



# Ferguson Report



Vol. 5 No. 5

*"Go ye unto all the world"*

May 2008

## First Graduation Class - CBC

As usual I'm a few days behind on a few things including this article due to the timing of my travels. This newsletter is partly being written on my last evening in Chimala, Tanzania. Jeff Bell, preacher for the Bishop St. congregation in Union City, TN and I arrived at Chimala over two weeks ago in order to teach four short courses at the Chimala Bible College.



*Students of the Chimala Bible College, May 2008.*

In addition to teaching classes, this was a monumental occasion as we participated in the very first graduation class of the Chimala Bible College.

I want to thank all of you who support this work for making this great occasion possible. Without you none of this could have occurred. Your sacrifices have helped prepare ten men more fully to become able leader-servants in the kingdom of God in East Africa.

After Jeff and I arrived at Chimala Saturday (24<sup>th</sup> May), we both had an opportunity to speak at nearby village congregations Sunday morning and afternoon. We traveled with Bill & Cindy Stinson and Menard Swila, one of the CBC graduates, who translated. Jason Stapleton and Chris Raynor, working with the local evangelists and preaching students, had just completed one of the first campaigns for the winter season (our summer) with reports of well over 20 baptisms. I thought this was a really good number since this is typically Chimala's harvest time.

Classes at CBC started Monday morning as scheduled. Jeff and I alternated speaking at the 7:30 a.m. chapel devotional. Classes began at 8:00 and

continued up till 12:00 noon. After an hour lunch break, we taught until 3:00 p.m. The first week, I



*2008 Graduating Class of the Chimala Bible College.- Salick Ghambi, Joseph Haonga, Boaz Kasiba, Julius Mkisi, Timothy Mwama, Gideon Mwandette, Asifiwi Mickson, Xavier Ngullo, and Menard Swila*

taught Joshua, Judges, and Ruth to the 1<sup>st</sup> year students while Jeff taught Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther to the 2<sup>nd</sup> year students. The second week, Jeff taught James, 1, 2 Peter, and Jude to the 1<sup>st</sup> year students while I taught the Doctrine of the Godhead to the 2<sup>nd</sup> year students. Our 2<sup>nd</sup> year students are eight in number with most of them coming from Malawi.



*Jeff Bell addressing the graduates and audience at the CBC graduation commencement exercises.*

Teaching the four classes was the primary reason Jeff and I came to Chimala; however, an additional reason for coming was to witness a monumental

Ferguson Sponsoring  
Congregation

Please send all contributions  
to:

**WESTSIDE CHURCH  
OF  
CHRIST**

3235 HWY 54 WEST  
BROWNSVILLE, TN 38012  
(731) 772-3810

***“Ferguson Mission”***

Monthly commitments and one-time  
donations still needed

**Bear Valley Bible Institute of  
Denver**

A work of the Bear Valley Church of  
Christ, 2707 S. Lamar St, Denver,  
CO  
80227 (303) 986-5800

Howell Ferguson, Ext. Coordinator  
Chimala, Tanzania, E. Africa and  
Abakaliki, Nigeria, W. Africa  
Bear Valley Bible Institute of Denver  
22 Tanbark Cove  
Bells, TN 38006  
(731) 984-7409  
hferguson@bvbid.org

occasion: the graduation of the first ten students of the Chimala Bible College Friday afternoon, May 30<sup>th</sup>. It was a well-received event with 167 people in attendance—mostly family and friends of the graduates. Others invited were the current CBC students, Exaud Mwanjisi—Officer of Ilongo District, Chimala mission administrator and missionary families. Each of these graduates having completed the two-year program made up of 48 courses in Bible texts or Bible related subjects received a Bachelor’s of Biblical Studies degree. Each of these is a 30-hour course totally over 1,440 classroom hours not counting time spent doing outside research, writing papers, sermons, and memorization of relevant scripture.

The graduation ceremony went very smoothly. Ottu Shadrach worked diligently coordinating the decorations and flower arrangements. The students’ wives worked most of that Friday preparing chicken, beef, vegetables, rice, cabbage and other food items for the expected guests. The students carried chairs and tables and arranged them in the large front yard of the “Smalling house” (named after former missionaries – Wayne and Flo Smalling) where the graduation ceremony took place on the mission. My basic role was to choreograph and MC the event. Joshua Mwakyasima served as my able translator. With Mr. Mwanjisi assisting me, we awarded the degrees and later the study Bibles as student gifts which I purchased and brought from the states.

The ceremony began with the ten graduates

exiting the front door of the Smalling house in single file and taking their place in the two rows of chairs to the side and slightly to the front of the audience. After prayer from one of our instructors, Joshua Mwakysima, CBC director, Salick Ghambi gave the graduates words of encouragement with a challenge to follow faithfully the biblical concepts they had learned in their classes. His speech was followed by the presentation of the degrees to each of the students, and then a message from the District Officer. Jeff Bell then presented to the class and audience a biblical message. He was followed by the valedictorian chosen for the occasion, Benard Kulanga who gave exhortation to his fellow graduates and also read some pertinent passages of Scripture. George Phiri, one of the first year students led us all in a song followed by a brief history of CBC by Chimala administrator Bill Stinson, who also led the closing prayer. Afterwards, I invited everyone to shout a hearty “hongera” (Swahili for “congratulations”) to the graduates. The ladies at once began sounding their traditional verbal shrills – a frequent custom at weddings, and other African social events. Hugs, handshakes, smiles, picture-taking, gift-giving, and eating continued until nightfall.

The graduation was complete. Happiness filled the air. It was a fine way to end the week. Ten men have been given the tools of the Lord’s “trade” of preaching the unsearchable riches of Christ. May God bless their efforts for good in His kingdom. May their tribe increase! What a great day!

Howell