



# ASANTE SANA! [THANKS MUCH!]

Bob and Jackie Braswell, Spring 2008

## *We came. We taught. They conquered.*

We started teaching BA-level courses at AGBC-Dodoma in August, 2005. We stepped in at a time when there seemed to be a sudden turnover of teachers and not enough teachers to cover all the classes. We were both qualified to teach (Bob: Ph.D. in Communication, MA in Education; Jackie: MA in Theological Studies) so we both pitched in. From that time until the end of 2007, between the two of us, we taught half the BA courses offered at AGBC.

By the end of 2007, we graduated two dozen new BA-holders, which approximately tripled the number of BA graduates from before we arrived. Among these, all but 2 are pastors. In addition, 8 are Bible School teachers, 6 have gone on to study at the master's level, 5 are sectional, district, or national leaders, and

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Due to time constraints and postage costs, we can send e-mail updates more often than print. To sign up to receive them, please write us at <bb@agmd.org>.

## *Prayer Requests*

Bob's sister, Melinda, needs healing from cancer.

Due to increased responsibilities as veterans and some loss of original support, Bob and Jackie need to raise \$2,600 per month before returning to Tanzania. Pray for favor and spiritual and financial success in our home assignment.



one is a missionary sent out from the TAG to an unreached people group.

The students' favorite course that Jackie taught was New Testament Greek. When AGBC students study the Bible in English, they are already studying it in a "foreign" language. It is not much of a stretch for them to learn another language in order to read the New Testament in the original, and there is a tremendous appetite for it among our students. It is also a qualification for many master's level courses.

The students' favorite course that Bob taught was Intro to Computers. Bob adapted the course to fit the reality of Africa, introducing students to a small library of public-domain Bible and Theology resources they took with them on CD and are able to use at any Internet Cafe or borrowed computer. The course also taught how to use the many resources on the Internet to make up for the chronic lack of books.

We thank God for what He has done, and for allowing us to be a part of it. We are also thankful to be able to report on this kind of a return on your investment. The churches and individuals who invested in our ministry will see a multiplication of ministry through these students.

We came back to the US at the end of 2007 and are now on home assignment. We expect and hope to return to AGBC to continue our teaching ministry in early 2009. We appeal to our supporters to stick with us, and to pastors and churches who have not supported us in the past to consider doing so in the future. It's a partnership, and we are grateful to the partners who have invested in us, and through us, these students. ☐



## *What we've been up to ...*

Although we sent some e-mail newsletters along the way, our last print newsletter was sent from Tanzania while we were fully involved in the daily life and challenges of Assemblies of God Bible College (AGBC-Dodoma). Since then, we have wrapped up our first 3½-year term in Africa with the launch of the new MA program at AGBC-Dodoma (story, page 4), followed quickly by graduation of the BA and Advanced Diploma students (related story, page 1). Then in December we packed all our belongings into storage and left Tanzania to return to the USA for home assignment.

*Home assignment* is alternatively referred to as *itineration* or *furlough*, and each of these ways of speaking emphasizes a valid part of what we are doing now.

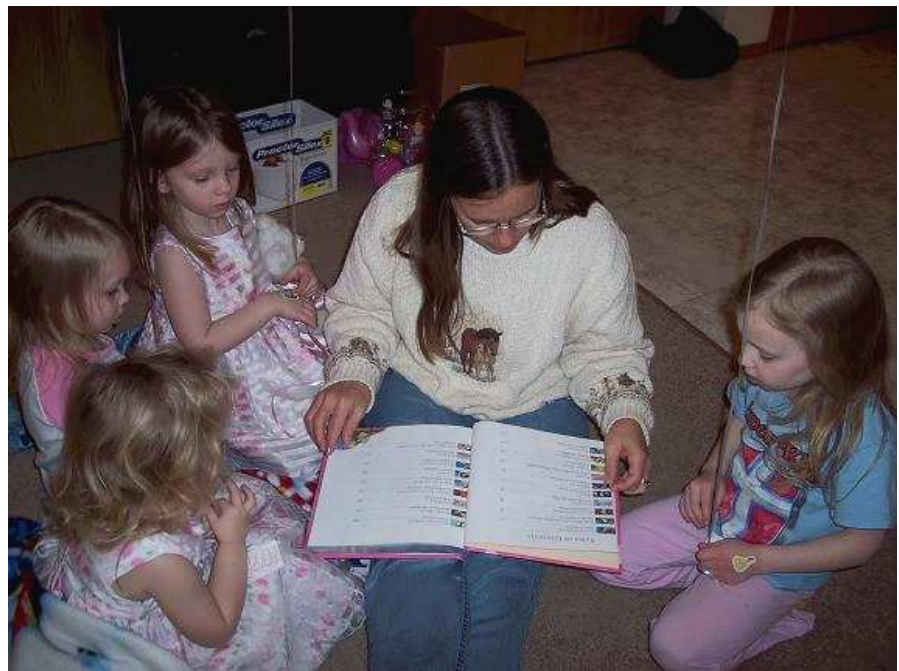
*Itineration* emphasizes our responsibility to travel and make ourselves accountable to the churches who sent us out and who continue to support our ministry. It also underlines our need to look for additional support for a second term (we plan to go back to AGBC-Dodoma to continue our work there).

*Furlough* emphasizes the aspect of rest and recovery, which was certainly necessary for us. Bob had been overtaxing himself until his immune system was weakened, and was sick with a combination of bronchitis and asthma that held on for the first months after landing back in the US (we praise the Lord he is now healthy and trying to stay that way).

We prefer the term *home assignment* because it emphasizes that this is an assignment, a required part of every Assemblies of God missionary's ministry, a part that God often uses to stir peoples' hearts for missions here in the USA. We are praying that God will use us to build his kingdom in this way in every AG church that will have us.

We arrived back in the USA in mid-December and started visiting churches almost immediately (though, due to the holidays, I think we only had one meeting that month). We had opportunity to celebrate the holidays with our loved ones, which we did in stages with all the parts of our extended family. We admire missionaries who say that the mission field is their home, but for us, as long as our kids and grandkids are in the USA, this is truly home assignment.

Between opportunities to be in AG churches, and the communication efforts that naturally go along with



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finding those opportunities, we have three priorities that are helping to shape our days.



The first is the devotional habit, spending time enjoying God every day through prayer and reading and meditating on Scripture. The second is exercise (45-60 minutes per day, 5-6 days per week): there is nothing like a long bout of illness to convince an otherwise distracted Type A personality that not much is accomplished without a healthy body to work with. The third is time with our grandchildren. As a couple we have committed to each other that we will not pass up an opportunity to baby-sit or spend time getting to know our grandkids and helping them to get to know us. One of the hardest parts of our first term was not seeing our grandchildren grow and knowing they would not remember us when we came home.

Especially hard

was not seeing our first grandson until he was 13 months old. Of course, all this is nothing compared to what the old time missionaries endured. It's good we weren't around then; we had all we could handle as it was.



It is a strange thing that all the above can be true, and at the same time, it's also true that we have already started wanting to go back. There are many challenges there but there is also a need that we know we can help to fill. We are grateful for the opportunity to go for a first term, and we are grateful for the many wonderful people who made it possible. We are grateful for this time on home assignment,

to visit with so many friends and loved ones and also to regain a big-picture perspective of what we want to do when we get back to Tanzania. We hope to see you while we are on home assignment! ☺



# *The New MA in Bible at AGBC-Dodoma*

Rev. Ranwell Mwenisongole, the General Superintendent of the Tanzania Assemblies of God, announced at the end of 2005 that the TAG would have an MA program in Biblical Studies operating at AGBC-Dodoma by 2007. This time frame was a challenge, especially to Bob, who was asked to accept much of the responsibility of preparing for and administering this new program in addition to his other responsibilities. At the same time, it was an opportunity to meet a real need: there was only one evangelical graduate program in Tanzania, operated by Lutherans, and it was not affordable or suitable for TAG pastors. Training teachers for the BA program had involved study outside the country (leaving their families behind). For the TAG, the MA represented an opportunity to grow their own Bible School teachers within



Our first MA class, together with Chuck and Bonnie Ness from Nairobi and Bob. The three missionaries pictured were the teaching team for the first block course offered at AGBC.

their own country and system of higher education.

Bob and a committee of TAG leaders were appointed to work with Global University, the East Africa Graduate Study Centre in Nairobi, and other AGWM missionaries involved in higher education in the region to put together an accredited study center in Dodoma. Because the first classes could not realistically start until October of 2007, we extended our time in Tanzania for 6 months (we were originally scheduled to be there for three years, ending in June of 2007).

After much work to coordinate accreditation requirements, textbooks, library and computer resources, classroom facilities, and visiting professors, the first class convened October 29, 2007. Chuck and Bonnie Ness, AGWM missionaries in Kenya, team-taught the first block course

Leaders involved at inauguration ceremonies for the new MA.

From left to right:  
Asst. Dir. of Education, Rev. Nyanda  
Missionary Bob Braswell  
Dir. of Education, Rev. Mwakimage  
Sec. of Ed. Dept., Rev. Mwakajwara  
Principal of AGBC, Rev. Ron Swai



Part of the preparation for the MA involved getting Internet access on campus, a process that took months to complete. Due to the expense, only a few simultaneous connections were possible. This picture shows 8 MA students sharing two connected PCs.



along with Bob, and Doug Lowenberg, also from Kenya, taught the second beginning November 8.

During the time of preparation, Bob made the mistake of taking too much on himself and was stressed out as a result—he felt like he was trying to herd cats. In retrospect, we see that God was at work in giving us favor and bringing everything together within the timeframe. We are grateful for a successful launch of the MA! ☺