



BIBLE STUDENTS' COMMITTEE FOR AFRICA



Newsletter

Summer 2019

Greetings from the BSCFA

“He lived there two whole years at his own expense and welcomed all who came to him, proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and without hindrance.” (Acts 28:30-31) NRSV

These last two verses that close the Apostle Paul's experience in the book of Acts seem to sum up the Christian's responsibility as well as our commission. That commission is to teach about our Lord Jesus Christ—and preach the kingdom of God. As the Apostle Paul's life comes to a close in Rome, we are encouraged by his continued emphasis to preach, teach and encourage until the end. The Bible Students' Committee for Africa is primarily focused in the following areas: supporting established isolated brethren, strengthening ecclesias, local conventions as well as cross-continental conventions.

The Pan African conventions bring brethren together and foster continued communication. The interest in the French speaking countries in Africa has continued to grow. This has broadened the French literature requested and has engaged the brethren in France. We continue to have inquiries from the Africanbiblestudents.com website and have added more French literature to support the increased interest.

As continued interest has incurred an increase in the cost of shipping, we continue to look for innovative ways to support the requests of the brethren. At present, we have French and English literature printed in Africa. The literature is then distributed to local ecclesias for distribution and for use with the ecclesias. The Bible Resource application has also been an enormous help enabling all with smart phones to have 'Bible resources' at their fingertips.

We encourage brethren within the continent of Africa, to communicate with each other, and this has been made possible through inexpensive modern technology. Brethren stay in touch primarily by email, texting and WhatsApp. WhatsApp is a free instant messaging application that allows the user to exchange text, image, video and audio messages. This is an extremely useful resource when communicating with brethren overseas. All that is needed is a smart phone, an internet connection and a download of WhatsApp on your smart phone.

We are impressed how adaptive our brethren are when using modern technology in order to communicate and meet with one another. "To equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ." (Eph. 4:12-14) NRSV

Bro. Bill Dutka, *Chairman BSCFA*



2019 Young Adults' Seminar Attendees



Bro. Brendan Getchel Flanked by African Brethren at Kitale Convention

Report from East Africa

Visit to Kenya

During February 2019, Bro. Brendan and Sr. Karen Getchel traveled to Kenya from America to participate in the Kitale Convention. Additionally, six brethren from Uganda also attended this gathering. Some of the discourses presented by the friends included the following: "Passing from Death Unto Life," "The Present Judgment," "God's Thoughts Towards Us," "The Death of the Saints," "The New Jerusalem," "Who Are the Spirits in Prison?," "The New Creatures," "Fundamental Doctrines," "The Seed of the Woman," and "Forgiveness."

There were about 50 in attendance including several ecclesias from various parts of Kenya. There was great gratitude expressed for Bro. Brendan's service.

Pilgrimage to Other Locales

Bros. Bill Gill and Ed Winske traveled from the United States to several regions in East Africa for approximately four weeks in the early spring. A report of the first portion of their sojourn was posted online on April 10, 2019. It is evident there were many blessings received.

Report from West Africa

During the first half of 2019 some of the activities in West Africa included the following:

1. A pilgrimage of three weeks by Bros. Edward Nkansah and Khurrsino Miranda to meet with

consecrated brethren and/or individuals interested in learning about the Bible in Sierra Leone, Ivory Coast and Togo.

2. The 2019 Nigeria Bible Students Mission Servants Seminar was held from March 1-3.

3. The Nigerian Elders/Leaders' Seminar in April 20, 21.

4. Bros. Edward Nkansah and Alex Mokom visited the brethren in Togo between April 14-21.

The Harvest Work in Africa

Since August of 2018 the Lord has provided us the opportunity to reach out to individuals from the countries of South Africa, Zimbabwe, Namibia, Botswana, Benin and Swaziland as part of follow-up witness efforts through email. Weekly lists, faithfully prepared by Sr. Barbara Ostermann, include on average approximately 12.65 leads of individuals from these 6 countries—as well as others. These lead lists are sent to Bro. Brian Montague who distributes them to volunteers. The individuals on the lists have already received a PDF copy of the "How to Study the Bible and Have It Make Sense" booklet after having requested it on the Bible Resources app. A volunteer then uses the leads from these 6 countries (if containing accurate contact information), to send a semi-personalized email to each individual inquiring if they would like to receive an ongoing series of 23 Bible study lessons with the opportunity to ask questions and make comments via email correspondence with a Bible Student. This 23-lesson series covers various aspects of the Divine plan, introducing interested individuals to the harvest truth message.



Left to Right - Srs. Carina Butler, Barbara Ostermann, Rebecca Gray and Bro. Dean Oswell

Considering the informational requests brethren receive from these and other countries inspires awe in us as we see the Lord of the Harvest working all over the globe to engage prospective members of the body of Christ in gathering any remaining Wheat. We are so thankful for the many brethren the Lord directs to physically travel across the globe to assist interested ones in other countries, and we are thankful to be able to "travel" using the computer in an effort to assist. These types of efforts we may **all** participate in through prayer for honor to be brought to God through such efforts and possibly through offering our services to inquire about reaching out—if so directed by the Lord. We are very thankful to the Heavenly Father and our Lord Jesus Christ for the many blessings we have received by collaborating with other consecrated Christian brethren in this effort. 1 Corinthians 3:6 (KJV) ".... but God gave the increase."

Sr. Carina Butler

Within "Christian Resources" is a form inviting anyone interested in receiving the PDF copy of the booklet produced by the Chicago Bible Students entitled "How to Study the Bible and Have it Make Sense," to fill in the form and provide name, address, cell phone and email. It also allows for comments—or as some prefer—to ask a question. When sending out the PDF of the booklet, a short message of Truth is included, with an invitation to respond if one requests a printed copy and/or other Biblical materials, and if desired, personal contact from designated brethren in their region. After sending out the PDF copy, the lists are weekly forwarded to Br. Brian Montague, who sends to each of the brethren the requests from their region. As a result, many Bible study lessons have been sent out and ecclesias formed due to the zeal and diligence of these

brethren who have consecrated their all in service to the Lord and the harvest work.

From the onset, the requests began to pour into the site from all over Africa. People were hungry for the Truth about God's wonderful Divine Plan of salvation which includes ALL people, the truth about the two salvations—the heavenly high calling of Christ and the Kingdom on earth for the remainder of mankind. To date there have been a total of 28,841 requests for the booklet in PDF format that were sent. But also, as a result of our initial message, many, many requests for print copies of the booklet have been fulfilled. These requests for paper copies are referred to the brethren in each African country represented, who then make contact to furnish the booklet, and other Biblical materials as they carry the Good News. Recently, I had the pleasure of meeting in person Bro. Dean Oswell from South Africa who attended the Highland Park Convention here in the United States. Along with Sr. Carina Butler, who assists Bro. Dean, we discussed the harvest work and shared our own experiences with one another. A very blessed time!

Each day as the site is accessed, it is with anticipation to see the requests and comments from the persons writing in and a real sense of gratitude as the booklets are sent out, knowing that each one now will have in his or her hands the means to better understand the Word of God and perhaps may desire to look ever deeper into the gems of Truth found there. My life is greatly blessed by the privilege granted me to share in this wonderful witness activity.

Sr. Barbara Ostermann

The increase of "knowledge" predicted for the end of our Gospel Age—when Jesus would

"stand up" (Daniel 12:1-4)—provided opportunity for helping in the Harvest work for finding the true "Wheat" all over the world.

In Africa, a website was set up inviting questions from inquiring people in a spiritual direction and/or specifically on the Bible. Some of the questions included "background" from where the people were coming:

"Is there any time when there was no God?"

"What does the Bible tell us about faith, prayers and rapture?"

"...Why so many churches of different names if we belong to one Lord our God?"

"How do we learn to pray?"

"Did the 'holy ones,' whose bodies were raised from their graves, go to heaven with Jesus?"

"What other religions talk about our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ?"

"What day is the Sabbath?"

"How can I be born again?"

"Is 'hell fire' real as some believe the Bible to teach, or is it a parable?"

"Paul on Galatians and Romans -- what did he conclude about the Law concerning the grace we've received?"

"What's the present Church Age that we are now in and who are its messengers?"

"Is it bad to wear earrings?"

So, answering questions from enquirers in Africa is very heart-expanding as we try to be faithful in our opportunities in sharing in the Harvest work at this end of the Age.

Sr. Rebecca Gray

South Africa's people generally look to Pentecostal and animistic churches for their hope in solving worldly and spiritual matters—unlike the USA where membership in conventional churches is high. But in terms of preaching the truth here, people are very eager to talk and to listen owing to the culture of "Ubuntu" ("we are only human by virtue of respecting and valuing one another"). However, very few have serious interest in an ongoing study of God's Word and the writings of "that servant." Most have a level of literacy that *sadly* makes personal study very difficult.

With a violent and unstable backdrop, preaching the Truth hasn't been easy. We look to the Lord's overruling grace and guidance—and meet largely online. Most here, including brethren are without transport. Public transport is generally pathetic and moving around—particularly at night—is not an option. RSA (Republic of South Africa) has a murder rate on average of over fifty per day—

and is the rape capital of the world. By contrast, those travel problems are mostly unknown in the US and Western Europe where transportation is quite safe and reliable. Public rail transportation such as Amtrak (US) and Deutsche Bahn (Germany) are Government owned corporations.

One drawback in America is that people are not very approachable ... seemingly establishing relationships vicariously via their computers and the internet. Therefore, the personable approach in preaching may still be worthy of person-to-person efforts in South Africa to this day. We pray earnestly for God's Kingdom. The difference between the "rich and poor" is higher in South Africa than anywhere else in earth (called the Gini Coefficient). The public service transport is so unreliable and dysfunctional that the norm is to use unsafe and speeding mini bus taxis run by private enterprise truly called "coffins on wheels." Concerning trains: there were over 1,000 incidents of serious rail accidents as admitted recently by the "Minister of Transport." Should you desire more information concerning conditions in South Africa, please email me at supersurfer38@gmail.com.

Bro. Dean Oswell

Report from Ghana

Friday, June 7, 2019

On Friday, June 7, 2019, at approximately 10:30 PM, Bros. Richard Doctor, Ryan Hangs, Brian Montague, Homer Montague, Austin Williams, Srs. Rosalie Hangs and Cathy Sandridge as well as Karen Montague boarded a direct flight scheduled to leave at 11:30 PM from JFK Airport in NYC to Accra, Ghana, West Africa, for the purpose of being involved in a Young Adults' Seminar.

Saturday, June 8, 2019

After a swift and relaxing journey overseas, the travelers arrived in Ghana the following afternoon around 2:00 PM and were warmly greeted by Bros. Edward Nkansah, Omar Ndamutsa, as well as the friends from Togo including Bros. Felix Afantchawo, Emmanuel Awitala, Sergino Kpoedzou, Samuel Lekpor and Srs. Audre'e Agobokousse and Deborah N'tsouglo after they passed through customs and received their luggage. Bro. Edward provided a comfortably sized and air-conditioned van for the brethren and once everyone was settled, the driver brought the group to the Presbyterian Women's Centre (PWC). When they arrived, the travelers were welcomed by Bros. Beni Roland N'goran and Kouassi Konan from Ivory Coast who assisted

them with their suitcases to their respective dormitories. Shortly thereafter, some of the friends remained at the PWC for their afternoon and evening meals as well as extended fellowship while others traveled back into the city of Accra to visit restaurants and determine which eatery would be best for our Wednesday evening supper.

Sunday, June 9, 2019

At approximately 7:00 AM, Bros. Edward and Brian left the PWC for the airport to receive additional brethren who had early morning flight arrivals into Ghana that day. In the interim, Bro. Homer spent a considerable amount of time explaining to the remaining brethren many details concerning the Young Adults' Seminar while at breakfast. Around 10:00 AM, Sr. Rene Blanks, her 2 children, Daniel Blanks and Tiffany Jeter as well as Srs. Karen Earl and Karetta Robinson arrived at the PWC. We were also greeted by Bro. Abraham Baah who was escorted to the PWC by Bro. Jerome Rogers. Shortly thereafter, Bro. Edward left again for the airport, to receive the Nigerians who had an early afternoon flight arrival that day. By lunchtime, Bros. Isaiah, Noah and Samuel Amoo from Kumasi, Ghana, as well as Bros. Lawton Kalu, David Obire and Sr. Blessing Egbu from Nigeria arrived to the PWC. Bro. Edward then quickly left the PWC one final time that day for the airport to receive those brethren who had early evening flight arrivals. At approximately 4:00 PM, several of the friends gathered in the auditorium to sort name badges, and place Truth literature inside of folders for everyone. Others decorated the hall with charts and ban-

ners and set up tables and chairs for the seminar. We ended the evening with supper and fellowship. Bro. Edward returned to the PWC at 7:00 PM with Bros. Nicholas Toe, Emmanuel Okorie and Srs. Prisca Ariwodor and Leticia Mills.

Monday, June 10, 2019

The brethren quietly gathered into the meeting hall prior to the 9:00 AM morning devotions, and the services promptly began on the hour. Bro. Homer then gave the morning address informing the friends of a change of schedule. Shortly thereafter, a taped discourse presented by Bro. Michael Nekora entitled "Oneness" was played. Following the discourse, the brethren were divided into groups and discussed the challenges of marriage, being equally/unequally yoked and the difficulties of finding a compatible and consecrated mate in the brotherhood. A representative from each group then shared with everyone from the podium what was discussed in their group. Following lunch, Bro. Isaiah presented a power point on "The Chart of the Ages" and Bro. David Obire served us with a talk entitled "God's Kingdom Heavenly and Earthly." After a 30-minute intermission, Bro. Ryan led an animated study entitled "How We Can Encourage One Another" where there was much audience participation. Our last services before supper were 3 power point witness reports presented by Bros. Omar, Edward and Nicholas where they informed the brethren of their Harvest Truth activities at home and in distant locations. After supper there was a testimony meeting chaired by Bro. Samuel Amoo and immediately afterwards some of the young adults were involved in a devotional service enti-



North American Attendees at Young Adults' Seminar

tled, "It Is Well." The evening ended with Songs in the Night and prayer.

Tuesday, June 11, 2019

The morning began with the devotional service and Bro. Richard presenting a power point on "Christ's Second Presence." Following the intermission, Bro. Brian led Part 1 of a study entitled "Self-Control" where the young adults were engaged in active participation. Following lunch, there was a 15-minute song service as well as a 3-panel question meeting where Bros. Homer, Richard and Austin addressed questions presented to them by the young adults. Bro. Nicholas ended our afternoon session with a discourse entitled "The Day of the Lord." There was a one-hour-and-a-half period of fellowship before supper and the sisters chose to use this time having a sisters' meeting in the gazebo where they continued their discussion on marriage from the previous day's breakout session. After mealtime, the brethren had another testimony meeting led by Bro. Edward where the African brethren shared the issues and challenges faced as Christians in their various countries. Following the testimony meeting, another group of young adults participated in a devotional service entitled, "The Lord Is My Shepherd." The evening ended with Songs in the Night and prayer.

Wednesday, June 12, 2019

At the conclusion of the 9:00 AM devotions, Bro. Austin led Part 2 of a spirited study with the young adults entitled "Self-Control." The morning session ended with a second question meeting panel again led by Bros. Homer, Richard and Austin. Following lunch, Bro. Omar served the friends with a discourse entitled "The Hidden Mystery." Immediately after his service, everyone boarded a van that brought them to the business center of Accra. As we traveled to Accra, Bro. Emmanuel Okorie shared with the brethren about his witness activities in Benin. After making a brief stop for some of the out-of-towners to exchange their money into the Ghanaian currency of cedis, the van brought us to a market in the center of the city for shopping. The friends enjoyed purchasing many souvenirs and negotiating prices with the vendors. After our shopping we arrived at a restaurant at 5:15 PM where the friends spent time taking pictures and touring the grounds before their 5:45 PM dinner. We had our meal in a reserved area of the restaurant, and following supper, Bro. Brian led a testimony meeting where the North American friends testified about the challenges they face as Christians

in North America. Bro. Austin also provided a "riveting" testimony concerning one of the brethren from India who was unable to come to Ghana. At approximately 7:30 PM, the brethren departed and headed back to the PWC. As we traveled to the center, the young adults were involved in the final devotional service in the van entitled "Great Is Thy Faithfulness." We ended the meeting with Songs in the Night and prayer and finally arrived at the PWC where the brethren retired for the evening.

Thursday, June 13, 2019

The meeting began at 9:00 AM with the morning devotions. Bro. Brian then conducted a service entitled "Seminar Highlights" where he asked the friends for suggestions/feedback for future Young Adults' Seminars. He also distributed vitamins, malaria pills and Bible Student literature to the brethren. During the intermission, everyone remained in the auditorium for a group photo and extended fellowship which included taking additional pictures. Bro. Homer resumed the service at 11:00 AM with closing remarks and Bro. Noah concluded our seminar with a beautiful vesper that involved the singing of various song selections, soloists, poetry and Scripture readings. Following his service, the brethren sang "Happy Birthday" to Bro. Isaiah, and our music for the day ended with Bro. Austin leading a small group singing a few Christian hymns. The entire day concluded with the brethren singing the emotional chorus of "God Be with You," where the young adults walked around the room hugging, crying and bidding each other Godspeed until we reunite once again. Shortly after lunch, some of the African brethren departed from the PWC. At approximately 3:00 PM, the North American brethren and Bro. Emmanuel Okorie with Bro. Edward as our guide boarded a van and traveled once again to the business center of Accra. The first stop was the Accra Airport where we said good bye to Bro. Emmanuel—after which parting the remaining friends had a farewell dinner together. We arrived at the airport around 8:30 PM, and Bros. Ryan, Brian, Homer, Austin, Srs. Rosalie and Cathy as well as Karen were wished travel mercies on their return trip to the USA from the North Americans who remained in Ghana an extra day because their departure for home was scheduled for the following evening.

Friday, June 14, 2019

After a 9 1/2-hour flight, the 7 travelers arrived to the JFK Airport at approximately 6:00 AM. It was a smooth flight and the friends wished each other

a safe travel home as they went through customs and received their luggage. Bro. Edward arranged for the brethren from Africa to fly home to their respective countries of origin during the morning and remained with the American friends throughout the day including taking them to a lovely beach. In the evening these last travelers were taken to the airport and arrived home safely on the following day.

Expressions from Brethren

The Young Adults' Seminar in total was special to me. I really enjoyed the fellowship time. Although this seminar was for young adults, I felt "Oneness" between the young adults and the [older] adults. Joining together as one body in Christ helps us develop Christian characters like love, forgiveness, humility etc. And because of the seminar, we have a new family in the USA! My two favorite lessons were, "Self-Control" and "How to Encourage One Another." The first be-



cause it spoke particularly to me. From the time I joined the nominal church, I was taught that self-control lessons are not for Christians, because trying to control ourselves will not allow us to accept the grace of God. I can't imagine what a lesson like that was supposed to teach me as a Christian! So, in my mind, I have been released and I will share this with all the brethren who have not heard this wonderful lesson. I appreciated Bro. Austin's presentation [of the lesson] in French. I will take this and make it a lesson in my class! The lesson "How to Encourage One Another" was very important, because as Christians we are to encourage one another. Everyone needs encouragement all the time. We have all [of] our daily dealings, [which] can be emotional, physical, financial, etc., and if we recognize the brethren as one body [just as our personal body], I think every day that our Lord graces us to see, we must encourage each other. I want to thank everyone that somehow made this seminar possible and may our dear lovely Father be with all

of you till we meet again. Oneness brethren, ONENESS!

Bro. Sergino Kpoedzou, Togo

The thing that I enjoyed most about the Young Adults' Seminar [in Ghana] was the amazing opportunity to meet so many brethren from different parts of Africa, and hear about their lives and testimonies of God's love and grace. I received so



many blessings from talking to them and was deeply encouraged and uplifted by them. Many of the brethren had found the truth through witness efforts, and their excitement and zeal for God's plan, after finally finding it was infectious and exciting. A recurring verse throughout the week was Ephesians 4:16. At the seminar, the different speakers talked about helping the brethren, and also accepting help from them. Bro. Homer Montague said that "if there is someone who can do something better than you can, let them do it." This will help us work as a team and make them feel needed and appreciated. This will also encourage them because it's what we all desire to feel. The main lessons I learned were:

- 1) "Let your walk be more powerful than your talk."
- 2) A comment by one of the brethren about Philippians 1:6, "God is willing and able to give you what He promised...Are you keeping up your end of the bargain?"
- 3) The importance of helping, supporting and encouraging one another. "Every joint supplieth."

Sr. Rosalie Hangs, Canada

The Young Adults' Seminar in Ghana was exciting, exhilarating and inspiring. The things I enjoyed most were 1) the sisters' discussion on marriage 2) Bro. Austin's practical applications on "Self-Control" 3) Bro. Brian's interactive session on "Self-Control" and 4) the lesson "How to Encourage One Another." I appreciated the honest discussion from Sr. Karetta and Sr. Rene about marriage. They made me realize it is filled with ups and downs, both high and low moments and

that anyone who is considering marriage should brace themselves for the challenges that come with it. I also learned that it's not all about the "fairy tale wedding," but the effort you put into making the marriage work. In addition, there was



a spiritual talk on "Oneness" and why it is not a sin to be single. I am really glad for the overall blessings that I received during these discussions. The practical applications on "Self-Control" were insightful. The lesson I learned was how to apply self-control in day-to-day activities and in whatever situations we may be dealing with, such as agitation, depression and other vices that may cause a stumbling block to our spiritual growth in Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. Another lesson was "How to Encourage One Another" by applying the five Love Languages: "Words of Affirmation," "Quality Time," "Acts of Service," "Receiving Gifts" and "Physical Touch." I will share with my ecclesia the need to incorporate the five Love Languages to improve communication, understanding and cooperation amongst the brethren. The seminar ended with loads of blessings and I am grateful that I was a part of it. Thank God for His infinite mercies. His faithfulness is ever sure! I also want to thank our American brethren for putting on this seminar for the young adults. It was indeed a great blessing!

Sr. Blessing Egbu, Nigeria

Future Projected Events

Next Pan African Convention

If it is the Lord's will, another Pan African Convention will be held in Accra, Ghana, during the period Thursday, April 16, through lunch Sunday, April 19, 2020. Much has been recorded in this newsletter regarding the global effort by Bible Students in responding to various inquiries concerning God's Plan for mankind during the perilous times in which we live. As a result of the labors by many of the friends, satisfying answers have been provided to several individuals who

have sought to draw closer to God by finding hope in the promises which have inspired so many of us. The follow-up on such inquiries has resulted in visitations being scheduled to various locations where potential members of the body of Christ may be found. Accordingly, it is presently projected that consecrated brethren will attend the 2020 Pan African Convention from approximately two dozen countries and three continents, including North America, Europe and Asia. As difficult as the foretold perilous times at the end of the Age might be, they are counterbalanced by the opportunities that continue to exist for proclaiming the wonderful Kingdom of righteousness that is designed to bring blessings to all the families of the earth. Accordingly, we continue to be encouraged that the following words of Christ during his ministry have applicability at the present time for all who are striving to walk faithfully in the Master's footsteps. "We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming, when no one can work." (John 9:4) Surely, there is still opportunity to proclaim the Gospel which when properly understood, speaks not only to the completion of the Bride of Christ, but also, provides clarity that it is the Heavenly Father's design to provide an opportunity to attain restitution blessings by the human family at-large who will not be partakers of this high calling which is still in effect until this door of opportunity closes. According to God's will, we are energized to press on in seeking to locate the final grains of "Wheat" and rejoice in the prospect of personal fellowship with some of these dear ones next April as our Heavenly Father's providences may permit.

Fall 2020 Young Adults' Seminar

Based upon the spirituality manifested and the encouragement received during the recently concluded Young Adults' Seminar, tentative plans are in place to have a reunion sometime in October 2020 when these dear ones can come together again and share the blessings, experiences—as well as challenges—they have faced since departing from one another during this special season of refreshment. It is anticipated that further information on these plans will be forthcoming in the Winter 2020 issue of this publication.

Newsletter items as well as fully tax deductible donations may be sent to:
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