



## *Son-rise in Africa Newsletter*

ASSOCIATION OF BAPTISTS FOR WORLD EVANGELISM  
CHURCH PLANTING THROUGH THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

Report by EARL & KATHI COOPER

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*December 2006*

### **Ministry Update...**

On Tuesday, December 5 at approximately 3:30 p.m. I stepped out of the Toronto airport into the zero-degree breeze of Canada's winter. I breathed deeply of the refreshing cold air. Twenty hours earlier I was sitting in the Accra airport trying to get comfortable in the 35 degree humid air of Ghana. Whoever said that missions was a ministry of contrasts was right on target.

The drive home to Muskoka gave time for reflection of the past 5 weeks of ministry. My thoughts returned to the special teaching moments in Togo when God's light dawned upon students as they saw Truth in a new and different way – such as “Christ builds the church, all we do is serve Him faithfully,” “Each member of your church is gifted especially to compliment God's own agenda for it,” and “Every truly born again person is united in Christ regardless of denomination or doctrinal differences!” Such statements produced great class discussion and provided an avenue for the Holy Spirit to move hearts.

As I drove those northward kilometers I found myself quietly smiling as I reflected upon the moments spent in several churches during Sunday School (while awaiting the opportunity to share the word in morning worship) – when I first realized (although the teaching was conducted in the native language) that the respective church pastors were using the notes I had taught that very week as their Sunday School curriculum. God has an amazing way of granting His joy and fullness in the most unexpected of times!

Kathi and I look forward to the Christmas season with our families and await the New Year with expectations of God's continued blessings and joy as we carry on the writing of curriculum for the African Baptist Theological Schools. My next teaching is February 15 to March 16 2007 with Kathi joining me for the West African Mission Conference in Tama, Ghana March 19-23 2007. Until then I have exams to grade, curriculum to write, class manuals to produce and weekend ministry to share as the Lord opens doors. Thank you for your continued prayers and encouragement.

**Africa Calls...** While teaching at the Mathetes Baptist Bible College in Ho Ghana in June, 2006 the electrical power failed. Although it was only 6:30 p.m. it was already too dark to read and write. Considering that most of the pastoral students had travelled by foot several miles to join this evening class ... and that walk after a sunrise labour in their own crops and an additional walk to their respective jobs, I thought the least we could do was wait a while and see if the power would be restored. Being unaware of the candles carefully placed at my disposal by the administration, I suggested we spent out time in the dark sharing ministry blessings and challenges. I was never so glad to spend time in the dark! An opportunity soon presented itself in which I peeked into the true heart of thanksgiving.

George, one of the pastoral students began to relate a recent event that caused his heart to rejoice and be thankful to our God. As pastor of Hasu Baptist church, a reasonably remote village church near Ho, George was confronted with the challenge of getting medical aid to a very sick lady from his congregation. She was too weak to walk to the clinic, a considerable distance away, even though she did have funds to pay for medical treatment. George graciously carried her on his back to the clinic where she received the attention she needed. He then carried her home on his back and repeated the laborious journey after a few days of her convalescence.

During all the time George was telling us about this labour of love he did not once hint of complaint nor grumble about the hardship. However he did share that during these trips his heart was burdened for his own son who was gravely ill at home. George's family had no money to secure medical aid for the lad. At this point in the story, with tears streaming down my face as I imagined the struggle this father would have gone through, George raise a voice of praise to God for hearing his prayers and meeting his need. At the very time when hope was fading for his son, one of the ABWE missionaries contacted George to see if he would be interested in cutting the grass at the college. This meant a day's labour of “mowing” with a machete, but would provide funds for medical aid.

George gladly accepted the work provided by the Lord and was able with these funds to secure medical help for his son. George concluded the story by assuring us that his son was on the mend and that

his heart was filled with thanksgiving for the blessings of God's care. In the solitude of the darkness I wept at the gratitude of this man of God who knows more of pastoral hardship in his three or four years of ministry than I ever faced in 25 years of ministry. I sat in silent awe at one who, in hardship and in want, could only express gratitude and thanksgiving toward our God. This is the heart of true thanksgiving – gratitude not for the abundance of God's provision (as is often the case in America), but for the willingness of God to provide His promised care.

George lives with his family of 12 in a clay brick home built by his father that George himself was born in. The home is in great need of repair. The Ghana team has established a "George's Home Repair" project to raise funds for the purpose of restoring the home to safe accommodations. You can help by sending donations to ABWE Canada (address below) marked – "Ghana – Pastor George Home Project." ... **Africa Calls**



Pastor George & family before their home in Helekppe, Hasu district, Ghana

**Please pray with us...**

1. For effective teaching while in Africa. Our prayer is to labour in the Spirit's power to bring understanding to the pastors and equip them to teach their own people.
2. For travel safety – for Kathi as she travels to teach and minister in Ontario and for Earl as he travels in Ghana and Togo.
3. For wisdom as Earl labours with a team to put together a curriculum for the newly established African Baptist Theological Schools or ABTS with a goal to deliver theological education in the African countries of Ghana, Togo, Benin, The Gambia, Cameroon and Liberia. It is "Schools" because we envision a four-stage program, beginning with church Bible Institutes taught by pastors in local churches. The current Bible Institute will be upgraded to offer the equivalent of a high school diploma. A new Bible College will be started, which will offer a bachelor's degree. Finally, at some point down the road we plan to have a seminary level program to offer graduate degrees. We hope to have stages 2 and 3 operational within the next two years. This is going to require faith, finances, and work, but we believe it will strengthen churches throughout West Africa, and lead to a church planting movement that will cross international boundaries.
4. For our support requirements. Our desire is to have all our committed support completed by the end of 2006. If 4 churches or families would commit to \$50 per month our support needs would be met. Please pray for God's provision.
5. For Kathi as she continues to teach the junior and senior kindergarten classes at Muskoka Christian School.

**Present Itinerary for 2007:**

African Teaching Intinerery:	2007/Feb 15 - Mar 23
	2007/ May 24 – June 25
	2007/ Sept 6 – Oct 22
	2007/ Dec 27 – 08/Feb 12

We are just beginning to make contact with Canadian & American churches for ministry in 2007. If you are interested in having us share our ABWE "Son-rise in Africa" ministry, or be involved in a Mission Conference, or conduct a Bible Conference, please do not hesitate to contact us. *Our aim continues to be to build the body of Christ up in North America while sharing the ministry needs of the body of Christ in West Africa.*

**Air Miles Assistance**

*Thanks to air miles assistance we are close to gaining a free trip to West Africa. For those who have passed on your earned air miles to us, we thank you.* You can help our travel costs by using our Air Miles number. This is a practical way of supporting our ministry travel costs. We thank you for your consideration.

**Cooper Air Miles**

No.

**8006 178 1930**

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