



Ferguson Report



Vol. 5 No. 6

“Go ye unto all the world”

June 2008

The Details Really Matter

While we are seeking to effect spiritual changes by challenging people’s minds with God’s love as revealed in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, we operate in a physical world. Conducting schools of preaching and Bible institutes requires making good use of material items which are neither cheap nor free. The costs of nearly everything imaginable are going up. Adding to this “cost-misery” is the fact that often when operating in third-world countries things tend to break at the worst possible time, supplies are often scarcer and more costly, and frequently they can only be found at greater distances. And with diesel fuel in Tanzania at about \$7.50 per gallon, the location of supplies is a really big deal.

Just to give you some indication of the costs of travel; when we transport a short-course teacher by private transportation to Chimala the cost of diesel fuel alone for the 2 round-trips between Dar-es-Salaam and Chimala (44 road-hours) is more than \$800.

Existing equipment is generally older, second-hand donations. These are very much appreciated and put to much good use, but breakdowns are frequent. Consumable materials are regularly on short supply and consequently have to be rationed.

What we need in the Chimala Bible College is churches to help us with the small details of day-to-day operations. For example, we need churches that are willing to help us with dry-erase markers. We need churches that will help us keep the copying machine repaired and supplied with toner. We need churches to help keep the light bulbs and “starters” replaced and operating in the classrooms. We need churches to help us furnish our classrooms with ceiling fans to give some relief from the sweltering summer heat. It can become very warm in these non-air-conditioned classrooms. Fans can be a tremendous help.

We need notebooks and writing pens. We need churches to help us build a new student dorm. We need churches to build simple wooden desks and chairs for the existing dorms so students can have a place to study instead of sitting on the ground. We need churches to put a drop ceiling in the existing dorms to keep mosquitoes from coming inside the student’s rooms while they’re trying to study in the evenings.

Students regularly come down with and have to be treated for malaria—a fatal illness. We need churches to build chairs and tables for the “sitting” room at the end of the existing dorm. This is only a small list of the needs we face regularly at CBC.

Yes, there are a lot details in operating institutions of spiritual learning. The cost of making souls “*wise unto salvation*” continues to challenge our priorities and call to Christian stewardship. The devil doesn’t like what we’re doing. That’s why we’re determined to keep doing it.

Howell

Panama

The extension preacher-training program of the Bear Valley Bible Institute of Denver is as you already know a “world-wide” program. Besides the primary operations in Denver, there are existing schools in Tanzania, Ukraine, Nigeria, Panama, and Peru with new schools starting in Uganda and Cambodia. Part of what we do as extension coordinators is recruit short-course teachers as well as teach in each other’s extension schools as needed. Since it is not always an easy thing to find men available who are able to take a week or two of their year to travel to a foreign country to teach, we frequently call upon one another to teach the courses. And I truly believe it is something that each of us genuinely enjoys to do.

There have been two trips that I’ve made to the Bible School of the Americas in Panama that I haven’t said much about in my newsletters. But I want to give a brief report on them in this issue. Back in April shortly after returning from Ukraine I taught a short course on Homiletics. This visit made my third time to teach in this school. The students have always been very attentive and work hard to take good notes even with a translator. During the short courses we teach both 1st and 2nd year classes combined making a total of 23 students.

Just last Saturday (June 28th) I returned from the second and final trip to Panama for the year which makes my fourth trip. During this week I taught a course on church growth. Skip Andrews had been there the previous week teaching the other short course on expository preaching. My routine has been to fly down on Saturday, visit a congregation on Sunday, teach Monday through Friday, and then make the

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return flight home the next Saturday.

Upcoming Classes

There are several other places that I'm scheduled to visit to teach short courses. The third week of August I'm down to teach a class on the Old Testament historical books of Joshua, Judges and Ruth at the Bible School of the Americas in Lima, Peru. This school is led under the capable directorship of Rodolfo Espinoza. The last time I taught there was a week after the devastating earthquake they experienced last August. Like last year, I'll return to Memphis on a Saturday (Aug 23rd) where I'll meet Mary and together fly to Denver for the yearly BVBID extension staff retreat and workshop.

Following our return from Denver, Denton Landon and I will be traveling together to CSMT School of Biblical Studies in Abakaliki, Nigeria. Denton will be teaching two graduates courses, while I'm teaching Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther as well as I, II, & III John. We fly into Lagos, spend the night at a local hotel, worship that Sunday morning with a local congregation and fly that afternoon on a local air carrier to Enugu. From Enugu, we'll have about an hour drive by taxi to Abakaliki in the Ebony State.

Once Denton and I return from Nigeria, Mary and I will be preparing for our visit to Eastern Ukraine. This will probably be a two-week trip in which we'll spend half our time in Gorlovka which is the city where one of our Bear Valley extension schools is

located. I'm excited that Mary will finally be able to travel with me making this her first trip to Ukraine to meet these wonderful people. Depending on the school schedule I may be teaching a short course during that week. The second week we'll be in Krasny Luch visiting the brethren there and helping to strengthen and encourage the church. I'm considering the idea of conducting a seminar on the subject of Christian stewardship. There are so many opportunities that exist for church growth there. As the Lord once said prophetically to the apostle Paul concerning the potential for a church in Corinth, *“for I have many people in this city”* (Acts 18:10); the same I believe can be said of Krasny Luch and many other such towns and cities of Eastern Ukraine.

Once Mary and I return from Ukraine, Denton Landon and I will travel to Tanzania the end of November making this my last trip out of the country for the year. Because of the ever-increasing costs of travel to Chimala, Denton and I plan to take the bus even though this is normally our last choice of travel due to the conditions of the mountain roads. But the costs will be only a small fraction of the costs we otherwise would have to pay. Denton will teach I, II Samuel and World Religions and I will teach Paul's Prison Epistles and the book of Revelation. Also while there we will have the second graduation of the Chimala Bible College. Five more men will have completed the two-year Bible program. I'll have more to say about that in later newsletters. Howell