a better life and education. The children go to the big city and many of them do not speak the language. The children have no escape when the reality of cruelty hits them. The Talibe System is modern-day child slavery. The only "education" the children receive is memorizing the Qu'ran in Arabic and learning the teaching of Islam. Most of their day is spent begging for the Islamic zakat (required Islamic alms giving of 2.5%). Most Talibe children are required to collect an equivalent of about \$1.00 (USD) a day. If they miss their quota they go without food or are beaten. It is estimated that each



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Marabout grosses around \$40,000 to \$100,000 USD a year from the work of Talibe children.



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The children range in age of 5 to 16 years of age, but most are under the age of 12. The total number of Talibe children in Senegal is not known. A United Nations study in 2010 put the number at 50,000. The Talibe children are placed in "daaras" which is a group of 30 to 200 boys. They sleep on the dirt floors in abandoned structures and often suffer malnutrition. One study found that 80% of the children had suffered sexual abuse. These children suffer in just about every way possible. Their

young lives are filled with abuse, fear, disease, toil to survive, lack of parental love and guidance, and lack of education for future advancement.

(Click here for a video interview of some Talibe children: <http://vimeo.com/17181484>)

I am also a witness to the oppression of the Talibe boys. In my two visits to Senegal, I have personally observed the condition and begging of these children. I have seen their tattered clothes, emaciated diseased skin, and their scars from beatings. Most of the children I have seen look between the ages of 8 and 12 years old. I also visited an abandoned building where they live. I have heard terrible stories of their treatment.

I personally witnessed the love and compassion of Christians serving these children in Senegal, Africa. I have seen these children bathed, their clothes washed, wounds mended and loving care given from the Body of Christ. These Talibe children have hope because they are loved by Jesus and His "workers." Pastor Jose and Zeneide are Christ's representatives of His love, care and hope. James 1:27 reminds us, "Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world."



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Spirit of Martyrdom is honored to contribute funds to the legal needs of Pastor Jose and Zeneide. They are "living martyrs" as they risk and sacrifice daily for the needs of the Muslim orphan Talibe boys. Zeneide said, "I just pray that the ministry doesn't stop, but this situation actually gives us more power and strength to act and help the street children of Senegal." (To view a video of Pastor Jose and the Obadiah Project click here: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player\\_embedded&v=2ZfZitMdNp8#](http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=2ZfZitMdNp8#))

Within the last month that Pastor Jose and Zeneide have been in prison, they report the following blessings from their imprisonment:

1. They have prayed with inmates and several have received Jesus Christ as Lord.
2. They now have a growing "cell" church in prison!
3. The churches in Senegal and Brazil have become more united.
4. The United Nations is now drafting a document to attack the Talibe child slavery in Senegal.
5. Thousands of Christians have discovered the Obadiah Project and are praying for Pastor Jose, Zeneide and the Talibe children.



They are "living martyrs" as they risk and sacrifice daily

Pastor Jose said, "When I first was arrested I wanted to be released immediately. I have seen God use this situation for great gain. Now I am content to trust God in His timing. I want God to use this situation for His glory." Please continue to pray for this outreach and that God will use this to bring an end to this exploitation of children and the advance of His

for the needs of the Muslim Kingdom.  
orphan Talibe boys.

THANK YOU for your prayers and financial support of Spirit of Martyrdom ministries that makes it possible to support and respond to needs of the "living martyrs" around the world and embolden the witnesses of Christ globally.

You Can Speak Out! If you would like to show solidarity with Pastor Jose and Zeneide and your angst against the Senegal government for allowing the abuse of the Talibe children you can contact the Senegal Embassy in the United States:

Ambassador Fatou Danielle Diagne  
Senegalese Embassy in Washington, the United States

2112 Wyoming Avenue, N.W.  
Washington  
D.C. 20008  
United States

Feel free to cut and paste this quick note and change it as you like:

*Dear Ambassador Fatou Danielle Diagne,  
Thank you for your service to America. I am a Christian and I pray for all the people of Africa but especially I pray for the children. Jose Silva and Zeneide Moreira from Brazil have been put in prison for their loving care of the Talibe boys in Mbour. Please use your influence for their release and true justice and that Senegalese government will began to pass laws to protect children from begging and abuse. Please assure me that you are doing what you can to help in this situation.*

*May the Love of Jesus Christ bless you over the Christmas Holidays,  
Your name*

*If you would like to send Pastor Jose and Zeneide an encouraging note, or comment on this article [leave your message below](#). We will make sure they receive your note. You can also leave your letter to the Ambassador of Senegal here if you prefer that we deliver it.*

If you would like to donate to this work today click here.

[www.SpiritofMartyrdom.com](http://www.SpiritofMartyrdom.com)

[Donate Here](#)

**Join us in prayer, gather helpful information or to support the living martyrs of Christ globally.**

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