



Ferguson Report



Vol. 4 No. 2

“Go ye unto all the world”

February 2007

Pikeville Missions Workshop

The dates of February 22 – 25 marked a very special weekend for the Main Street church of Christ in Pikeville, KY as they hosted their 12th Annual Missions Workshop. This is admittedly a highlight to that congregation, those involved and interested in missions, and to those of us in the extension program of the Bear Valley Bible Institute of Denver (BVBID). That this church loves missions is obvious from the fact that the elders are implementing plans to expand their auditorium to accommodate a recurring packed house. I have always heard it said that missions-minded churches are growing churches. The Main St. church family is evidence of that principle. Churches, do you want to grow? (Are you listening?) Then become more involved in missions and rekindle God’s dream in your congregation’s life.

Keith Kasarjian, the local preacher, had just returned from the mission field—Chimala, Tanzania—having taught a couple of short courses in the Chimala Bible College (CBC) along with BVBID director, Denny Petrillo who also taught two courses. Not only did these men bring back interesting stories of their work at Chimala, Keith also brought back a nasty case of malaria, one of the hazards of working in the “bush.” While waiting for his malaria medicine, Keith managed to do a great job hosting the workshop by taking doxycycline. As of this writing, his medicine came in, and Keith said he was feeling “great” running at about “98%.” We thank God for his recovery.

The missions workshop hosted a good number of speakers this year. Burt Jones of Diamond, OH spoke about the “Passion of Christ” and “Making Singing a Part of Missions.” Terry Harmon, missionary in Kramatorsk, Ukraine, gave a presentation concerning his work in the Ukraine. More will be said about that exciting work later in this newsletter. Albert Bagdasaryan, a co-worker with Terry Harmon and a native Ukrainian, spoke concerning his work with the preacher training school and the church in Slavyansk. Zechariah Mbewe, future director of a new extension school planned for 2008 in Luanshya, Zambia, spoke on the subject of retaining Christians long-term on the

mission field. Cecil May, teacher at Faulkner University, spoke on the subject of “Training Youth for Missions.” And David Hamrick, director of extensions, gave an overview of the current state of our extension schools, future opportunities, and the increasing demand for preacher training schools around the world.

Sunday morning, closing out the workshop, Denny Petrillo taught a class on Matthew 18 and the role and responsibility of the “ninety-nine” who are left while the shepherd seeks the one lost sheep. And then, following a custom that has become a mainstay at the Main St. missions workshop, Perry Cotham gave his usual encouraging words to the congregation during the worship hour. Truly, brother Perry vividly demonstrates that a person’s passion for world missions doesn’t have to dim due to old age. This “energizer bunny” at the age of 95 just keeps on going and going with a zeal for the Lord and a love for lost souls around the world. If the Lord allows, I am sure brother Perry will be the guest speaker for next year’s missions Sunday.

Because of our travels and the difficulty of getting all of us together at one place, whenever we do come together as an extension staff to such meetings as this missions workshop we try to include a staff meeting. During this meeting we gave some time to discuss the current status and needs of our extension schools. Since Denny and Keith had just returned from Chimala, we had a fresh perspective about CBC. As those of you who read this newsletter know, a new intake of students has brought us new challenges. Not only are we continuing to seek support for new students, we are also making personnel and policy changes. Denny brought back recommendations to help along these lines and has acquired some funds to improve the existing facilities. Unfortunately, however, we were not able to have as large a class as we had hoped. The problem was not a shortage of students, but a shortage of funds. As much as we hated to do it, we had no choice but to deny most of the students who wanted to attend CBC. While we were able to accommodate seven new students for the new second year class, we simply must have the funds in

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place to enroll any additional students. This will be my continuing pursuit until we satisfy the capacity of CBC and the void of church leaders in East Africa.

The state of another BVVID extension school discussed was the work in Kramatorsk, Ukraine coordinated by Terry Harmon. Terry, his wife Maryna, and their young son, Timothy stayed with us for several days shortly before the mission workshop. We thoroughly enjoyed our time together talking about our works and visiting churches. As a Ukrainian, Maryna speaks Russian and knows very little English. But there must be some kind of universal “mother” language because Mary, my wife and Maryna managed well when Terry and I were gone. Terry shared with us some of the challenges of the school in Kramatorsk. One issue Terry faces that by May of this year they must be out of the existing state institute where they had been operating. Without a place to go, the extension school might be forced to shut down. Truly, Terry has been carrying a heavy burden. However, it appears that God may be opening a door to resolve this issue which is indeed exciting. While I am not at liberty to discuss the details at this time, please pray for Terry and this good work. The other BV extension schools are currently operating smoothly in Arusha, Tanzania; Panama City, Panama; and Lima, Peru.

Concerning future schools, we have a lot on our plate. We have been given the “go” signal with a

school in Nigeria. Property, buildings, teaching staff, and students with support are ready to begin this year. Gary Fallis will be coordinating this work. Zambia is also under way to begin in January of 2008. Zechariah Mbewe will be the new director in this school located in Luanshya. Land has already been purchased with additional land to be given to us by the government. Keith Kasarjian will be assisting me with coordinating this work. Columbia is also a very promising work with Denton Landon and Pat McIntosh making a trip soon to survey the needs and establish an extension school in Medellin possibly this year. Ralph Williams is the coordinator for a new work in Cambodia. He has been involved in establishing a new congregation in the growing city of Siem Reap. In time, Lord willing, an extension school will follow there. Opportunities are opening again with possible schools beginning in 2008 and 2009 in India, Bangladesh, Romania, Guatemala, the Philippines, and believe it or not, in China. There are two Chinese students who want to enroll in Bear Valley Bible Institute in Denver and then return to their homeland to begin a BV extension school in China. Truly God is opening unto us the doors of opportunity. Doesn't it put you in awe when you stand back and look at the providence and power of God? Brethren, we need your prayers—frequent, fervent, and prayers of faith. Howell