

## **Reaching Out to Burkina Faso** by Jared and Anna Odle

Jared, Anna, Aidan, Benen, Cecily and Samuel live in Brazil (Indiana) but have their heart invested in a Business As Mission project in Burkina Faso, West Africa. Jared has worked for the past two years with American, French and Burkinabé partners and ten American investors to create a gold brokerage and mining management company in Burkina Faso. Ethnic Investments, LLC (EI) began operations in December 2007 and is beginning to turn a small profit.

Gold is an important commodity, especially to the poor African nations in the northwest. Unfortunately, policies of the World Bank and individual nations create opportunities favoring international mining companies and create more poverty for nationals. EI is creating an opportunity for small mining communities to make more wealth and begin community development programs from the wealth generated by their own work. EI works with the government to create better taxation and mining policies, bringing advantages to the Burkinabé people.

So what's this have to do with the gospel? EI is bringing the Good News of Jesus in word and deed as we demonstrate the love of Christ by delivering the poor and needy from spiritual and physical bondage through God's love. EI is working to change the spiritual, political and physical oppression associated with gold mining in Africa. EI is already known throughout the country as a company with great ethics and treats miners and smaller brokers with grace and compassion. This stands in stark contrast to small and large companies that regularly abuse miners physically and extort the value of their work. EI has multiple opportunities each day to share Christ with government officials, businessmen, tribal leaders, brokers and artisan miners. The spiritual context of Burkina Faso is 50% Muslim, 30% Christian and 20% Indigenous Religions. As you can see, there are many complicated roots to the social justice, poverty and spiritual realities in Burkina Faso.