

Back in Africa!

On July 4th I made it back to Africa, landing at the Kotoka Airport in Accra, Ghana after a 23 hour journey. Joining me on the trip was Jack Dodgen, a student at Bear Valley Bible Institute in Denver who is scheduled to graduate in December of this year. Jack, who is a member of the North MacArthur church of Christ in Oklahoma City, came for the month of July in order to teach two classes at the Tamale Institute of Biblical Studies. Upon arriving we were greeted by Steven Ashcraft, Bear Valley Coordinator for West Africa, who would be our ride and our guide until we reached Tamale.

Our first full day in Ghana was spent getting supplies, changing US dollars for Ghana cedis, and trying to set up a Ghana bank account. With the exception of the bank account, the day was successful. I found out I cannot get a bank account without having a local utility bill in my name, so I will have to figure out a different way to manage finances while I am here. Fortunately I brought enough cash that it will not be an issue for a while.

After a day in Accra we headed up the coast to visit with some of the preachers working in the Central and Western Regions, as we worked our way toward the West Coast School of Preaching in Takoradi. We also took the opportunity to teach classes and preach at local congregations on Sunday morning. After visiting with the staff and students in Takoradi we headed north to the city of Kumasi.

Our main purpose in Kumasi was to look for a vehicle for me, thanks to generous donations from the Wilkie family, Front Range church of Christ, H. & Betty Henderson Foundation, and many members of the Greenbrier church of Christ. After discussing the matter with Steven we made a deal, if he left his 4 wheel drive with me when he was out of the country (which is most of the time now) than I would use the money raised for a vehicle to buy a "mini-bus", the local name for a 15 passenger van, that we could use at the school to transport students on campaigns and visiting teachers from Accra to Tamale. We spent a day in Kumasi checking all the car lots we could find, but failed to find an acceptable bus in our price range. Rather than buy something that was less than we needed we will continue to look for the right vehicle. It may take a couple of months, but it should not be an issue until Steven returns for a visit next January.

We finally arrived in Tamale on our sixth day in Ghana. It is good to be back at the school again and to get reacquainted with both the staff and students. There were some changes of course, as three of the students I remembered have left the school for various reasons, but the 12 returning students were excited to get started on their second year of studies. One additional student was expected, but the beginning of the term found him suffering from a very bad case of malaria. He attempted to come back during the third week of classes, only to have a relapse. It is our prayer that he will be able to rejoin his class during the next term in September.

Once arriving at the school, Jack and I began our teaching assignments. Normally an instructor will teach one four hour class two to three days a week. However, since Jack and I were going to be the only teachers for this term it meant we had to double up our workload. To further complicate matters, Jack had to be leave for Accra to catch his flight back to the U.S. in 16 days, giving him just 11 school days to teach over 80 hours of material. So, for nine of the 11 days Jack taught both morning and evening classes in order to get everything completed before he headed back to the U.S.

It was great to have Jack here, and his help was greatly appreciated. Once he left it was just me,
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So I got to experience teaching double classes every day for the remainder of the quarter. I can assure you that I will not take on teaching three classes in the same term again! Despite the workload, all is going well and I am looking forward to the end of the term this Friday, when the students will head home for a couple weeks and I will catch my breath!

Evangelism Report

During the break between terms Stephen Ashcraft will be returning to Tamale and will join me and two of our students for an evangelistic campaign in Sinkasse, Togo. The students, Joseph Molsak and Nichema Jacob, are from villages on the Ghana side of the border near Sinkasse, and belong to tribes that are closely related to those who live on the Togo side of the border. Since Togo is a French speaking country the campaign will also be relying on help from preachers in Togo, especially from a preacher named Fidele who is working in a recently planted congregation in the city of Dapaong. The goals for this campaign include bringing the church to Sinkasse with the planting of a congregation, and to encourage the cooperation between Christians in evangelistic work on both sides of the border.

A second campaign is being planned for October in the Bimbila area of Ghana. Two of our students are originally from this area, where there is no church of Christ. This campaign will be for the purpose of planting a congregation in the area, which the students will go to work at after their graduation.

Evangelism also happens at the school on a regular basis. I recently met a young man at the market, who after finding out I was teaching at a Bible school expressed an interest to learn more, and a study has been set up. Another young man has been studying with the school's assistant, Jacob Yeboah, which resulted in his baptism this past Sunday. With your help we are making a difference in this part of the world. Please keep our efforts in your prayers.

Thank You!

Whatever I am able to do, it is only because of the many people who make it possible. While I am the one who gets to see the results of the work, it truly belongs to each and every one of the following congregations and individuals who have offered their support or encouragement for the work in Ghana during the past two months.

Greenbrier church of Christ (overseeing congregation); Colony church of Christ, Harding Street church of Christ, Sue Shumate, Bobby and Jackie Sims, Aubrey and Donna Allensworth; Mildred Priest; White Oak church of Christ; Front Range church of Christ; H. & Betty Henderson Foundation; Virginia Heilen; Brian and DeAnn Wilkie; Rachel Wilkie; Jack Wilkie, Anna Wilkie, Joe Wilkie, Glen and Colleen Elliott; Ron and Joann Boatwright; David and Beverly Woody; Wade and Gary Maverty; Verple Baker; Kevin, Amy, Cody and Cassidy Barley; Carol Shadell; Jim and Martha Bell; Ratis and Dorothy Yeager; Judy Williams; Herb and Dorothy Tatum; Mary Mix, Jimmy and Floyma Sutterfield; Larry and Linda Harness; Linda Ray; Rod and Cindy Wilson; Del and Love Hines. And special thanks to Foster for lending me his bed when I get to visit Greenbrier!

Did you know?

As a non-resident of Ghana I can only stay in the country for 60 days at a time? For this reason I will also be working in Togo and Burkina Faso until I can arrange for a resident alien permit (which allows a person to stay for one year at a time.)

That it is estimated that only 20% of the homes in Ghana have private toilet facilities? Fortunately, I am one of the 20%!

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Teaching with a translator at the church in Sinkase



Jack had the opportunity to teach in the villages



Most congregations have plastic chairs and wooden benches rather than pews



Jack and Steven posed with the students before heading back to Accra



I have been spending most of my time in the classroom



Preaching in Tamale - I will begin teaching the book of Acts at the West Tamale church next quarter