

mission:world

AFRICA



September - October 2019 ::: The Great Commission Magazine of the BMA



AFRICA

BY: Dr. John David Smith
BMA Missions
bmamissions.org

Sweltering heat; a large part of the population living on an average of a dollar per day; limited education and employment opportunities for the people; the scarcity of water; and the simplicity of life were all realities of our family living in Africa....did I say sweltering heat? Even though this was our family's reality in Africa, please do not limit the vastness and the diversity of Africa to one description. Africa, if nothing else, is colorful, distinct, and yet so different from one place to the next.

For our family, the heat would eventually become tolerable (at least most months). Slowly but surely we would be transformed into the African way. That transformation happened when we began to realize that the measurements of abundance that we were always applying did not measure the most important

things. When I think of Africa, I think of simplicity as a most desired characteristic; I think of resilience, resourcefulness, determination, and people who are genuinely concerned about people. We learned innumerable lessons in these areas.

Africa, in the sphere of Baptist Missionary Association (BMA) Global Missions, has been so blessed and yet so much remains outside our influence. In this issue we will both celebrate the blessings on the continent of Africa and show the opportunities that remain. May God encourage your hearts from the second largest continent in the world as fruitful ministries are highlighted; and may He stir your spirit to do something about the opportunities that call for action.

BMA FAMILY OF MINISTRIES

To help fulfill the Great Commission, the people of the BMA have created a family of ministries. Each has a unique directive, but all have the same Great Commission purpose.

BMA Missions seeks to facilitate churches in fulfilling the Great Commission through assessment, training, coaching, and missionary care.

Lifeword assists in taking the gospel throughout the world through radio, television, the internet, and mobile devices.

DiscipleGuide partners with BMA churches to maximize their Great Commission potential.

BMA Seminary equips students to become pastors, missionaries, and church leaders.

Moral Action makes sure that the views of BMA Baptists are heard in the halls of Washington, D.C.

Ministers Resource Services helps meet the financial planning needs of BMA pastors and staffs.

BMA Foundation is the endowment instrument for all of the ministries of the Baptist Missionary Association.

Volume 7 - Issue 5
September - October 2019
www.bmaamerica.org

Editor
Donny Parrish

Managing Editor
Phillip Rice

Design & Layout
Nick Jacobsen

Published bi-monthly by the
Baptist Missionary
Association of America,
611 Locust Street
Conway, AR 72034

Entered as Periodical Rate at
Conway, Arkansas.

Periodical Postage paid at
Conway, Arkansas,
and at additional mailing offices.

POSTMASTER
Send address changes to:
Mission:World
P.O. Box 1188
Conway, Arkansas 72033
501.329.6891

Email
missionworld@bmaamerica.org

Website
www.bmaamerica.org



For contact info, websites, and
more on the BMA family of
ministries, visit BMALife.com



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AFRICA: A CHRISTIAN EPICENTER



BY: Phil Knott
BMA Missions
bmamissions.org

Historian Richard Bulliet described the spread of Islam as if it had one center, like an inkblot diffusing outward from a center that remains set and inexorably stained. Other religious movements could be described in the same manner. When we look at the spread of Christianity, it is more like shifting epicenters of earthquakes. Sudden shifts occur, and then the shock waves go out from that epicenter to spread the gospel far and wide.

It's predicted that in not too many years, possibly half of the world's Christians will reside in sub-Saharan Africa. Africans already make a great impact in the world's missionary forces. Africa could become a new epicenter for the expansion of Christian faith. The pressing concern of African churches and leaders is what kind of Christians will they be? Today, there are some countries in central and southern Africa that claim to be at least 80 percent Christian. Although many who profess Christianity actually follow a mix of biblical teachings and animistic or neo-Pentecostal practices, there are in fact many faithful believers who remain true to God's Word.

In this issue of *mission:world* you can read articles about the work of the gospel in five countries in Africa. Liberia, which in recent years has come out of the dark days of civil war and a decimating Ebola epidemic, has still seen the advancement of the Lord's kingdom work even in the most difficult of circumstances. In Nigeria and Mozambique, there are new church planting and missionary efforts. The articles from Ghana and Tanzania are stories and reports of renewed focus, organization, training, and missionary vision. You will also read testimonies of conversion and God's amazing grace, proving once again that the Lord often works in extraordinary ways in extraordinary circumstances. In the hardest mission fields, you may often see God's greatest work. Here is just one of many examples to illustrate that truth:

"I was born to a Muslim father, forced into this religion not knowing or understanding anything, just following my father ignorantly. Then one day at the age of fourteen, a group of people came to my town for evangelism with a film on Jesus. Not every family had access to television, and having not seen a program like this before, I went there to see what was happening.

"After the film and preaching, a call was made for those who wanted to give their life to Jesus for forgiveness of their sins. He died and paid for our sins and He is our Savior. I went forward and wrote my name without knowing what I was doing. They gave me a pocket New Testament and two days later these people came for a follow-up visit. They met me at home and prayed with me. At that time, my parents had many problems in their relationship, so my mother left my father's house with us and we went to live with my mother's parents who were Christians. Although they were Christians, I had never heard my grandparents talking to us about Jesus Christ. I only saw them to be religious people.

"One day, I was sleeping in the hot afternoon when the temperature must have been well over 100 degrees. I woke with sweat all over my body, as if someone had poured a bucket of water on me. I had had a nightmare where everything in the world was falling down and I was trying to find a safe place to hide. When I finally woke and came to my senses, the first thing I laid my hands on was that New Testament they had given me from the *Jesus* film. The first page I opened to was a page that showed the plan of salvation from Romans. I read it with tears in my eyes. That afternoon, I fell to my knees and received Christ as my Lord and personal Savior. I now understand that was the work of the Holy Spirit.





Emmanuel Nakoulma, Jackson Hayford and Stephen Aganda prepare a French-African broadcast.

LIFEWORD AFRICA

BY: Holly Meriweather
Lifeworld
lifeworld.org

Brother Phil Knott, retired Director of International Missions, is now assuming, as he says, “a missionary role of coordinating and assisting implementation of the guiding vision of Baptist Missionary Association (BMA) Missions in West and East Africa.” His travels to Africa are for training and mobilizing churches to plant new churches.

The West African nation of Ghana was the location of a recent training. He says that after a day of training and with no electricity or fans, he and the church leaders enjoy relaxing outside as the sun is setting. Often the conversation will turn to their conversion stories.

John Nondia, a pastor in Ghana, told his story about the paganism of his culture, which is focused on ancestor worship. When villagers need a favor or blessing, they go to the village priest or soothsayer and form a little idol out of the dirt. Then they pour out libations of water and the blood of fowls and sometimes animals, invoking the spirit-god of their ancestors.

After the guinea fowls or chickens are killed, they flop around, and the position in which the bird dies might indicate a blessing or a curse, favor or no favor from the spirit-god.

These rituals are not only part of the belief system in Ghana, but also in other African countries and the reason that both Lifeword and BMA Missions are involved in training indigenous leaders to plant biblically sound churches.

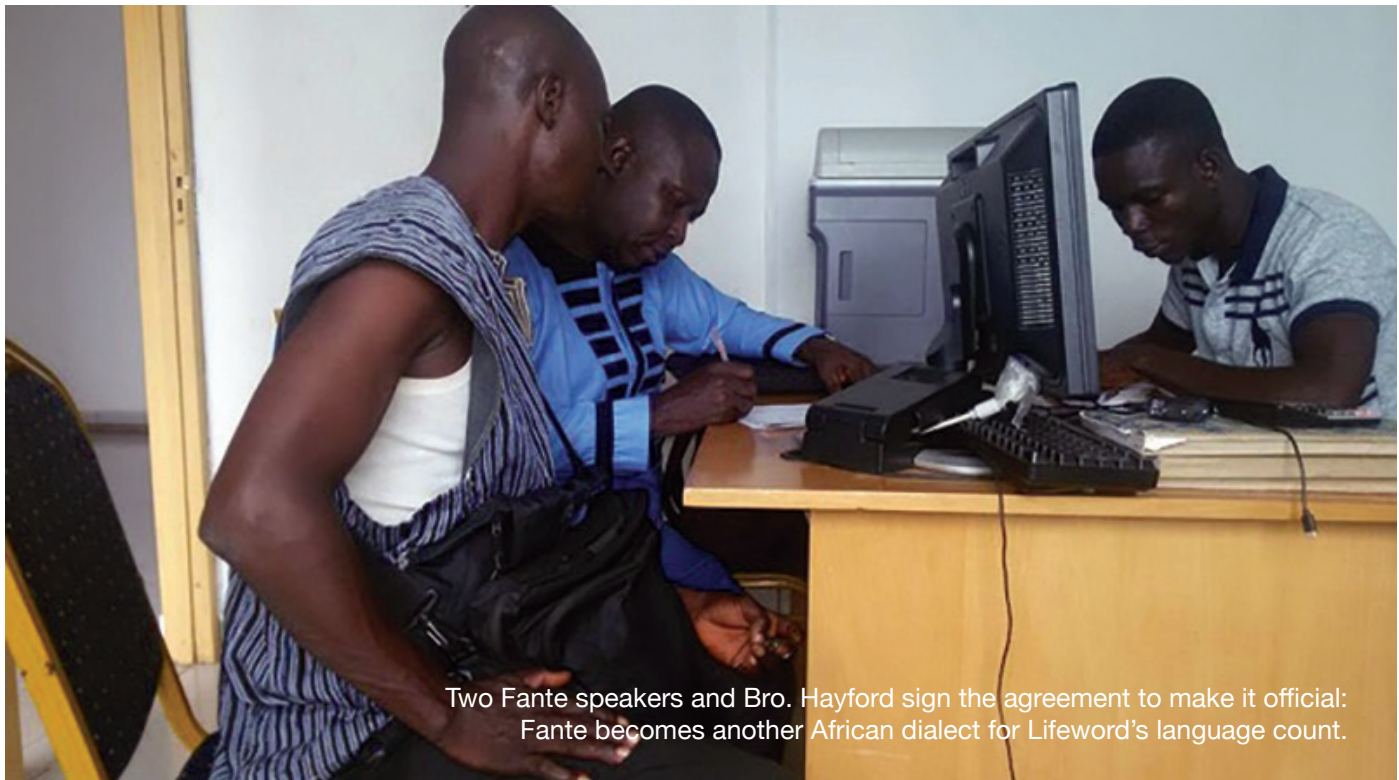
Cloud technology allows Lifeword's ministry footprint to expand across the continent of Africa, with its numerous languages and dialects, and spill into entire worlds of people who speak them. Lifeword partners all over the world are just now learning about this new way of doing things.

Lifeword Ghana

One of those African partners, Hayford Jackson, has been a part of Lifeword for a decade with programs produced from his radio station called Life FM in Kumasi, Ghana. He has witnessed the libation ritual and has a passion to share the truth of the Bible with those who believe in ancestor worship and spirit gods.

During a video conference call between Lifeword USA (Director of Operations Luis Ortega and Director of Digital Broadcasting and Strategy Jon Dodson) and Brother Hayford, the conversation about new responsibilities soon turned to the people to whom he ministers.

In his region of Africa he has recently begun to manage Lifeword cloud content. In addition to his heart language of Twi, he also produces video and print content in nine other regional languages: African French, Fante, Hausa, Moore, Ewe, Songhay, Dangbe, Enzima, and Yoruba. *Jesus To You* gospel presentation videos



Two Fante speakers and Bro. Hayford sign the agreement to make it official: Fante becomes another African dialect for Lifeword's language count.



Adults and children gather around Deus and his staff as they hand out Christian books and Bibles.

can be seen in all those languages at Lifeword.org, and it was Brother Hayford who found the speakers and directed their video production.

As a pastor, he caught the vision early on of what Lifeword Community Radio could do to help a church's ministry. He worked diligently for several years to get a radio license and led his church to build studios and apply for a commercial license. Now, he is completely on board with the idea of Lifeword's cloud technology and how that can help reach even more of the world for Christ.

Lifeword Tanzania

In East Africa, Brother Deus Kanunu is invaluable to Lifeword in cloud production. Radio Uhai is the name of his Christian radio station, and he has partnered with Lifeword since 2017.

I had the privilege of listening in on a video conference call between Lifeword USA and Brother Deus. The purpose was to communicate the new processes for uploading audio, video, and print content to Lifeword.org.

Quickly emerging as a regional leader, he and his brother will manage and produce content in their heart language of Swahili. In addition, the following regional languages will be added to their responsibilities: Kigogo, Kirundi, Nyamwezi, Nyiramba, Sukuma, Nyaturu and Lingala. *Jesus To You* gospel presentation videos in those languages are currently on the website.

During the video conference, he was asked about his radio ministry: “We have many challenges,” Brother Deus said, “but challenges are the way to develop something, to do something more, to reach more people.”

His ministry is to an area of the world that is not hostile to Christianity, but many indigenous Baptist churches teach that, as Brother Deus puts it, “you can receive salvation one day and lose it the next.”

In two years, his radio ministry has been able to reach seven cities surrounding the city of Tabora. Radio Uhai broadcasts all day, every day, and receives hundreds of text messages and calls daily, all from listeners asking for spiritual help.

Lifeword’s use of cloud technology will allow him to reach even more of Africa with the gospel, and in seven more surrounding languages!

Brother Kanunu says that they are praying for God to work in two areas: He would like to establish a prayer team for Radio Uhai and a pastoral training center so that nationals may be trained to go out and plant churches.

The rest of the conversation was about training, duties, and contracts, but at the end we prayed together about reaching Africa and the world with the gospel of Christ. Brother Deus says, “I pray that this new adventure (the Lifeword cloud) into ministry will continue to add more glory for our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Lifeword partners all over the globe are learning about the new Lifeword way of doing things, and all are excited about the possibilities. For 54 years, radio programs remained with the producers of those broadcasts, unheard by the world’s population. Now approved, quality, biblically sound content will be shared with billions of people at Lifeword.org...

So the whole world may hear.



Bro. Deus Kanunu's staff members interview people about who Jesus is.

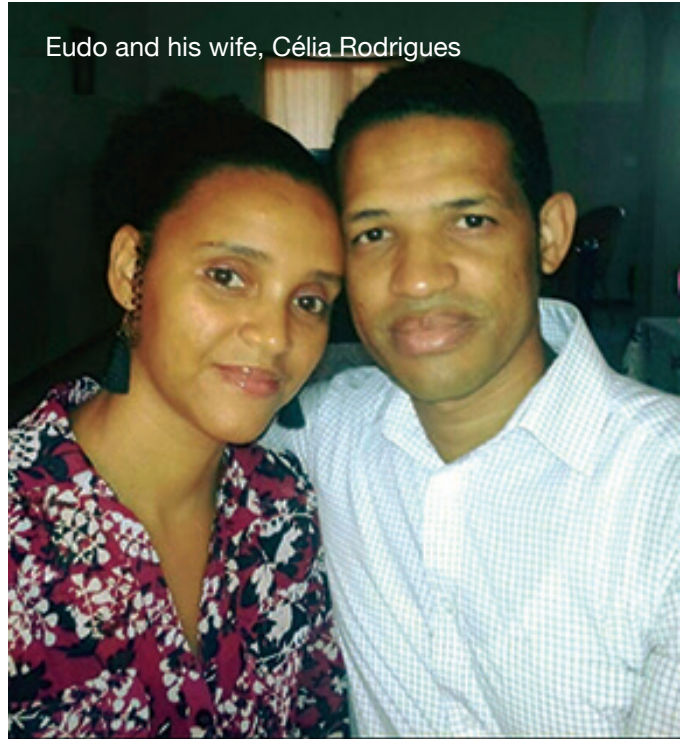


THE GOSPEL PERSEVERES!



BY: Eudo Rodrigues
 BMA Missions
bmamissions.org

Eudo and his wife, Célia Rodrigues



*P*raise God for calling us to His family and for His great love that He showed to us through His Son Jesus Christ. We are many who could make such an affirmation and for this we are eternally grateful. What about those who cannot say the same? Those who perhaps have never had the opportunity we have already had to hear clearly the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. We feel indebted to God and to men and have no better way to show such gratitude than to make the name of God known and to proclaim to men the blessed message of salvation.

We see in our country more and more the increase of Eastern religions, especially Islam. This serves as a reminder for us to not become discouraged but to persevere even more. On the island of Saint Nicholas, where we have been carrying out our evangelical ministry, it is no different. Each day there is more and more difficulty in proclaiming the gospel and seeing it be accepted; but this is exactly what compels us to keep sharing the good news of Jesus Christ! We pray that souls may come to the knowledge of salvation and be freed from the most varied forms of lies we know today.



Bible Study class in Cape Verde.



Catholicism continues to be a very strong opponent to the proclamation of the gospel on these islands—especially on our island. People still live in great fear of what others will say if someone converts to Christ. This fear, coupled with a fear of the priests, hinders our work. And yet, thanks to our good God, we have seen people converted and baptized as they show their commitment to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Islam continues to grow on our islands. We consistently see people both sympathizing and converting to the Muslim religion. In our country, more than 90 percent of people identify as Roman Catholics; Islam follows right behind as it spreads from the mainland. A few years ago, no one had even heard of Islam. This growth in Islam has saddened us but has strengthened our commitment to the kingdom of God.

Kardecist Spiritism that comes mixed with Eastern philosophies and African spiritualism and is disguised as being based on the teachings of Jesus, is another threat to gospel. It is a sect that has also grown immensely in the country and with great rapidity in our island. May God have mercy, and give us strength, love, and wisdom to continue. Many people, deceived because this sect appeals to

one's knowledge and spiritual development while not leaving out the person of Jesus, have embarked on this path of no return to perdition. Again, we find ourselves committed to sharing the gospel and fighting against the enemy of souls.



Pastor Eudo baptizing a new believer

The “prosperity gospel” sects are also spreading everywhere as more and more gain followers from all sides. They promise “anything and everything,” forgetting the freedom, healing, and prosperity found in the salvation that our Lord Jesus offers. We remain motivated to announce the true gospel of Christ to which, though often accompanied with suffering, no wealth or health in this world can compare.

All of the above, along with being far from our families on a different island, often being seen as threats and not as allies, and facing financial difficulties, does not stop us from trying to make known the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Proof that the gospel still works is evident as we continue to see people convert and be baptized. We see families joining in marriage, and those same

brothers carrying the gospel to other people. We make known the name of God in communities and in schools. God has given us the opportunity to prepare new leaders. God has been very good to us despite the difficulties we may face. We do not want to come before the face of our God and present ourselves as useless servants or with empty hands. We do not want to go through this world investing everything in ourselves and forgetting lost souls.

Today we have a congregation on our island that is helping to start a sister church on another island. We have some of our believers leaving to share the gospel with other islands. Difficulties have been fuel for us to persevere in the proclamation of the gospel.





EGYPT



BY: Charlie Costa
BMA Missions
bmamissions.org

When you hear the word *Egypt*, you are obviously reminded of Old Testament stories long ago—stories that showed the power of God. Yet even today, Egypt has stories that show the power of God. When the Muslim Brotherhood took over the country eight years ago, Christians were persecuted and killed, and churches were burned to the ground. Christians persevered under very difficult circumstances. Then came the day when the Lord turned the tables on the evildoers and the Muslim Brotherhood leaders, including the president of Egypt, were overthrown and imprisoned. Some even received death sentences. Under President Al-Sisi, the Egyptian army rebuilt the burned churches and Christians all over Egypt began to enjoy more freedom. God was truly in control all the time and demonstrated His sovereignty.

Today, our national missionaries are doing a great job. In 2018, the sixth church was planted in upper Egypt by Baptist Missionary Association (BMA) national workers. In February, a pastor for that small flock was ordained. Our missionary in Jordan, Sam Jordan oversaw the ordination. What a joyous event to see small groups organize into New Testament Baptist churches.

In 2019, a new church was planted in a suburb of Cairo. Brother Gentle, our national worker there, is doing a wonderful job. A place has been rented and people are having regular services already. That tells you that someone's house has already become too small to accommodate these gatherings. That tells you that more people are coming, and more people are accepting Christ. The next challenge is to disciple these new believers and train them to take ownership and responsibility of the new ministry.



Pastor Atef, based in Minya (upper Egypt), has been our team leader for the last several years. He has done an awesome job leading the work. Although he was offered the opportunity to leave the country during the revolution and the ensuing unrest, he refused and remained with his wife Randa through the troubles. It is of utmost importance that we keep him in our prayers.

The policies of BMA Missions and the directives of Dr. John David Smith have led to a strategy of replication and productivity. These policies led to better use of funds, trimming of all non-productive workers, and sharpening the focus and skills of those workers who have believed in the vision to reach as much of Egypt as possible for Jesus.

BMA Pastor Bill Goodwin visited Egypt in the last year and got to see firsthand what God is doing as hundreds flocked to hear the preaching of the Word. More opportunities are in our future as we seek to keep an open mind and heart to what and to where the Lord leads.

Yet the importance of Egypt surpasses the ministry taking place there. Egypt is the key to North Africa, and potential Egyptian church planters are key to any future work in that region. As Libya, Algeria, Sudan, and other surrounding countries face internal conflict, our strategy is to keep an open eye on developments and to be ready to send church planters into these countries. The regimes in both Sudan and Libya, who have been resistant to the gospel, have been overthrown. Now we wait for the picture to become more clear as to when and where we should start.

What can the BMA of America do *in* and *for* Egypt? Prayer is the obvious and easy answer. Prayer is what builds a hedge around the national workers and destroys strongholds built against the gospel. It opens doors and shuts down the enemy. Ultimately, prayer is the tool we use to war against the powers and principalities of evil. Yet the more challenging answer is giving. God has entrusted us with a job to do. Finances are an important tool to get the job done. Our churches have been generous over the years to support BMA missionaries and fields across the globe, yet there are fields that have opened up recently where we have yet to hear the call and meet the need.

As you think and pray about your personal or church involvement in the work of missions, remember that there are countries that are strategic to our work within certain regions: Mexico in Central and Latin America, Philippines in South East Asia, Lebanon in the Middle East and Europe, Romania in Eastern Europe, and Egypt in North Africa. With that in mind, it becomes more incumbent upon us as churches to make our support strategic as we face increasing pressures to do so.

In the Gospel of Matthew, the Bible tells us that baby Jesus found refuge in Egypt. Let us together help Egypt—and the surrounding region—to find refuge in Jesus.





LIFE GIVING WATER



BY: Ben Temple
Water for Christ
waterforchrist.com

“Water, water every where, Nor any drop to drink” writes the riddle of *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* by Samuel Coleridge. My dad always quoted this to me as I grew, asking me, “Where do you think that is?” The answer to the riddle is of course the ocean! Little did I know I would grow up to write a riddle of my own. “Desert, desert and arid everywhere, my cup runneth over with cold water.” Can you answer this riddle?

In small villages in sub-Saharan Africa, Water for Christ is making a difference. We are teaming up with Baptist Missionary Association (BMA) pastors who are making a difference in their villages, their communities, their regions, and their nations; and together we are changing the world for Christ. Tim



African sun from sunup to sundown drilling water wells in Ghana. We used our trucks, our drill rig, our compressors, our pumps, our pipes, our fuel, and our time to drill over fifty water wells in Ghana. This was and is incredibly successful! Water for Christ witnessed thousands of people accepting Christ! When Water for Christ shows up in a village, everyone, including the chief, comes to see what is happening. This makes it easy to do evangelism on-site as the drill team works to get clean water flowing. Water for Christ quickly became in demand as the need for clean water is great in most of sub-Saharan Africa. This made it challenging to get work done as more and more requests poured in.

Tyler, founder and director of Water for Christ, says, “A water well opens the door to a community that has never heard the gospel of Jesus.” Water for Christ provides clean drinking water to communities in need, and by meeting people’s physical needs we show the love of Christ to a community. This opens the door for local pastors in remote areas to share the gospel of Christ. This is the mission of Water for Christ—to reach the world for Christ by sharing the living water found only in Jesus as we provide clean drinking water around the world.

In 2010, Water for Christ drilled one well in Ghana, Africa. From there, the vision was cast that Water for Christ would be a worldwide water well drilling ministry. For years, we worked under the



Water For Christ Director, Tim Tyler



In 2017, Water for Christ received a call from then BMA of America Missions Director Phil Knott about drilling a water well for a BMA pastor in Liberia, Africa—Pastor Abraham Cheyee. Mr. Knott encouraged us to support Pastor Abraham’s efforts in hosting a revival for over 500 women in Liberia in which the closest drinking water source would be a river two miles away (one way). We began to work with Pastor Abraham to ensure the water well would be completed in early 2018, just in time for the revival. Although we didn’t have any assets in Liberia, we worked with Pastor Abraham to coordinate a drill team and funded the project. We had already begun to work with other drilling contractors in Ghana to meet the needs around the

nation as we could not keep up with demands from abroad. The Liberia water well project was exciting because it met the needs of Pastor Abraham’s request for clean drinking water. We accomplished this by working across international barriers as a team.

Fast forward to 2019, and Water for Christ has drilled over eighty wells worldwide in the countries of Ghana, Liberia, Burkina Faso, and Haiti. Water for Christ teamed up with BMA missionary Michel Poirier to drill two wells to support the work he and his team are doing in Haiti—and what a mighty work it is. In Haiti, we partnered to drill a well where Mr. Poirier has planted a church in a community of 100,000 people where there is only one public well. Imagine the impact of this new



well! Also, Water for Christ continues to work with Pastor Moses Adjekwei and Pastor Abugre Clement of Ghana, Africa to drill wells in both Ghana and Burkina Faso. These two pastors helped us coordinate a drill team for Burkina Faso, a country in sub-Saharan Africa that Water for Christ had only seen in our travels along the Northern Ghana border. People were amazed when a drill team showed up in the middle of the desert and hit water. We received reports that even the “witch doctors” (which are prominent in that area) were dancing and saying this must be God.

Teamwork makes the dream work. Teaming up with amazing missionaries and pastors enables Water for Christ to reach nations for Jesus. With the

shared vision of reaching people for Christ, Water for Christ is meeting the physical and spiritual needs of many around the world. To God be the glory for this!

As we look forward to the next decade, we are believing God will continue to open doors for the gospel to be preached and souls to be won to the kingdom of God. And in case you’re wondering about the riddle, the answer is Jesus. Only by the grace of God are we drilling into the deserts of Africa and pumping cold water to surface for those who are willing to drink the living water found only in Jesus.



The Battle with Islam

The number of mosques in Tanzania is increasing every day. This is becoming something in Tanzania. It is something that is making Christianity appear to lose every day. Many people have been selling their land to the Muslims so they can build houses for worship. Many people now are leaving Christianity and joining Islam.

The movement is very high. What surprises me is when you get to a remote village and see a very clean and expensive Mosque. Sometimes these Mosques have no people but the Muslims believe that one day people will come and be part of their faith. They are making progress through their visions.

Apart from all the construction, the Muslims are discipling Imams and Sheikhs to lead these mosques. Many people are being brought from Zanzibar, Tabora, Dar es Salaam, Kigoma, and Tanga to be Imams of the mosques. The very amazing thing is that every evening you will see

many of them roaming around inviting people to go to pray. One of their Sheikhs came to me one day and he started sharing with me about their god Allah and he left me with three books. When he was done, I gave him a Bible and asked him to read the Gospel of John. It was a barter trade.

The Muslims are also trying to gain favor with the government by financially supporting various causes. They claim to be agents for change and peace for the country. They have been saying that God wants all people to be in unity.

One of the Sheikhs was preaching during the month of Ramadan and he said that there is only one religion and it is Islam, and if Christians are not seeing this, one day they will see it. They are bringing people from the Middle East to do medical missions and to provide food, clothing, and shoes for all the people. Last month they did a dental mission.

In Tanzania, there are many challenges. In most of the villages in Tanzania there are pastors and evangelists who have never been to any college. In other places, many Christians don't have Bibles to read and study so that they can grow spiritually. In some places many churches do not grow because they fail to get proper Bible teaching. As a result, they become dormant. The church of Tanzania needs special attention. Some church leaders have been teaching things which are not biblical. Some churches teach that you can lose your salvation. Some leaders teach that once you get salvation you need to speak in a new tongue and you need to be filled with the Holy Spirit every day. What I have found since I finished our pastoral training in 2017 is that most of our leaders have no knowledge of the Word of God.

I want to say thank you so much to the Baptist Missionary Association (BMA) of America and Evangelistic International Missions (EIM) for their time and financial support as they invested in us to grow us spiritually and to bring us to where we are now. They spent hours and hours sharing knowledge and wisdom with our 22 pastors in Tabora. The BMA and EIM have been truly provided shoulder-to-shoulder support to our pastors in Tabora and Shinyanga, Tanzania. For three and a half years they trained pastors in sound biblical doctrine. This is exactly what was needed to help the church of Tanzania to hold true to the Word of God.

**WHAT
IS NOW
NEEDED?**

Tanzania Training Center

In order to address the problems listed above, the association of Tabora Baptist churches should build a training center to help pastors, evangelists, and lay men and women. Christians in Tanzania especially need training on discipleship so they recognize the heart of Jesus for the nations. They need to be trained and equipped so that they can reproduce themselves.

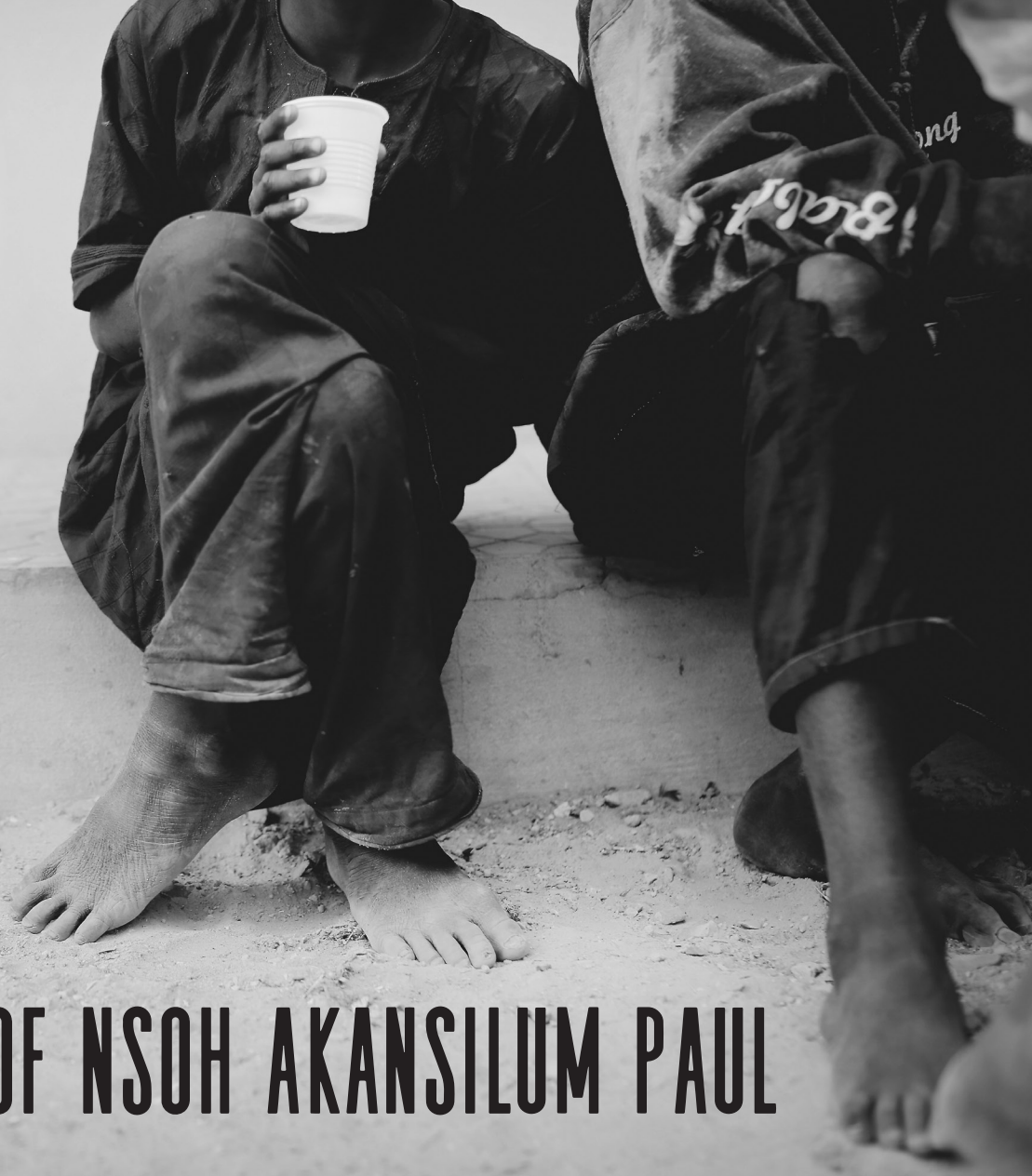
Please pray about our desire to construct a training center in Tanzania. We plan to build a training center which will provide education to pastors who live mainly in rural and remote areas. This college will help pastors in Tanzania to reach their dreams of preaching God's Word to the developing world. In Tanzania, we have very few Bible colleges and very few educated pastors—so the intention of this college would be to provide education to rural pastors, evangelists, and lay men and women.

Discipleship Resources in our Swahili Language

We need to encourage the church to utilize available resources. We need to motivate the churches to use the Christian discipleship resources provided to make sure that they build a strong church with sound biblical doctrine. We are in need of Swahili resources to supply to all pastors to help them teach the truth of the Bible. This means translating current resources and printing enough copies to distribute. I truly believe discipleship materials combined with sound teaching provided to church leaders will really help our churches and God will be glorified.

Please pray for the translation and provision of study materials in Swahili. We have very limited Christian resources in our language of Swahili. Pray that God will provide people to bless the church of Tanzania by writing or supplying materials in Swahili or by translating current materials into Swahili.

God bless you, brothers and sisters, in the work of the gospel.



THE STORY OF NSOH AKANSILUM PAUL

Nsoh Akansilum is currently the clan head of Azorko's clan and a member of Bible Baptist Church in Sumbrungu Agusi of the Upper East Region Ghana. Nsoh was once a business man and bread winner of the family. One of Nsoh's principles was that Christianity was a foreign religion; as such, he refused to allow any of his family members to convert to Christianity.

Should any member of the family refuse to comply, he or she would be punished. This punishment could involve

beatings or banishment from the family. At one point, one of his sons Samuel Atule Akansilum traveled to Accra and converted to Christianity, ignoring his father's principles and the pending outcome of his disobedience. When he arrived back home, his father Nsoh was disappointed and refused to allow Samuel to pray in the house or go to church. Samuel was very persistent though, despite his father's attitude and rage towards Christianity. One day, Nsoh found his son praying in

his room. This provoked Nsoh's anger. He took a cane and beat his son on the back. Punishing his son for disobeying his rules regarding Christianity was done to protect Nsoh's gods and prevent the gospel from "ruining" his children.

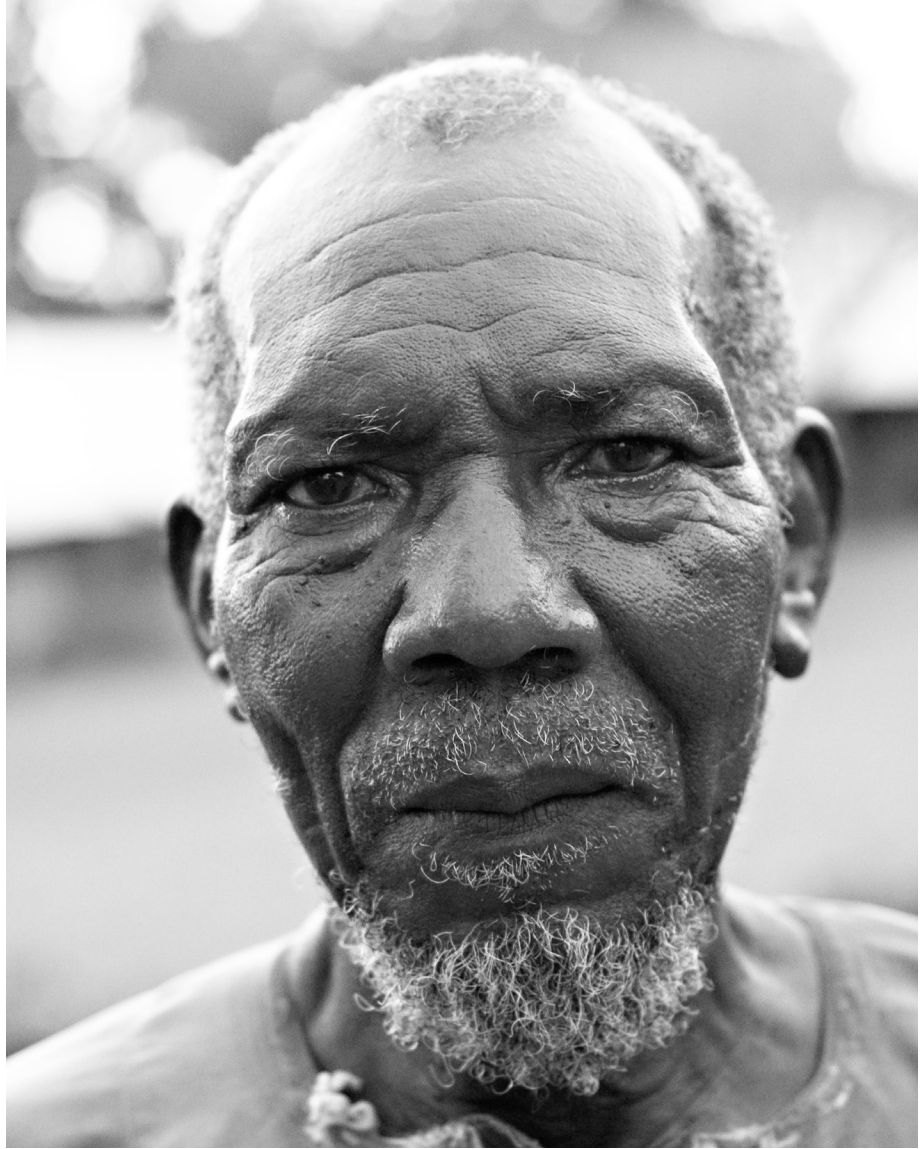
In Nsoh's house, they had hardly ever seen someone going to church or praying. Meanwhile, Samuel continued to pray in secret. Despite the persecution he had received, he once again strengthened his faith in Christ and became a member of the

Agusi church. This only served to anger Nsoh even more.

At one point, the church needed money to buy cement for work on the church. Nsoh's second son Joseph, who had also accepted Christ, sold his goat and gave the money to the church to support the work. This did not sit well with Nsoh. In his mind, giving anything that didn't pertain to his gods was a waste of money. Nsoh asked his son to take the money back, but Joseph refused. Nsoh took it upon himself to go to the church to get the goat money back.

Three months later, Nsoh's older brother Ageenongo, the current head of the clan and the one responsible for pouring libations and offering sacrifices to the clan's gods for protection, fell sick. Nsoh himself was also a soothsayer and could stand in Ageenongo's place for the protection of his family. Nsoh began seeking the gods for his brother's health, but it was to no avail. Nsoh told his brother that in case he died and arrived at the home of the silent world, that he should tell their ancestors that Nsoh saw no reason to follow these gods anymore because they had nothing good to offer.

Two months later, Ageenongo died. Nsoh, now the head of the clan, called all his clan members together and announced that he was going to follow the God of his children because the gods of the clan had nothing to offer. After the funeral of his brother, Nsoh joined the church of Agusi and was baptized on September 20, 2015.



Three months after Nsoh's baptism, Nsoh developed a strange disease called TB on the skin. Eventually, after falling into a coma for three weeks Nsoh recovered. Though he now has to use a stick to walk, he remains strong in the Lord.

Now, all the clan members are Christians including most of the members of the Agusi village. Even the Agusi chief accepted Christ as his Savior! As Christians, we learn people all around are watching us. If we stand strong in our faith, regardless of the circumstances, the Lord will fight for us. Samuel's faith led Nsoh to God. Let us always remember that we are

testimonies to the glory of God. We must stand firm and hold to the promises of God. We should never be selfish with the truth. The Bible says, "that we may know the truth, and the truth will set us free" (John 8:32). Nsoh experienced the power of God's truth and it set him free from his empty beliefs and his bondage in sin. He didn't want to experience it alone; instead he shared it with his clan and saw many of them come to Christ.

Let us always remember that as children of God, we will be tested and tried; but God is always in control—He listens and will protect His children.



WHEN CHRIST CAME TO AGUSI

BY: Moses
BMA Missions
bmamissions.org

In the northern sector of Ghana, a mere fifteen minutes' drive from the capital city of Bolgatanga, in the upper east region, lay the small village of Agusi. During the day, the village consisted primarily of children, youths, and a few older people. Farming was the main source of both food and income to the village. The men took care of the farming while the women cared for their homes and wove baskets. The village of Agusi, ruled by a king and his elders, had a beautiful culture evident in its food, art, and clothing. All the villagers respected the local customs and traditions.

During the day, children would run around the village playing or helping the men as they farmed. Some days, the teenagers would gather around trees to dance and sing songs. This was their way of making introductions and interacting with each other. Later in the day, the wives would

welcome their husbands home, preparing a meal with the little food they had on hand. The villagers believed in "togetherness" in every situation. As the night approached, the children would gather around the aged members of the village to hear stories about their ancestors. Finally, everyone would return to their homes to sleep.

From an outside perspective, the people appeared to live in peace and harmony. However, behind the scenes, the people lived a hard life. Extreme poverty dominated their lives. Instead of seeking ways to improve their economic status, they found peace and other means of temporary escape from their difficult situations. The truth is even if they did seek to escape their poverty, there was no help. So, the people looked for joy in their idols, and consulted them for protection.

The weather conditions of the village were very dry; water was

hard to find; rain always brought a welcome distraction. Because of the droughts, the men could not provide consistently for their families through farming—so they often sought to provide through other measures, usually resulting in a loan from another family. Since there were no other jobs or options to provide, repaying the loans became difficult. When payment was due and there was no way to satisfy the loan, the little girls in families became the victims. Families began to sell their daughters to pay off their debt. Girls were forced into early marriages, sentencing them to a lifetime of pain and sadness. The village leadership showed very little remorse.

These girls, instead of enjoying their childhood and watching their dreams come to fulfillment, became house wives and mothers at very young ages. They would watch from their compound as their fellow playmates enjoyed

being young, and they would tear up in pain and irreversible regrets. But, the bond of motherhood and love for their families kept them from fleeing. At times, their tender ages would shine forth—they would run out to join their girlfriends as they breastfed their children, then they would run home as their husbands returned.

Often the mornings brought bad news. Many girls lost their lives during childbirth. As the villagers mourned their deaths, they wondered if the cycle would ever end. They could not undo what had been done. They walked with heads hung low. As the weeks ended, they would forget what had happened.

The women would, at times, help their husbands farm, walking in a straight line with their babies breastfeeding, uncertain of what would happen next. Perhaps flood or disease. The village had various fetish priests who provided herbal solutions to the people. They classified disease based on visual observation, and mostly took the same approach for every case. The people were never cured, but they still sought the help of the fetish priests. They trusted and believed the priests more than any doctor or health practitioner. There were no doctors, no nurses, no healthcare center to instruct the people. Grief, mourning, was nothing new to the village of Agusi. The older women delivered the babies; as a result, every complication ended in death.

Children ran around with their ribs well defined and their stomachs protruding, showing

clear signs of malnutrition. Despite their hunger, they still played full of joy, free of worry, eating every morsel of food provided. As they played barefooted, climbing trees and eating nuts and fruits, they exposed themselves to infections and disease. They had no external or internal protection. They lived and slept with very little. To outsiders, this way of life seemed unbearable; but for the people of Agusi, life was a privilege.

As the days passed, the rains finally came destroying crops and creating chaos. The palm roofs leaked; the families gathered pots to keep the water from destroying their belongings—only to have the mud walls cave, exposing them to insects and animals seeking shelter from the rain. The men would protect their families while the women gathered the children near. These were sleepless nights indeed. As the sun rose, the villagers began to check on one another, evaluating the damages caused by the torrential rains. The women would dry the grains and other foods; the children would work on the few clothes owned by the family; the men went to the farms to see what damage the rains had caused there. The worst rains destroyed all the crops and washed away all the stored food, leaving nothing for many families to eat. When this happened, the men would choose to either be in debt or to flee, leaving their wives to care for the children. Often they would travel to the border seeking work and forgetting about their families back home.

Finally, the leadership realized the village needed help. Men, including youths, were scarce as they fled the village life; children were starving; and mothers were working themselves to death trying to care for their families. The village could no longer depend on farming. They turned to making baskets to sell for food. Soon the villagers carried their baskets to other villages and cities in an effort to earn enough for food. Over time, various non-profits and individuals came to the aid of the village of Agusi. One group helped them to retain their water supply; another brought a school, introducing the village to Jesus Christ and supporting them with clothes and feeding programs. Now, the people of Agusi are happier than ever. The men are staying in the village; mothers are supporting their families; and they have food and water. The children appear well-nourished as they study in school. The people have hope for more change in the future.

The village of Agusi never knew that help would arrive one day. Even in the worst of conditions, they believed that hard work and sticking together would make a difference. If only they had looked for help outside of themselves. So often, we look to ourselves for help rather than to gospel of Jesus Christ; yet He is waiting to help us; He is waiting to save us from our sinful condition and effect change in our hearts.



THE STORY OF JAGADA

BY: Joseph
BMA Missions
bmamissions.org

Jagada was born to the family of Pa Alade, a local farmer in Ore, in the Ondo State of Nigeria in 1948. At the age of twenty after his school certificate examinations, his friend Olasore invited him to Kaduna. Jagada did not hesitate to go because he was born into a polygamous family and thought he was hated by his people. Jagada was employed by a startup textile company south of Kaduna city. He worked there for many years and rose within the ranks. He had a car, built a house, and married a

young lady. He became rich and joined many clubs in that ancient city. Many young men befriended him; and he, along with his friends, was often found drinking and socializing.

In 1987, something happened. Jagada's house and properties including his certificates were burned by religious Jihadists; he escaped only with his life and his family to Abuja, the capital city of Nigeria. He started life again and became quite successful again—until something else happened.



In 2003, Jagada was in the office one afternoon when someone called him to inform him about what was happening in the area of his home in the district of Abuja. He arrived home quickly only to discover that his house had been demolished by the earth-moving machines of the Federal Capital Development Authority. He wept and said in agony, “Ah, my enemies have followed me to this place again.” He thought about killing himself but was rescued by his friends.

Some months after his house demolition, a crusade was organized by a Pentecostal church near where he was staying with a friend. The friend invited him to the crusade where the speaker stressed the need for one’s salvation. Jagada felt the Lord was calling him and finally surrendered his life to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. He was

very convinced he had found a new life in Christ. Everything changed for him, but he remained spiritually hungry.

A few years later, he moved down to Ibadan where he settled with his family. He got a job with a private company where a co-worker, Mr. Dele Ogun, a devout Christian invited him to a Baptist Church at GRA of Ibadan. Mr. Jagada became interested in that local church because of her discipleship program which he saw as an answer to his many years of spiritual hunger.

In 2009, Mr. Jagada was ordained as a deacon and later worked with a team that planted a new church in his area. Mr. Jagada is now an octogenarian but still faithfully serving the Lord and encouraging the young people to love and to serve the Lord Jesus Christ.

I believe as individuals and as churches that we can learn from Mr. Jagada’s story.

First, we learn that Jesus Christ loves and wants all to be saved. John 3:16 says, “For God so loved the world.” God’s love for Jagada who felt hated by his own people is complete and thorough. Maybe you also feel hated or discriminated against by those who ought to show you love; I have good news for you. Jesus Christ eternally loves you, and He died on the cross of Calvary in your place. The Bible says, “But God commends his own love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8).

Second, we learn that it is our Lord’s command for us to go out and preach the gospel to all creatures (Mark 16:15). He wants us to reach out to the hundreds of Jagadas in our immediate society with the gospel of Jesus Christ. Also, our churches and missionaries must be encouraged and adequately resourced to not only win souls, but also to empower new converts through a thorough discipleship process. Jesus says, “teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you” (Matthew 28:20a), so as to produce sound Christians (2 Timothy 2:15).

Finally, we learn that God can give us grace to confront the harsh realities of life and make the best out of them to the glory of his name. Remember Job whose latter end [was blessed] more than his beginning (Job 42:12).

BY: Jairo Bonilla
BMA Missions
bmamissions.org

JOYS AND STRUGGLES IN MOZAMBIQUE

Traveling in the bed of a pickup truck and very cold, we finally reached the intersection of a dirt road where a group of about seventy people were waiting to sing songs in Changana (a native language) with a surprising rhythm of palms and dances. Surprised at such a welcome, we could not help but give thanks to God; and we immediately forgot the fatigue and sleeplessness caused by the long, arduous journey.

After this beautiful reception, we were taken on a tour of the whole village where there were small circular huts made of palm roofs and mud walls called Casas de Mato. In the center of the village sat a type of large hall where the community is accustomed to meet. (I must add that in the village there was no electricity and no potable water.)

I couldn't help but be impressed by the village girls. Though only twelve to fourteen years old, very thin, barefoot, and wearing clothes visibly worn by use, they carried babies on their back. What was

even more impressive was the fact that these girls were already mothers of one or more children.

Later we were shown to a very clean and organized wooden house. This would be our place of lodging during our stay. Before noon, we had a talk with the men and community leaders. We were able to donate ten Bibles in Portuguese—sadly, this was not enough for all the men who wanted to own a Bible.

After the talk, we walked to the river Gulamo, one kilometer away, with the whole community singing and praising God so that I could baptize thirty-two people who publicly professed Jesus Christ as Savior of their lives. It was the most exciting moment of my life to hear the conversion testimonies of each of the candidates for baptism.

One of them, a large man well over six feet tall, testified to giving up his past life, to abandoning the vice of liquor and the promiscuous lifestyle in which he had indulged. As I baptized him, he asked me to change his name as a sign of the old man who had

died and the new man who had been born. After a lunch of cassava with chicken, I was taken to the hall that was in the center of the community to officiate the marriage ceremony of fifteen couples. One by one, I had each couple repeat their vows after me.

The whole day was both exciting tiring at the same time. At the end of the afternoon, in the center of the village, the whole community sat on the ground; and from the youngest to the oldest, they listened very attentively to the Word of God. The sincere love and desire to seek God, exemplified by an entire community, does not seek to amaze me. I am accustomed in our culture to people who are pulled from true worship and consecration to God by the variety of pleasures the world offers. However, in this small community, away from all comfort and with only minimal services, they have nothing to prevent them from approaching God. There is no television, no internet, no cell phones—for them, God is everything to which they cling.

The next morning after breakfast, several of the youth expressed their desire to hear more of the Scriptures, even asking for Bibles. Their thirst for God was evident. Unfortunately, we had no more Bibles to give. At noon, we prayed and said goodbye,



sad that we could not spend more time with them. Then we boarded another small bus to travel to another village an hour and a half away. Again, we were greeted with cheerful songs. They took us to a small log hut with a palm roof; this was where the village would meet to study the Bible. After an hour of meeting people, the pastor of the congregation asked me to officiate his marriage. Just then, it began to rain so hard that the water leaked through the roof and soaked all of us, including our luggage. The rain stopped after about an hour; since it was nearly three o'clock in the afternoon and we had not eaten, we decided to stop for lunch.

After preparations had been made for the wedding of their pastor, we taught a discipleship study along with the help of Brother Francisco Antonio and his wife Julia. At the end of our study, we hoped the wedding ceremony would begin (it was nearly five o'clock by this point), but the bride was both cooking for her own wedding and trying to get dressed. Finally, all was ready, and we began the ceremony. I was particularly impressed by the testimonies given by the locals of their pastor and his bride's faithfulness and honor. After the vows were exchanged, the ceremony continued for nearly two hours.

After we returned from our trips to these villages, I found my heart longing to return to Mozambique. So many people—children, teenagers, and adults—are hungry and thirsty for the good news of Jesus Christ. So much needs to be done! We must continue preparing workers so that many more missions and churches may be planted in that country and around the world.



BMA MISSIONS REACHES THE KRAHN



BY: Abraham J. Cheyee
BMA Missions
bmamissions.org

The origin of the Krahn in the Kparblee Chiefdom and the establishment of Christianity into the Kparblee Chiefdom (currently known as the Kparblee District) begins in Eastern Liberia, in the lower Nimba County. This area is home to over 20,000 Krahn ethnic groups.

The Kparblee District is named after its founder, a prominent warrior king named Kpar. The Krahn arrived in the area as part of the early eighteenth-century migration from what is now the Ivory Coast. This migration occurred due to both the overpopulation as a result of western Sudan tribes immigrating to Ivory Coast as well as an increase in regional tribal wars. As crown king, Kpar could not stay in the same kingdom as his kinsmen; instead

he needed to find another place to settle. So he, along with other chiefs and elders and their families, crossed the Cestos River and settled along the Liberian side, building towns and villages in what is now known as the Kparblee District.

The Krahn in Liberia were originally hunters, farmers, and fishermen, traditionally focusing on rice and cassava production. The Krahn in Ivory Coast also traditionally became hunters, farmers, and fishermen; but they focused more on crops of rice, yams, maize, and bananas; and more recently, they have begun to work in the diamond camps and rubber plantations. Both regions have suffered many developmental setbacks due to the Liberian civil war.



Krahn Culture

Early Krahn political organization was traditionally decentralized in both Liberia and Ivory Coast. The tribes often lacked a central governing power; instead they turned to a village “headman” who rose to a position of social esteem through skill, hard work, and luck in hunting and farming. These individuals often formed councils consisting of young warriors for protection and village elders to serve as consultants in village affairs. This governing group would both broker trades with neighboring tribes, as well as make important decisions for the tribe members. Within these tribal groups, it was not uncommon for ceremonial face masks to serve dual roles in both rituals and politics. These masks were often modeled after fearsome animals and were utilized in community mediations. They may also have been a means of implementing social control in the years prior to the adoption of Western laws during the colonial period.

Krahn Religion

Many Krahn believe that objects have spirits or souls (animism). Although scholars are not certain of their origins and intended use, some sources believe that the Krahn saw these objects as living entities typically found in small bodies of water such as rivers and creeks. Called “tien,” “nitien,” or “dwin” these artifacts would have been viewed as water spirits or “gods of water.” Additionally, it is believed that the powers associated with these beings



included healing, fertility, and the ability to end conflict and to create new villages. The Krahn also thought that a town or village could gain protection from one of these water guardians if they were caught in the water and carried into town.

According to the Krahn in Ivory Coast, it is also believed that the natural world is made up of spirits, referred to as “bush spirits.” These spirits are part of the world untouched by man, and they believe that keeping these spirits appeased is vital to the health of the tribe. Whenever new land requires cultivating for fields or expansion, or when tribesmen need to venture outside the village, it becomes necessary to make offerings to the spirits, with such endeavors being surrounded by an air of danger. It is further believed that the bush spirits take corporeal form in order to interact with the villagers and participate in ceremonies. The people believe that the bush spirits can communicate with humans through dreams, often demanding ceremonial masks be created in their honor in either male or female forms. These masks then serve a variety of functions ranging from ritual ceremonies, forms of entertainment, focal points in moral stories, and judicial and political controls. Typically, female masks are viewed as less imposing and more beautiful than male masks and are in turn used more for ritual and entertainment purposes while the male masks are often more ferocious-looking and serve roles in sociopolitical issues. However, all Krahn masks are believed to deflect sorcery attacks; and many undergo shifts in their primary function during their lifetime.



The Arrival of Christianity

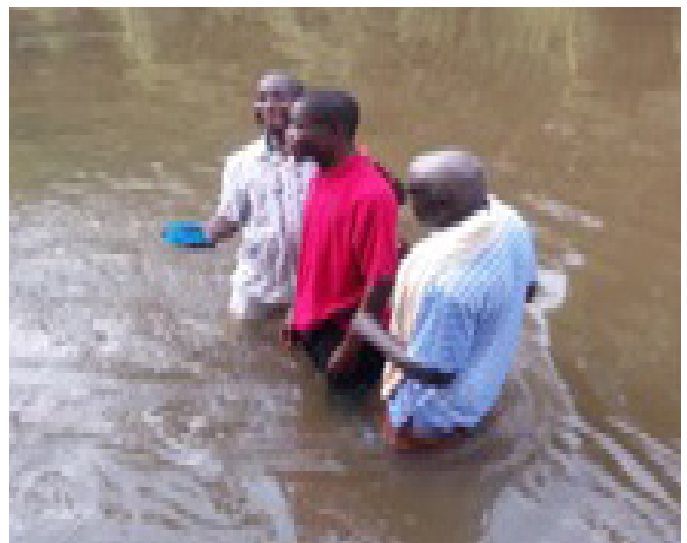
The Krahn people in the Kparblee District continued to live in darkness, worshipping idols from their ancestors' time; they had never heard of the saving grace of the gospel and continued in their sin, dying without Christ. But God had a plan to redeem the Krahn people to Himself. A missionary from Baptist Mid-Missions, Reverend Walter H. Kronemeyer and his wife Ruth arrived in Liberia at the end of the Second World War. After praying on where to settle, they decided to plant a mission in rural Liberia in a place called Tappita. A few months after they settled in Tappita, Chief Yonton Paye from the Kparblee District came to Tappita to attend a required government meeting. There he met Reverend Kronemeyer and his wife who both shared the gospel with him. The Kparblee chief accepted Christ as his Savior and promptly invited the Kronemeyer's to his village to share the gospel with his people. The Kronemeyer's accepted this invitation as an answer to their prayers. They became the first missionaries to the Krahn people, and through the course of their ministry, they helped lead thousands of Krahn to salvation, planted Good News Baptist Church, established various missions, and began translating Bible verses and songs into the Krahn dialect. Even after retiring in the States, the Kronemeyer's continued to visit and support the works they had begun within the Krahn people.

Civil War

Throughout the 1980s, 90s, and 2000s, both Liberia and Ivory Coast were ravaged by civil war. When war raged in Liberia, many of the Krahn were forced to take refuge in Ivory Coast. Those of us that were from the Kparblee District along the Liberian and Ivorian border fled to exile into the neighboring Toulepleu Region of western Ivory Coast. With the help of God and the United Nations and other humanitarian aid, we were able to obtain food, medication, education, and other essentials.

Ministry in Exile

Despite our conditions as refugees and the persecution caused by the war, we Christians did not lose our faith. We decided to group ourselves and began to carry out evangelism and soul-winning among the refugees in various towns and villages in the Ivory Coast. This was when I first felt called to ministry. Prior to the war, I served as youth president in our church; and when we fled Liberia, I began to work in close collaboration with our Pastor Joseph Koliyah. After a few months of illness, Pastor Koliyah died. At this point, I took up the challenge to continue the work of the gospel. In late 1990, Good News Baptist Church voted me in as their pastor, despite me having no theological training. However, the Kronemeyer's had not forgotten us, and arranged for my wife and I to attend a Baptist Bible Institute in Ghana.



In 1998, I graduated from the Bible Institute and returned to minister to the Liberian and Ivorian refugees. Before I returned, I met with Reverend Adu Bohane, the former director of Baptist Missionary Association (BMA) of Africa, about working with the BMA to continue in ministry to western Ivory Coast and Liberia after the war. My request was granted and I returned to plant churches and evangelize for the next year. Some of the BMA missionaries in Ghana came to train us in church-planting and evangelism. As the Lord blessed, we established many works in various Ivorian towns, villages, and refugee camps.

As the Liberian civil war subsided, Ivory Coast plunged into its own civil conflict. This forced us, along with many other Liberians, to be repatriated back to Liberia. As we returned to our post-war country after fifteen years of being refugees, we began to rebuild our lives and homes in the surrounding cities, towns, and villages. Sadly, many of the Christian Liberians focused more on reestablishing themselves and turned their backs on Christ. Many of them no longer attend church and returned to idol worship.

Current Ministry

Immediately upon our return from exile, the pastors, church planters, and members of BMA churches saw the need to reach post-war Liberia with the gospel message. We started in Monrovia and extended to the southeastern settlements of the

Krahn people along the Liberia and Ivory Coast borders. Our goal was to plant ourselves in such a way that we could continue the work in Ivory Coast once the war ended. Today, our pastors and church planters continue to minister in various towns and villages. Despite many challenges, including the Ebola outbreak that claimed the lives of thousands of Liberians, many people are responding favorably to the gospel. Two years ago, the Ivorian civil crisis ended; many Ivorians have returned home while others remain in Liberia in various refugee camps. Our ministry focuses on sharing the gospel, caring for widows, orphans, and underprivileged children, and working to provide medication, food, and clothing. Would you pray for us as we seek to share the gospel and love of Christ with the Krahn people?



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DISCIPLESHIP: THE KEY TO SPIRITUAL MULTIPLICATION

BY: Dr. Steve Crawley
Ministers Resource Services
ministersresourceservices.com

Whether we are ministering in North America or on the continent of Africa, spiritual multiplication and church growth begins with discipleship. Jesus made it clear in the Great Commission that the mission of the church is to produce disciple-making believers of every nation. Everywhere God's people are being obedient to His mandate, God is on the move, and that certainly seems to be the case

throughout Africa. David Barrett, author of the *World Christian Encyclopedia*, reports that every day an average of 32,000 people in Africa accept Christ as their Savior.

Since being obedient to the call of discipleship is paramount for every believer, it is good to periodically revisit the foundational concept of this responsibility. Several years ago, I had the opportunity to interview Sam Hershey of the Navigators. Specifically, Hershey works with Navigator Church Ministries (NCM). He has served with the Navigators for 44 years in a variety of capacities. His current focus is helping church leaders grow intentional cultures of disciple-making in their congregations.

WHAT IS THE DEFINITION OF DISCIPLESHIP?

Hershey points to John 15 as a good scriptural model for discipleship. He believes that this is a very clear picture of Jesus unpacking what it means to be one of His disciples. This passage reveals three major themes: 1) growing in intimacy with Christ, 2) growing in love in a community of believers, and 3) growing in a relationship with lost people. This captures one of the simplest pictures of what discipleship is all about. By asking these three questions, one can gain a sense as to whether or not he or she is a disciple of Christ. Are they growing in their intimacy with Christ? Are they growing in their relationship with other believers? Are they continually growing in their relationship with lost people? Hershey asserts that if you find this continuing, then you find a follower of Christ who is a true disciple.

WHAT IS THE PROCESS OF DISCIPLESHIP?

When asked what setting, according to the Navigators, is most effective in disciple-making, Hershey referred back to II Timothy 2:2. The

Navigators feel that discipleship occurs best when there is some sort of close intimacy and accountability. That may be in a triad of three people or it may occur one on one. However, they assert that it has to occur within a community. Hershey shared that there is a powerful impact that the Holy Spirit makes when He affirms truths to a person of a different mind than someone else. When discipleship is taken out of the context of community, it can actually fracture and create a skewed picture of what it means to walk with Christ. Similar to raising children and similar to the way Paul describes in the book of I Thessalonians chapter two, you raise people spiritually when you are more like a father or like a mother. Consequently, one can disciple effectively through small group discipleship. However, the individuals in the smaller group should always relate to the larger community, in other words the church. With Jesus, you see the crowds, you see the seventy, you see the thirty, you see the twelve, and you see the three. However, no matter how small a number of people that Jesus taught, they could always relate to the larger group.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF LEADERSHIP IN DISCIPLE-MAKING?

As I concluded the interview with Hershey, he stated that our ultimate goal in missions, whether in the States or abroad, should be for every church leader to be both a disciple and a disciple-maker, while leading his members to do the same. The motto of the Navigators is simple— “to know Him and to make Him known.” As we in the Baptist Missionary Association (BMA) seek to partner in fulfilling the Great Commission around the world, may we strive to abide in Christ, to know Him intimately, and then, with our “cup overflowing,” make Him known by discipling others. Everywhere God’s people are being obedient to this Great Commission mandate, God is on the move. That is certainly true in Africa; may it be so in the United States as well—for discipleship is the key to spiritual multiplication!



BY: Dr. Charley Holmes
BMA Theological Seminary
bmats.edu

THE SIMPLER THE BETTER

We have all seen or heard the acronym “K.I.S.S.—Keep It Simple, Stupid.” I have had to learn that lesson many times. A few years ago, while traveling with Evangelistic International Ministries (EIM) in Tanzania, I was to teach about twenty pastors the Evangelism Explosion (EE) strategy of personal evangelism. This strategy has been used at the Baptist Missionary Association (BMA) Seminary for over twenty years. Hundreds of pastors and other lay leaders have been exposed to this methodology and have used this technique in their first experience in leading someone to Christ.

When I began planning for the class, we contacted EE International to obtain EE curriculum in the Swahili language. All arrangements were made over

the course of several weeks. However, when the time came for the class to start, the materials had not been shipped from Nairobi, Kenya, to our location in Tabora, Tanzania. All the students were in place, the teachers were ready, the week had been set aside for training, a large city full of lost Muslims needing to hear the gospel awaited, and we had no books! What could be done?

I decided to use an extraordinary soul-winning strategy which I had studied once before but had never used or taught—One-to-One Bible Reading. The materials needed are simple. This method has only one aide. There is no script to memorize or tract to distribute. All that is needed is the Gospel of Mark.

The strategy for sharing Christ is equally simply. You merely ask an acquaintance if they have anyone they read the Bible with on a regular basis. The answer 99 out of 100 times is “no.” If that is the answer, then simply ask, “Would you have any interest in reading the Bible with me for a few weeks?” About half the people who are asked will take up the offer. You then simply read a chapter of Mark with them each week. While reading, look for the answers within the text to these questions:

“Who is Jesus?”—What is His identity?

“Why did He come to earth?”—What was His mission?

“How do people follow Him?”—How do they live as a Christian?

During that week, we saw over a dozen people (mostly Muslims) begin to follow Christ.

On the occasion of my next trip, the leader of their group informed us that most of their existing

churches had been invigorated and his own had almost doubled in size. He stated that the primary factor was learning how to read the Scriptures “One-to-One.” The purpose of this trip was to teach a form of the Seminary’s DiscipleWay method of inductive Bible Study. Inductive Bible Study allows you to examine the Scriptures for yourself, without study aids such as Bible commentaries. This is a skill which is sorely needed, especially when no Bible commentaries are available.

The next goal for the trip was to teach these pastors how to make the topic of the text being studied the main point of the sermon (exposition). This training helped them learn to truly preach the message of the passage of Scripture and not merely pick a theological topic and deliver a rambling speech. This was a new concept for them, as it is for many preachers around the world.

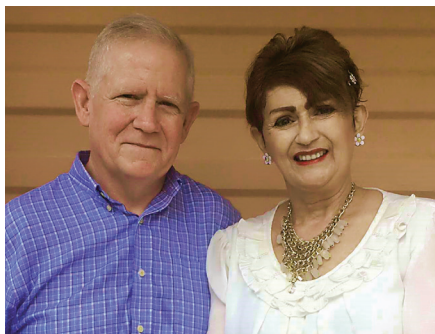
When I returned the third time I had another surprise. The leaders told me the number of churches had grown from about twenty to thirty-three. More surprising than this growth was the fact that the composition of the congregations had also changed. Previously, the attendees were about eighty percent women and children. Now, those coming to Sunday services were about fifty percent adult men! When pressed to explain the profound change in the number of men attending, there was an immediate and definitive answer. The logical and systematic approach of inductive Bible study along with modern application through expositional preaching appealed to the African male mindset. All the teachers at BMA Seminary are convinced that Word-centered evangelism, disciple-making, and preaching will carry the day in any culture.

As I write this article (May 2019), I am preparing for this summer’s mission to Tanzania. This trip will consist of leading a small number of leaders through a study of Biblical Theology. I will be using Charles Spurgeon’s small teaching manual. (Spurgeon is probably the most famous Baptist of all time.) Please pause after reading this article and give thanks for the fruit that has been borne and will continue to come in Tanzania through the ministry of BMA Seminary in partnership with EIM and BMA of America Missions.



Preaching group training in Tanzania.

mission:news



Philippines: Danny Ballard

God's grace is truly amazing. Seeing the Lord's hand at work in the lives of those we minister to is so exciting. We had our first two-day training session for church planters and workers at the Training Center we have been working on for over a year. It is still not completed but the Lord is faithful and we are confident it will be soon. Our children's ministry is going well and we are blessed to have a wonderful young Christian Filipino lady who teaches our lessons in their native language where they can better understand God's Word. We are also very blessed that our local cancer institute has been allowing us to share the gospel of Christ with their patients and their family members. There are anywhere from 25 to 45 individuals present in each meeting. Several patients have accepted Christ since we began this ministry and we are anticipating even more. The members in each of our Bible studies are continually growing stronger in the Word of God and in their faith. In addition, we will

be on furlough through October and would love to come share our burden and ministries here in the Philippines with you and your church. You can simply email us at ballardsphilippines@gmail.com and we can set a time to come visit you.



Lebanon: Joe Costa

Hello everyone! As we are enjoying the end of the warm Lebanese weather, we are also enjoying God's provision and blessings. Day by day, Mira and I are reminded that God is great and His love endures forever. He has blessed us with a great summer filled with outreach events for teens and young adults, some conferences and events. We are currently restarting our Bible study and youth groups for the new school year and also continuing our collaboration with Lifeword to provide short videos for teens and young adults all around the Middle East to challenge them to think about their life's struggles and their relationship with God. I will also be traveling to Egypt mid-

September to do a training for youth workers on developing a good system and structure for their youth ministries. Please pray for the region and for God's plan in the Arab world. May He prepare the hearts of the lost so they may experience His grace and freedom.



Mexico: Tommy Rose

We arrived in Querétaro, Mexico without knowing a soul. Now approaching three years since beginning a new church in central Mexico, we can say we have met some incredible people-- people that God has surely placed in our path. Each quarter we have a meal for those interested in joining the membership of the church. Though not easy, our mission is simple: we desire to worship God in word and deed and to disciple and serve our neighbors. I am encouraged greatly that there are many that share a desire to make our world a better place by sharing and helping others grow in the gospel. Pray for us as we pray that God would use us to change Querétaro one person at a time. God bless.



**Canada & Haiti:
Michel Poirier**

From Quebec, Canada, the church of Levis is doing well but sickness has taken its toll. Satan attacks our churches by attacking our young people in their faithfulness to the Lord. We are running around 45 on Sunday morning, but many are not saved. Please pray for the Lord to open their eyes. We also have five new men that have started attending. Please also pray for their salvation. We are reaching out to a new area to plant a Baptist church; we pray for wisdom and faithfulness for our soul-winners. Haiti is in an uproar because of bandits that terrorize the city of Port au Prince where we are. The church of Segur is running in the 300s and the one in Onaville is running 70. Praise the Lord. We need your prayers in order to go back and train our men who are hungry for the Word. We need to dig two other wells in different places where we plan to start new churches located in Jeremi and Duval. We have an orphanage with about 120 children who go to get water down the hill about 1000 feet at six in the morning for cooking food, drinking, and bathing. Would you help them? I sure want to.



Philippines:Fil Kakilala

Mabuhay! I am being asked about the health status of my wife Lisa. The latest pictures of her brain show no improvement on her large brain ventricles, full of fluid, after nearly 17 years of treatment. Her neurology team has advised her to remain in Conway, Arkansas where treatment at Baptist Health is just minutes away from home. The technology for the magnetic shunt in her head is not available in the Philippines. Any slight change in the cerebrospinal fluid pressure magnifies daily headaches. Unfortunately, the shunt cannot be re-calibrated in the Philippines, so suffering is prolonged until she can get help in the U.S. Due to her health, I now have a dual base between the U.S. and the Philippines. Our support plan has been changed from 100% funded to 50/50 this year, then to the 40/60 plan, where I would raise the bigger portion, until my retirement in three years. Please pray for Lisa, for partners in the new support plan, and for the development of national leaders in my work.



Nicaragua:Paige Ferrell

At the Piece of Hope, we are so blessed to continue to see growth in the work that God has set before us. We continually have new families showing up at our door that we are able to build relationships with while we love and teach their loved ones. God continues to open doors in our communities including schools, with professionals and in the hearts of those who we come in contact with daily. Our team is growing with our third teacher now teaching part time with us as she learns and continues her secondary education. Please keep the Piece of Hope teachers and families in your prayers as we strive to serve God in all aspects of our daily work. Keep up with what we are doing on our website or our Facebook page, www.pieceofhope.com or www.facebook.com/PieceOfHopeNica.



Philippines: Stan Scroggins

We always enjoy guests from America. Even though a trip to the Philippines is long, we've been blessed to welcome BMMI in February and a work team from Bethel Baptist Church in Fulton, Mississippi in April. Both teams helped promote our church planting efforts as well as needed repairs at the Bible College. EIM led VBS at our newest church plant in May and another work team from Garrett Memorial Baptist Church in Hope, Arkansas helped with repairs to the boy's dorm in July. After graduation and classes dismissed for the summer we were busy promoting and visiting our missions. Pastor Josh Wright from New Testament Baptist Church in Sullivan, Missouri visited in June to see first-hand the church planting work on the island of Leyte. New Testament is the mother church of that mission. August welcomed a new batch of freshman to our campus and the start to another great year training future pastors and missionaries. So, you can see how easy it is to do a successful, beneficial short-term mission trip to the Philippines. Get in touch with me with any questions. A fact-finding tour to Asian countries helped us to identify open doors for our plan

to plant 200 churches in 10 years in Asia. Prayer is truly the most important thing. God Bless!



Thailand: Brandon Lingle

We are excited to see how God is working here in Thailand! Last Sunday two more believers were baptized. The church plant is growing in number, and more importantly growing closer to God and each other. It really gives us so much joy to see the work expand. Right now, we are praying and considering when and where to help this church plant (North Bangkok Church) plant another church. Please pray God would give us guidance and grace. Thank you for your prayers!



Papua New Guinea: BJ Sanders

Things are getting exciting around Wantakia Land! We just started our first ever literacy class with the Wantakian people. There are twelve students who

are learning how to read and write in their own language. This is such an important part of our ministry, because we want them to hold God's Word on their own and not rely on missionaries forever! Please be praying for the twelve individuals in this class. They will graduate in October!



Texas: Jesse Hales

We have settled in here in Round Rock, Texas and are starting to reach out and connect with people. Pray for us as we start this new church plant. Pray that God would lead us to people who are hungry to know Him. Pray that many people will be saved here. Pray that others will be led by God to join us here in Round Rock to work with us in the new mission. Thank you!



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Give: BMMI is financed entirely through contributions. The financial needs of BMMI have increased proportionately to the growth in opportunities for service. Even if you cannot serve on a team, you can become a part of this exciting humanitarian and benevolent ministry through your donations.



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☎ 501-455-4977
📍 611 Locust Street
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