



Ferguson Report



Vol. 6 No. 12

“Go ye unto all the world”

December 2009

Out with the old...2009

It is somehow beginning to bother me how it seems that writing end-of-the-year reports is coming more frequently and at a faster pace. Are they starting to shorten the year, or what? I know that most people expect a review of the 2009 year. If only life fit into neat one-year packages! In reality, the work of the BVVID extension program and mission work in general doesn't always follow our man-made timetables. I'm certain that books could be written detailing what has happened at both the Chimala Bible College and the Bear Valley Bible Institute of Ukraine. Nevertheless, I will try my best to give you a brief overview of 2009 from my perspective.

Chimala Bible College

Concerning the Chimala Bible College, January began with seven new students and a search for a replacement CBC director as Salick Ghambi made the decision to return to Malawi. As a result, the Chimala Mission administration decided to hire Peter Kamatula from Mbeya as the new director and instructor. Peter was a godsend just when we needed him the most. He is a keen and experienced Bible student, well-educated, and possesses a pleasant Christian attitude. We are so thankful Peter has come our way.

In March, Denton Landon and I traveled to Chimala to teach the first set of short courses. Almost mid-way in our visit I received a phone call from Mary saying that my father was taken to the hospital with respiratory failure; a few hours later he died. What began as a complex trip including a visit to Ukraine was shortened considerably as I immediately made my way back home. Denton continued to teach the duration of his time at Chimala.

Garry Hill taught the next two short courses by himself without the usual second teacher due to two unexpected cancellations. Trust me; it is not easy to get a quick replacement teacher to travel 9,000 miles to Africa! But, in missions we need to adopt the saying of the military Seabees: “*The difficult we do immediately; the impossible may take a little longer.*” The other two classes were taught, and Garry accomplished his two classes as well. Thank you Garry and all you other

short-course and local CBC teachers!

The arrival of summer brought the end of the CBC sessions as numerous evangelistic and medical teams arrived at the Chimala Mission. Some of the students returned home temporarily while the others participated in campaigns as teachers and interpreters.

Following the campaign season, quarter three began on schedule followed by the next set of short courses taught by Donnie Bates and Cy Stafford. Again, I thank these two men for taking time to travel and teach at CBC. Both of them are very busy and dedicated men involved in great mission works of their own.

With the fourth quarter completed, Garry Hill (again!) and I, along with Mary, made our way to Chimala to wrap up the 2009 CBC year. An interesting note: Garry has been so impressed with the work at Chimala that he is seriously considering living there semi-permanently. With the returning home of Chimala missionaries, Chris and Tam Raynor, Garry would be a fantastic asset to that work; and we would gain a tremendous teacher at CBC. Please pray for Garry as he contemplates this new challenge in his life.

Bear Valley Bible Institute of Ukraine

The beginning of 2009 looked quite bleak for BVBIU in Gorlovka. There had been a number of setbacks. The major one was financial as the primary BVBIU funding suddenly disappeared due to the downturn in the US economy. With student enrolment down, attacks by false brethren, and the new building contract hanging in the balances; hope for BVBIU was dropping as quickly as the bone-chilling temperature in its hallways. And the devil was having a heyday.

When I did finally make my visit in March of 2009, I witnessed first-hand the effect all of this was having on our extension school. As discouraging as things were, and with an overload of burdens that would have crushed most men; BVBIU director Terry Harmon managed to keep the institute running. In fact, in a moment of brilliance, Terry called for a meeting of all the instructors, students, and several local preachers. With the prospect of moving the school looming, the unanimous agreement among those in

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that meeting was to stay-the fight, and keep the current school's location as the best possible place to educate preachers, church leaders and workers. The attitudes completely changed, God blessed the prayers and determinations of men of faith, and funds (even if temporary) were found which saved BVBIU from closing or moving.

Graduation came late in the spring; and shortly thereafter Terry, Marina and their boys came home to the States for a much-needed furlough. While they were at home, Mary and I returned to Ukraine to begin a four-week campaign series that summer with the help of two of our children and some friends.

About a month later, BVVID extension director, Bob Turner and I traveled back to Ukraine to welcome nine new students to a revitalized BVBIU. I remember how greatly encouraged Bob and I were during chapel time at the sight of a room full of students, instructors and staff.

Finances continue to be a challenge at BVBIU, and several of us with Bear Valley have been actively seeking new supporters to fill the gaps. Currently, funds have been found enabling us to install a new high-efficiency boiler system to heat the building. As of this date, however, the hook-up of the electrical continues to be stalled due to typical corruption issues where we are refusing to pay any bribes. But one way or the other, we are confident God will win over the devil and his corrupted accomplices.

Your prayers for BVBIU (as well as CBC and all the BVVID extension schools) are especially needed at this time. Regardless of any other needs the schools may have financially or otherwise; without the *“effectual fervent prayers”* of the righteous, we would be fighting a losing battle. However, we do need your financial support. These schools cannot operate without the *“works”* of faith (James 2:14-18). I'm sure we've all become tired of hearing about the *“downturn of the economy.”* The fact we all need to be reminded of, however, is that Jehovah God is Sovereign over all things both in a good or bad economy. Money does not become *less* owned by God simply because the economy is bad (cf. 1 Kings 17:8-16). And I simply cannot discount the thought that perhaps our current economic situation is God subtly reminding us that it *still* belongs to Him (cf. Job 1:21).

But let me end this newsletter by expressing my *heartfelt appreciation* for all of *YOU* who *DO* support the BVVID extension program. Only in eternity will it be revealed the extent to which your prayers and financial support have effected the population of heaven. But just in case you don't want to wait until you get to heaven to find out what influence your prayers and dollars are having; I'd encourage you to plan a visit to Tanzania or Ukraine and see for yourself. But I must warn you: you will never look at your role in God's kingdom the same way again. Why not think about it? ☺

Howell