

TIBS Update - The Class of 2015



Some of the TIBS students showing off their new Bibles given by members of the Greenbrier church of Christ

The Tamale Institute of Biblical Studies (TIBS) is back in session with its second term of the 2013-14 school year. The class of 2015 has a total of sixteen men who have committed two years of their lives to studying the Bible in order to become preachers and leaders in their local congregations. Many of these men are married with children, which they have to leave in the care of their local congregations while taking the ten terms of classes that make up the TIBS curriculum. Between each six week term the students return to their families and work to make sure their families are cared for during the next 6 week term. Since most of these men provide for their families as substance farmers that is what they will be doing, planting, tending and harvesting their crop, during the break periods between terms. It is a great struggle for most of these men to be here, and the fact that they are here reflects their desire to serve God.

During the second term the students are taking a total of five classes. They are continuing their study of the three synoptic gospels in Life of Christ 2. They are also continuing their study of the English language in their Writing Skills 2 class. New classes this term include Old Testament 1, a study of the first five books of the Old Testament; The Scheme of Redemption, a study of God's plan of salvation; and Hermeneutics, the first of two classes they will receive on interpreting the Bible.

One of the interesting challenges faced by the TIBS teachers here is making sure the students understand both the words and what the words mean to the original audience and writer. We use the

TIBS Update (continued)

New King James Bible for all classes, and many of the words used are unfamiliar to the students, so we spend lots of time discussing words like “firmament” and “dominion” from Genesis 1. More difficult than identifying words that the students may be unfamiliar with is identifying a word that is used differently in their culture. Often times it involves a word that you never imagined might cause a problem. A recent example in our OT1 class involved the word “sister,” as used in Leviticus 18:9 and its instructions prohibiting a man from marrying his sister. One of the students stated that in his village they were only allowed to marry their “sister” and wanted to know if this meant that everyone had to leave their wives. Fortunately I’ve learned to ask clarifying questions before answering and we were able to determine that in his village (as well as many others) that every unmarried girl in the village is considered their sister! You can imagine his relief when I explained the difference between how the Bible used the word as opposed to how his village used the word!

There is still much work to do, but we are excited about the work that this class will be doing for the Lord. There is much talent in this group of men, and a great desire to better understand and teach the Word of God. Evidence of their desire was seen a few weeks ago as one of the local women who comes daily to sell food to the students was baptized after studying with them.

Finally, this month TIBS was also blessed to receive a large number of books for our library from the wonderful people at Mission Printing. We are very proud of the library here which contains over 1500 titles. These new books are in the process of being sorted, shelved, and added to the library database, and will add to the depth of knowledge our students have access to. We thank God for all that He has provided us to do the work here in Ghana!

Thank You Supporters!

I want to thank all of those who contribute to the work we are able to do throughout West Africa! I could not do this without the constant support of the Greenbrier church of Christ, Colony church of Christ, Lieper’s Fork church of Christ, Connie Barden, Bobby and Jackie Sims, Sue Shumate, Aubrey and Donna Allensworth, Chris and Shirley Brill, Linda Ray, Gene and Sandra Blair, and Mary Mix.

I also want to thank Travis White and Holley Locke for their recent gift for the purchase of local language Bibles to be distributed in areas where English is not widely used. Being able to read God’s Word in our own language is something we often take for granted! We are currently searching for Konkumba and Kasasi language Bibles, both of which are in great demand in the areas we are working.

One of our greatest current needs is a congregation (or congregations) who would be interested in supporting the ongoing needs of the Tamale Institute of Biblical Studies (TIBS). It costs approximately \$2500 a month to operate the school. This includes transportation for the students, a feeding allowance, classroom supplies, and all the expenses associated with the buildings and their maintenance. Currently the school has commitments for \$800 a month towards these expenses. If you know of a congregation that would like to be involved with the training of preachers in their own country, please have them get in contact with me for more information.

In conclusion, I want to give a special thank you to all of those who have been supporting me with your prayers. Knowing that you are lifting up my name before God is the greatest blessing I could receive each day!

Please send all contributions to my overseeing congregation:

Greenbrier church of Christ
Attn: African Missions
12 Wilson Farm Rd.
Greenbrier, AR 72058

Be sure to send me a note if you want your gift to be used for a specific purpose.

Please share African Missions Report with your church family. If you know anyone who would be interested in receiving a copy please send their e-mail address to anthonyjohnson2010@gmail.com.

Evangelism Update

In the month of September I was pleased to be able to assist in two evangelism campaigns. These campaigns, which were organized by Steven Ashcraft, took place in the neighboring countries of Togo and Burkina Faso.

The campaign in Togo was led by two of our Togolese preachers; Fidel, who works in the northern city of Dapaong, and Alakoum, who works in the central city of Kara. The purpose of the campaign was to plant a new congregation in the city of Niamtougou, which is located between the two cities. Each day the campaign team did house to house Bible studies, and each night we showed a different Bible film and peached. At the end of the campaign there were 6 baptisms and 19 continuing studies set up, and a new congregation meeting with 16 in attendance for its first service. Alakoum and Fidel will be taking turns leading this congregation until it develops leaders and teachers of its own.

The campaign in Burkina Faso was held to support a seminar set up by the two local congregations in Ouagadougou, the capital city and home to an estimated 1.4 million people. Despite the size of the city there are less than 40 Christians in the two congregations. Our task was to invite people to the seminar which would be held at the end of the week. After spending 3 days passing out flyers to hundreds of people and inviting them to the seminar, we got to experience the difficulties faced by the local congregations. Despite many people promising to come, only a handful showed up each night for the seminar. There is lots of work to do in Ouagadougou, and we have been left with the challenge of finding new ways to reach the people there. On our last day in Burkina we stopped by the only other active congregation in Burkina (as far as we knew) in the village of Po. Thankfully they had been working hard there and the local preacher has established small congregations in two of the neighboring villages. I'll be going back in November to conduct a campaign with them in the two villages to try and strengthen those congregations.

In November we will also be taking the Tamale

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Kingdom of Hope Update

A new school year has begun and construction continues at the Kingdom of Hope Orphan's School.

On September 19th students reported for classes. In addition to the 40 orphans who the school was originally set up to serve, we had 31 additional students on the first day from the village of Kuka, for an initial enrollment of 71 students; 20 in kindergarten, 19 in P1 (1st grade), 10 in P2, and 22 in P3. A number of last year's students have not reported yet, so I am expecting an increase of numbers during the next week. In August we were able to deliver the textbooks for the new P3 classes, Bible based English lessons and flash cards for all grades that were provided by ladies from the Broadway church of Christ in Paducah, KY, and a great deal of necessary supplies for the new school year.

I will be headed to Kuka on October 6 to spend a week there checking on and assisting with the next classroom's construction. I have been informed that the walls are up and we are ready to proceed with roofing. Our hope is to have the building completed before the end of the year. In anticipation of the new building being completed, and in the interest of the children's safety, we had the mud brick room that the younger children were meeting in torn down, so we currently have 2 classes meeting in the church building and 2 classes meeting in the classroom completed last year.

In August we also were able to deliver 146 grafted mango seedlings to the school, to be planted on the land given to us by the village elders. It is hoped that these trees will provide an ongoing source of both food and income for the school once they start producing in two years. If these trees do okay in the sandy soil that is prevalent in the Upper East Region I will bring additional seedlings each time I visit the school until we have utilized the land we have available.

In August the school also conducted a series of Saturday meetings for the area children. These classes, which were taught by the school's teachers and covered subjects such

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Evangelism Update (continued)

Institute of Biblical Studies (TIBS) students on their first village campaign. During their time at TIBS the students will take part in at least 4 village campaigns as well as a number of local campaigns. The first campaign will be held in the village of Zabzugu, which is approximately 150 km east of Tamale, and has a small congregation which is being led by one of last year's TIBS graduates, Billam Phillip. In addition to doing house to house Bible studies the campaign will bring Billam some much needed supplies such as Bibles, tracts, and a chalk board to help him as he teaches.

There is one other campaign we are still working on set for the village of Yapei. This campaign was to be held with the Tamale West congregation in August, but has had to be cancelled twice, once due to lack of rooms for the campaign workers to sleep in and once due to a schedule conflict. It has currently been rescheduled for October, and our prayer is that we will finally be able to share the gospel with those who live there. Please join us in this prayer!

Kingdom of Hope Update (continued)

showing respect to elders, doing the right thing in difficult situations, and proper behavior, where well attended each week. On the Saturday I was able to attend there were over 100 children and a number of adults in attendance. These classes allowed the school to reach out to the community, which is primarily Muslim, and invite them to an on-threatening event sponsored by the church. We are hoping the relationships made will open doors for future studies of a much more important matter, Jesus Christ and the salvation available only through Him.

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The first meeting of the new congregation at Niamtougou.



Steven, Fidel and a member of the local congregation conducting a Bible study in Ouagadougou.



I was blessed to be able to preach to one of the two congregations in Ouagadougou. In case you're wondering, I'm the one in the yellow and green shirt 😊



Steven preached to the congregation that meets at Po in Burkina Faso. We need two translators in Burkina, one to translate to French and the other to translate to local languages.



Saturday meetings at Kingdom of Hope Orphan's School



The church building at Po has concrete benches rather than wooden benches or plastic chairs. They will last much longer and you don't have to worry about anyone getting to comfortable and falling asleep!



Delivering mango trees to the Kingdom of Hope Orphan's School



Visiting instructor Joe Wilkie teaching his Survey of the New Testament class during the first term at TIBS.



Going down to the river to baptize a husband and wife in Togo.