

## **PROFESSOR NESTOR MAMADOU NALI**

### **Report #C03**

#### **SURVEY**

In our survey, many Central Africans identified Professor Nestor Mamadou NALI, a medical doctor, as one of the most influential non-clergy persons in CAR. His impact is not limited only within the borders of the churches but nationally and internationally as well.

#### **ABSTRACT**

Pr. Nali is a medical doctor who did his medical training in Canada and is a founder and faculty member of the Medical Faculty at the University of Bangui, and has served as the Minister of Public Health for the country of CAR. He has played many leading roles in the country with a highly visible Christian witness, spearheading the fight against HIV/AIDS, and serving on the Board of FATEB, among other things.

#### **BACKGROUND**

##### ***Childhood***

Professor (hereafter Pr) Nestor Mamadou NALI was born in Damara in 1946. Damara is about 70 kilometers from Bangui the capital city of CAR. He came from a Muslim family. His father has three wives, and his mother was the third one. The two other wives were barren. Pr NALI is the only child of his mother. His father was living in the rural area but was a tailor making clothes for the whole village. Because of his profession, his father was able to offer a comfortable life to his family. Being the only child of his father, Pr NALI was well treated in the family. The family did whatever it could to make him happy. Although his father was a Muslim, he was a moderate one.

##### ***Influences***

Pr NALI was mainly influenced by his family (father and mother). He was very happy, but his parents were very strict when it comes to moral and ethical values. His mother was very rigorous and did not accept any negligent behavior.

##### ***Educational background***

At a young age, he was sent to the primary school in Damara. After completing his primary school, he went to the high school, Lycee Boganda, called in this time College Emile Gentil, with the financial support of his parents. As for the tertiary education, he received a scholarship from the Canadian government for medical studies in Canada where he resided for ten years (1965-1975). With his degree as a medical doctor, he came back to CAR to serve people.

##### ***Countries of residence***

Apart from Canada where he spent ten years, Pr NALI traveled a lot. During his studies, he was often selected with others to visit other countries during holidays, mainly because he was a brilliant student. He visited France, the USA and other countries.

### ***Current Family***

Pr NALI got married to a Canadian lady with whom they have had three children. Unfortunately, after ten years the marriage was broken down. Looking back, Pr NALI understood that the main reason for the divorce was the lack of Jesus Christ in their marriage. Both of them did not know Jesus Christ in their lives. In 1990, Pr NALI contracted another marriage. He is very grateful to the Lord because of his second wife. After the divorce, he went through a difficult time emotionally and psychologically. But brothers and sisters were there to support him. His current wife was among those who came to comfort him. She had also experienced a divorce. She is a woman of prayer and national responsibility for the women's group called *Beta ouali*, literally virtuous lady or women of faith. She has a great impact in their denomination (one of the Baptist Association) and Pr. Nali fully supports her in her ministry. She is also supporting Pr. Nali in his ministry and profession. Thus, they mutually support each other.

### ***Personal Testimony and Calling***

When Pr NALI was in the High School, he was responsible for the Christian Youth Movement in the school (i.e. IFES), but he did not meet Jesus personally as His Lords and Savior. Even when he went to Canada, he continued to go to church. The first marriage was celebrated in the church, as in Canada pastors would play the role of a state official for marriage. But this marriage was not founded on Christ as the rock and the Lord. Only after the divorce Pr. NALI came to understand that the main reason for the divorce was the absence of the Lord Jesus in their home. After the divorce, he reports, "my life was troubled. I was even hospitalized although I was a medical doctor with a good reputation. Now I understand that without Christ, my life is unworthy. When I was crushed down after the divorce, God in His compassion sent some brothers to show me the way of Christ. Marcel MALONGA (a deacon) and Gabriel MBAYE (director of Campus Crusade) were the instruments used to bring me back to the Lord. Now I understood everything that I am doing as a ministry from God. I take every profession as a special calling from God."

Pr NALI is a deacon in his church (a Baptist Church), president of the Association for Child Evangelism and also president of the Union of Christian Medical Workers in CAR. He is also a member of the board of Bangui Evangelical School of Theology. All these activities take time, but Pr NALI thinks it is a call from God to serve him with the gifts that he has.

## **CURRENT MINISTRY OR VOCATION**

### ***Work/Ministry***

Pr NALI is mainly a medical doctor. He is teaching medicine at the University of Bangui and elsewhere. He has been dean of the Faculty of Medicine and then Rector of the University of Bangui. Pr NALI serves currently as the Coordinator of the course on specialization in general surgery. He also served for some years as the Minister of Public Health in the CAR government. Although retired from the Public Administration, he was called to be the Coordinator of the Government Committee to Fight Against HIV/AIDS. It is because of his good reputation that Pr NALI was appointed to this position when the Agency had problems of funding with WHO. This position made Pr NALI the advisor the Prime Minister in the area of HIV/AIDS. He is also consulting for some private companies, and practices medicine in a well-known private clinic in Bangui.

### ***Influence***

Pr NALI thinks that God himself had influenced him through the rude experience of his divorce. When he received Christ in 1986, he was supported and mentored by brothers and sisters in the church. He is very grateful to the students of BEST who help him and his current wife to understand the Word of God and to serve God faithfully. He reports that during the wedding in 1990, “students of BEST were our godfather and godmother. We are hosting a prayer cell in our home. I am very thankful to BEST because students from this school helped us to lay the foundation of our Christian life.”

### ***Vision/Mission***

Pr NALI's personal vision and mission is to do whatever he can to help people to know Christ. From his experience, a life without Christ is senseless in spite of one's wealth or degrees. Pr NALI also tries to bring people to Christ through the integrity of his life. Such integrity is nationally well known even when he was Minister of Public Health in the government. He is leading by example. In the church, even when he was a minister in the government, his life did not change. He continued to keep his seat as a deacon. He tries to lead people who come in contact with him to Christ: family members, students at University, sick people in the hospital, colleagues at work, young people, etc. His desire is to help people to know Christ and to live a life that is worthy of all gifts that God has wired in each of us to serve in this world for the advance of his Kingdom.

### ***Impact/Success/Evaluation***

Pr NALI thinks that it is not easy for him to assess the impact of his life. But from the testimonies, some people came to Christ through his conferences and sermons or evangelism. He does not know how many. Pr NALI was one of the pioneers who founded the faculty of medicine at the University of Bangui. When he came back from Canada in 1975, he established the medicine program to train medical doctors. He was among the first teachers of the newly founded school. Now the school has trained more than 400 medical doctors who are serving in CAR, Africa and elsewhere in the world. He also treated thousands of sick people who came to him, some of them even looking for him personally because of his reputation of integrity. His own life has led many to come to Christ; when they see a brilliant and famous medical doctor serving Christ, people want to do the same. He is dedicating his life to helping young people through education. He believes that through good education, young people will be able to be self-supporting and to serve the Lord in good condition. Thus, they can also get married according to the Word of God.

### ***Leadership***

As a professor, Pr NALI wants to be a mentor to his students. Although teaching medicine, Pr NALI takes the example of his own life to train students in the area of leadership. He thinks that each position that the Lord gives him is an opportunity to minister to the people. Being a professor of medicine, a medical doctor in the hospital, coordinator (same rank as a minister), Pr NALI considers himself as an agent of development and transformation based on the Word of God. Pr NALI received leadership training from the Haggai Institute. He is trying to share his experience with colleagues and young people.

### ***Partnership***

The organization that Pr NALI is leading works in partnership with the government. It is also the case with the University of Bangui where he is teaching. The Association for Child Evangelism is an International organization with partners around the world.

In the church, Pr NALI was among the founders of the National Association of Baptist Churches. He was on the Board of the Association in charge of social development. He contributed to the development of the statutes and bylaws with the aim to help the new association to go ahead. Unfortunately, things did not work as he had planned. Pr NALI was obliged to resign from the Board of the Association, but he continues to serve and to help when there is a need. Pr NALI is aware that Satan is always trying to discourage any goodwill. He is determined to contribute to the development of his local church and to bring his expertise when needed in the association. It is sometimes difficult for Pr NALI to bring people where he wants them to be because he is dealing with people from different levels of education.

### ***SWOT: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats***

Pr NALI says that his strength is his faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. His preferred verse is Romans 8:28 *We know that in all things God works for good with those who love him, those whom he has called according to his purpose.* He is convinced that God has a purpose for each human being. Nothing is happening by chance.

His weakness, because of his numerous and various activities, Pr NALI has not enough time for reading the Bible. He does from time to time, but not on regular basis. But he wants intentionally to find time to grow in reading the Word of God regularly.

The opportunity in CAR, according to Pr NALI, is the freedom to share the Word of God. Those who are in positions like himself and who are Christian must take this opportunity when doors are widely opened to proclaim Christ in word and deeds,

The biggest challenge for Pr NALI is to contribute to the unity of the Church in CAR. Lack of unity among the churches in CAR does not strengthen the testimony of the churches in the society. Evangelical Churches in CAR are going through division after division. The National Fellowship of Evangelicals in CAR is not able to create the true sense of unity among churches. This is a great challenge for the testimony of the church in CAR. If churches in CAR were united, they would accomplish wonderful things for the Kingdom of God in this country. The recent events in the country came as a hammer to remind the church of the need for unity in action. Now people are coming together to pray each week. One of the challenges of the church in CAR is about finances. If we come together, we can raise money to accomplish great things for the Lord and His Kingdom.

### ***Reading and Writing***

For Pr NALI, reading is very important. He always reminds his children about the importance of reading. As a professor of medicine, Pr NALI reads a lot to keep himself up to date on what is going in his field of medicine. He said that he was reading mainly in the area of medicine. Teaching at university level makes someone an eternal student, declares Pr NALI. He is also very interested in reading in the field of leadership, because of his numerous responsibilities in the government and the church. Pr NALI has his own library at home. People who see it usually

say that he has a very rich library. He has published more than one hundred articles in the field of medicine. They have been published in different journals. He has also produced many handouts to help students to follow the teaching. Pr NALI is also a good speaker. He is invited as a guest speaker both for scientific and church conferences.

### ***Electronic Media***

Pr NALI recognized that he is part of the so-called "old generation." He is trying to catch up with computers and other electronic media. Often he is using his children to help him. One of them has a doctoral degree in Computer Science. He is using his cell phone, but also the Internet for his communication. He is determined to improve in this area.

### ***Finances and resources***

The government funds the National Agency with the help of the WHO. Pr NALI is at the head of an institution that receives a lot of money from partners. Personally, Pr NALI thinks that the salary that he received from the government is not enough to enable him to do what he wants. He has a house that he is renting out. He conducts private medical consultations in a private clinic and private companies. With all, Pr NALI can live well and also contribute financially for the service of the church. Pr NALI's principle is that as a leader, he must contribute first before asking others to do the same. Leading by example is one of his leadership models. Sometimes people want to be president of an organization only to benefit, but our calling is to help the Kingdom of God to be known in this broken world.

### ***Politics***

As Christian, Pr NALI thinks we need to bring the Christian worldview to the political arena. Politics is life; we need to get in with our Christian convictions and to try to influence others with our convictions. Pr NALI is of the opinion that Christian should not abandon the political arena. One reason he agreed to be a minister in the government was so that he could bring Christian influence. This is especially for lay people in the church. For Pr NALI, pastors may have their political convictions, but it is not good for them to be involved directly in the political area. If a pastor is a member of a political party, he may lose his neutrality in the church vis-a-vis other political parties and their members in the church. However, a pastor may give his opinion on political issues. Maybe a pastor should abandon his charges if he wants to play an active role in politics.

### ***Future***

Pr NALI's main dream is to prepare the next generation. Being 67 years old, he has trained many young people, but he thinks it is not enough. Pr NALI is a surgeon, and he is happy to practice surgery with those who were his students and who are now surgeons too. He is concerned to raise a generation of competent leaders who can take over. Among university professors, some were his students. He is very happy with this. The question is not only to train people but also to inculcate good leadership that comes from the Word of God, that is to say, servant leadership.

***Report Information Preparation***

Names: MUTEBA Elie and Dr. NUPANGA Weanzana

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