

Merry Christmas from Ghana!

This will be a different Christmas for me this year. As I walk about the town there are no Christmas lights adorning any of the houses, no Christmas music is being played, and I have not seen a single Christmas tree. None of this is unexpected since the majority of the people who live around me are Muslim, but it still seems strange. Since the temperature on Christmas day will be in the mid-nineties there will not be any hope for a white Christmas, only an expectation of another dust filled day courtesy of the Harmattan winds. And rather than a big mug of hot cocoa the preferred drink of the day will be a Coca-Cola or Fanta. It just doesn't seem very Christmas like at all!

Further south of here, in the predominately "Christian" part of the country there will be many Christmas celebrations happening throughout the month of December and into the first week of January. Many people will journey back to their tribal villages in order to spend the holiday with their family. On Christmas morning everyone will head off to church showing off their new 'bronya' (Christmas) outfits. For many of the children these new clothes will be the only new clothes they will receive until next Christmas. Once church services are finished the afternoon and evening is devoted to eating and partying. Roads will be blocked off as the parties spread out with dancing in the streets. Christmas day in Southern Ghana is traditionally a very lively, and very very noisy day!

As for me, I'll be spending Christmas planning for a trip to Burkina Faso the following week. It is time for me to have to leave the country and re-enter again so I will be spending a couple of days in Burkina looking for potential towns to plant churches in. So far I have only heard of a total of four churches of Christ in the entire country so it should be pretty easy to find towns and villages that need a church. More difficult is finding men who are able to lead that are also willing to spend the time necessary to help a new church plant grow. Finding those men will be a critical part of my Christmas trip.

Christmas is different here, and my Christmas will be much different than I am used to. What I will miss most this Christmas is spending time with family and friends. Even though I will not see you this holiday season, know that you are all in my heart and I will be thinking of you. Have a wonderful Christmas, and a safe and prosperous New Year! And if you get a chance, drink a big mug of hot cocoa (with extra marshmallows) for me.

Tamale Institute of Biblical Studies

The eighth term for the current class at the Bible Institute will be coming to a close on December 21st. Classes will begin again on January 14th, with the students having only two terms remaining to complete the two year program.

This term I am teaching a double class (80 hours of classroom time instead of 40) covering the Hebrew and Galatian letters. Other classes being taught this quarter include A Preacher and His Work, Godhead, (see TIBS on page 2)

Evangelism Update

Ten students from the Bible Institute recently completed a four day campaign in the Bimbila area as part of our school curriculum. At the same time two other students were following up with the church planted in Cinkasse Togo this past September. The Bimbila campaign resulted in 12 baptisms and a new church meeting in the town. Leaders from village churches in the surrounding area will be assisting the church with Bible class teachers and preaching until one of the current students graduates and returns to assist this new congregation.

(see Evangelism on page 3)

TIBS (cont. from pg. 1)

Old Testament 6 (Major Prophets), and Christian Morals. This has been a very full term for the students with lots out of class work being required and lots of in class tests to make sure they are understanding the information being taught. In my class alone the students have written a paper on the relationship between Melchizedek and Christ, created five sermon outlines from the books of Hebrews and Galatians, and will have taken 13 tests by the end of the class!

The biggest news for the school is that, Lord willing, we will be in our new building for the beginning of the next term. There is still a lot of work to do, but if the electricity hookup gets completed we will be able to move in and finish the work as we have the opportunity. The building project has been going on for a number of years and it will be a great day when we experience the benefit of so many people's giving and labor.

We are also excited that we may have visitors coming during the next term. A small group from Tennessee consisting of Travis White, Tracy White, and Chris Winner are currently raising funds to be able to come over and help teach classes and work with the students during the February campaign week. We do not get many visitors here in the north so we are very thankful for these men and their desire to help with the work here.

We are also looking forward to a short visit by Richard Renfro who works with Mission Printing. Mission Printing sends a huge number of tracts all over the world, including many that are distributed here in Ghana and in neighboring Togo. With the additional room we will have in the new building we are hoping that Mission Printing will send us a large supply of tracts to be distributed throughout Northern Ghana, Northern Togo, and Southern Bukina Faso.

As you can see, we manage to keep busy here at the Tamale Institute of Biblical Studies!

Thank You Supporters!

Overseeing Congregation

Greenbrier church of Christ

Supporters (includes recent one time contributions)

Greenbrier church of Christ

Colony church of Christ

Bobby and Jackie Sims

Sue Shumate

Aubrey and Donna Allensworth

Mildred Priest

Virginia Hielen

Wilkie Family

Chris and Shirley Brill

Linda Ray

Ron and Joann Boatwright

I am very thankful to all those who are part of the work here in West Africa. I cannot adequately express my appreciation for all of you who make it possible for me to work here. If you are interested in supporting the work at the Tamale Institute of Biblical studies or in helping the Kingdom of Hope Orphan's School we would certainly appreciate it and put your gift to a good work. Please send all contributions to:

Greenbrier church of Christ

Attn: African Missions

12 Wilson Farm Rd.

Greenbrier, AR 72058

If you desire your gift to be used for a specific purpose please indicate how it is to be used by placing a note with your gift or sending me an e-mail. Some of the current needs at Kingdom of Hope include:

Desks and Chairs - \$20 each set

Text books - \$4 each

Mattresses - \$25 each

School lunches - \$150 per month

Repairs for existing building - \$1000

Current needs for the Tamale Institute of Biblical Studies include the expenses to send the students on evangelism campaigns in February. It costs \$75 to send a student on a campaign.

All gifts are appreciated, large or small, and will be put toward a good work. Thank you for all of your help!

Kingdom of Hope Update

This month's trip to Kuka and the Kingdom of Hope Orphan's school was highlighted by a meeting with the church leaders there to discuss the direction for the school. One of the problems that can arise with these type of projects is the expectation from the local people that the white man is going to be in charge and tell everyone what to do. I am working very hard to make sure that does not happen, while at the same time trying to make sure that they are making good decisions regarding the organization and running of the school. Sometimes it feels like trying to walk on a circus high wire! But we continue to make progress and I believe the church is very happy that this is "their school."

Construction on the new classroom continues to go well. Between my personal contribution and donations made last month we now have the funds to complete the roof for the classroom. I will be going there later this month to buy the necessary materials and help oversee the work. All of the unskilled work on the building, such as hauling water and sand for the cement and digging the foundation has been done by members of the congregation volunteering their time and energy. At the current pace of work we should have a usable building by the end of January. The new building will be named the Enoch Elliott Learning Center, in memory of the son of Jason and Misti Elliott.

Other issues at the school continue to be addressed as possible. Thanks to a recent donation I will be able to buy a number of mattresses for the students who are currently sleeping on the ground. We have also been able to raise the money to catch up paying the teachers and to help the church with some of the expense of feeding the children. In doing all of this we have also challenged the church to become more involved with feeding the children, a task they have stepped up to through the increased giving of produce from their gardens and a number of chickens and guinea fowls. Working together we continue to meet the needs of a great number of children in Northern Ghana!

Evangelism (cont. from pg. 1)

During the month I also travelled to the Upper East Region along with one of the Institutes graduates to do a 1 day seminar on what the Bible teaches about Christians and drinking. Drinking is a big part of the pagan Christmas celebrations in that area and the local preacher asked for our help in proactively dealing with the subject. Once the seminar was concluded I was able to meet with other church leaders in the area to begin planning a leadership seminar for all the churches to be held during the spring of 2013.

Later this month I will be heading back to the north to work on logistics for February's campaigns. We will once again be involved with two campaigns, with most of the students assisting the church in Walewale with door to door evangelism. A small group will also be going with me to the Ghana/Burkina Faso border to plant a new congregation.

Please pray for our efforts to spread the gospel here in Northern Ghana!

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More Information

Want to know more about what's going on in my life? Check out my blog site about what it is like to live and work in Africa at <http://thinkingsouls.wordpress.com/>.

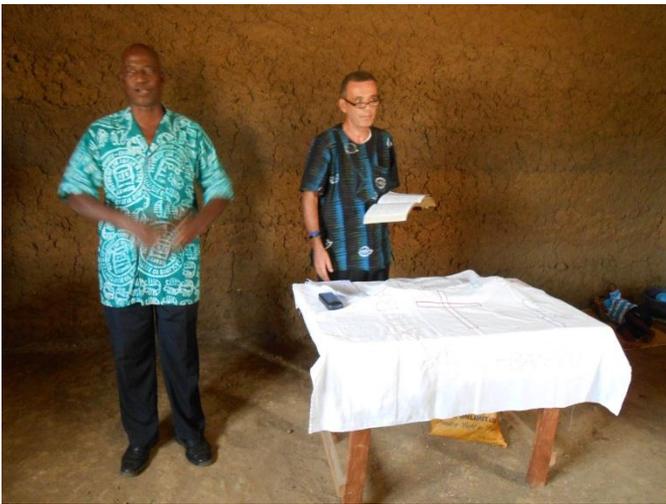
Did you know I also write for a new Christian blog site called Alive with Christ? You can find my articles, along with articles by many others at <http://alivewithchrist.com/givemethebible/>.



The church at Atuba where we held a seminar



Some of the places we go are a little off the beaten track!



Teaching in English with a Kusaali translator



Hooking up the new water tank your gifts help provide



Passing out Mission Printing tracts in Bimbila



Almost ready to move in to the new Bible Institute building



Construction continues on the new school building



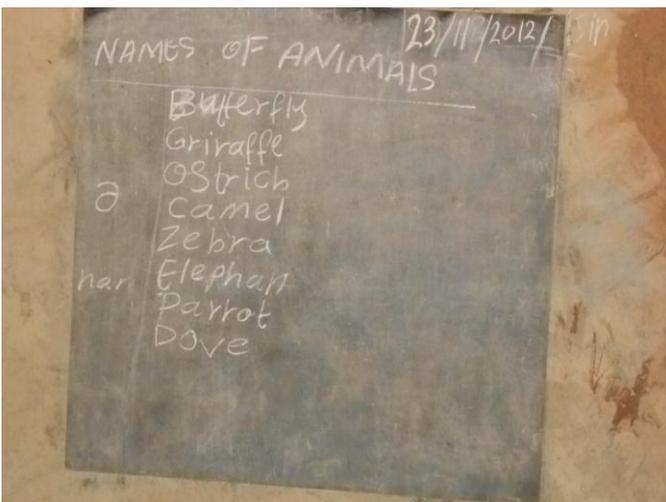
Some of the children living at Kingdom of Hope



Leaders of the Kuka church of Christ who are responsible for the Kingdom of Hope School



Some of the children living at Kingdom of Hope



The Primary 1 class is working on animal names



Some of the children living at Kingdom of Hope