

Thank-you for your prayer and support for the open-door God has provided for bible training pastors and future pastors; hopefully I can help you understand the importance of this work. This account will include a request for monies for my trip and for drilling a well.

Since 2016, I've been traveling about every other year to a country in Africa called Burkina Faso. The door opened because of a well-drilling ministry in that country called Myra's Wells <https://www.myraswells.org/>. After my trip to Burkina Faso (March 18-31), I'll be traveling to Madrid to speak at a Tri-church conference (April 1-10). The detour to Spain will be focused on encouraging these three churches at their annual conference and is unrelated to the work in Burkina Faso. This document is focused on the trip to Burkina Faso.

Whether a man lives in first-world conditions and has access to all the latest and greatest study material or if he lives in the bush of Africa and has only a bible and maybe a concordance... he is [still] called to "Rightly divide the Word of Truth" (2 Timothy 2:15), and "*study to show himself approved to God*" (2 Timothy 2:15), and to "*retain the standard of sound doctrine*" (2 Timothy 1:13). The biblical assumption is that the man has a bible and an intent to study and teach with clarity.

The bible is a book with loads of information... 66 books, written by 40 authors, on three continents, in three languages and over 1500 years on innumerable subjects. The pastor is called to keep it all in its biblical, historical, grammatical, and theological context!

One of the greatest challenges to the student of the Word of God is synthesizing all this information and understanding each passage in its context. In most formal biblical training programs, there's normally NOT a course that integrates systematic theology, biblical theology, bible exposition, and hermeneutics together. The course I teach seeks to do just that and normally takes between 15-24 hours and focuses on providing **four tools for the bible student**.

1. **Systematic Theology** (survey 1-2 hours of introduction) How to *think theologically*—as opposed to developing a rigid theological system which most bible students inherit from the denomination from which they are called.

- a. The advantage to this first tool is it does not matter what theological background the individual has; anyone, no matter that their theological background, can use and apply this tool as long as they revere the Scripture as God's infallible and authoritative Word.
2. **Biblical Covenants** (survey 1-2 hours of introduction)
 - a. A **survey of the six biblical covenants** that become the infrastructure of the Bible.
 - b. Understanding the key elements of these covenants is simple but essential understanding the plan and purposes of God as they develop in the progressive revelation of the Bible.
3. **The Plan of God** (12-15 hours normally about 80% of the class time) We study the Plan and Purposes of God starting from eternity past to eternity future <https://www.amazon.com/Panoramic-Study-Gods-Plan/dp/151276051X> During this time, we ***integrate and USE*** the first two tools and tie everything together. The study of the Plan of God certainly whets the appetite to continue reading through the whole bible because it provides context for the whole bible. I've put the Plan of God teaching into book form and it's been translated into several languages including the three primary languages spoken in Burkina Faso — French, Moore' and Gulimanchema (all three available for free download at: <https://www.gatewaybible.church/news/>)
4. **Read through the Bible** in a year (for life). Every bible student already has this tool. By reading through the bible regularly the bible student will have the platform to integrate the other three tools. While I don't have to teach this tool—I have to reiterate the importance throughout the class. Pastors usually need to be reminded of this because they get so busy in ministry, they can easily fall into the unfortunate habit of only studying for the messages they are preaching.

Those who benefit most from this class are those who have been studying the mass of detail of the scripture but may need help tying things together. That's where most of these bible students are; and they are privileged to be studying full-time in bible college, so time is hardly ever wasted.

These students are gifted and called; they are HUNGRY for bible training. They are entering into a spiritual combat zone where they know ultimately, could cost

their lives. As a rule, these men are godly, spiritually lean and hardy, mentally strong, undistracted, and disciplined; they *are all things Jesus Christ*, they do the work of evangelists.

The Pastoral standard in Burkina Faso is raised high...

The leadership in the Assembly of God and the Apostolic Mission Church denominations and their churches have a clear *vision*. They know they must raise up qualified men to carry the gospel and word of truth into the next generation. They have well-organized, completely indigenous bible schools and colleges that are growing and multiplying pastors ready for the next generation's spiritual battles.

Besides biblical training, the bible colleges train the men (and their wives) to be self-sustaining financially when they take or plant a church. The students grow their own food, providing for their own families during their three-year stint in school. The leadership of the Assembly of God can see the spiritual storm clouds on the horizon; they understand what's going on in a world run by the god of this age that is not friendly to the gospel. They know they are sending these men into a battle that could ultimately usher many into eternity as martyrs.

→ Gateway Bible Church has the HIGHEST privilege of helping them in this mission of preparation of the next generation ←

The following gives just a flavor of the ministry we are having in Burkina Faso.

My trip in January 2022:

While I stay in Burkina Faso, I am housed in the capitol city called Ouagadougou. The compound in Tangin Barage comprises a Large church, hospital, Elementary, Middle and High school. Below is a picture of one housing units I lived in. Clean well maintained and simple.



Week 1: Taught the above material in the mornings at the *Bible college of Gonse'* (about an hour outside of Ouagadougou in a very rural setting).

The director of the bible college in Gonse' is Andre' and his wife's name is Esther. The class at Gonse' has about 23 students. Very rural and rustic—more than any other I've been to. They had never had a foreigner teach in their bible college before. Their ears and eyes were wide open the entire time. There was an incredible amount of humility and hunger—very responsive. Andre' and the on-site professor from the Apostolic Mission church's college in Ouagadougou attended all classes.



As well as being the director of Gonse' bible college, Pastor Andre' pastors a church in a village close to Gonse'. He is an evangelist at heart and is always sharing his faith. As he drove us back and forth from Ouagadougou to Gonse' he took every opportunity to share Christ with the toll workers, people selling food/wares, the policemen etc. As we drove through the village where he pastored, he waves and greets everyone—like an elder of the village.

There are many Muslims in the village he pastors, and the gospel is having great impact.

There was an Islamic Imam in the class above who had converted and his whole family is now saved. What a blessing to teach a former Muslim about the riches of grace in Jesus Christ!

Muslim wives are forbidden by their husbands from going to church and there is often a “spy” hanging around the church to see which women are coming. The Muslim women asked pastor Andre' to build a high wall so they won't be seen. He did and some slip in unnoticed.

Andre' told me the story of one man who charged abruptly into a church service clearly upset and angry. He immediately turned around and went right back out.

Then moments later he came back in! Andre' candidly asked him if he had anything to say (It was all disconcerting and evident he was not there to worship—Andre' is like a Peter or Paul—a humble man, but always ready with an appropriate word). The man said, "I came in here to beat my wife for coming to church! When I entered to beat her, I could not because of the power of God was against me!" That man got saved on the spot. He and his whole family are actively involved in the church.

Another woman who lives next to the church is forbidden to go so they play the music and preaching loud so she can hear (and others). She listens in her own home.

The Muslim men threaten to divorce their wives and take the children. So, the women are afraid to be seen coming. But they still come and Pastor Andre' has special times and meetings to accommodate them. They are being secretly baptized.

A neighbor who lives next door to the church had a father who was murdered by the terrorists in the north of Burkina Faso. So, the son was converted shortly after his father's death and is now active in the church and walking with the Lord.

After I taught in Gonse' we would drive back to Ouagadougou, and I would teach from 6:00-8:30 in another bible college of the Apostolic Mission Church. This class had about 65 students (men and woman). The students work during the day and come to class after a full day's work. They were all completely engaged even though tired. The pastor of the church is Filemay (sp?). He graduated with an MDiv from Reformed seminary in Louisiana. His wife is a PhD in economics and has a job with the government in Ouagadougou. Again, the response was excellent. Pastor Filemay said he's never heard teaching like this and always wondered about the fall of Lucifer, God's plan of the ages, prophecy, and the lack of eschatology taught even at the seminary level. He arranged a meeting with the president of the Apostolic Mission denomination with the intention of having a pastor's conference early 2023. We will conduct this conference for the first week, March 22-25. Filemay is a visionary and, has one of the largest churches in this denomination so pray for him. He was very enthusiastic about the training and carries a huge weight of responsibility in his church and denomination.

Second Week:



Oholiab Class: This is a bible college run by the Assembly of God church in Ouagadougou (Tangin Barage) a very large church that runs a primary and high school of over 2000 children (Michelle Bonkongou, an associate pastor in the church, and my host). The church also sponsors *Oholiab Bible College*. The class had about 50 students (pic). Similar to the evening class at the Apostolic Mission, the students all work during the day and come to class after a full day's work. They completely engaged the class and material in spite of being visibly worn down. It was short class we met for total of 12 hours. Even with short amount of time there was a great response, and we were able to get most all the information in. The Administrator's name is Mathias a super sharp guy, a great leader.

Koubri Bible College with my interpreter Joel:



(This is the bible College that needs a well)

This would be the third time I've taught at this bible college, first in 2020. The class in January had about 105 third-year students with about 12 women. Koubri is the largest bible college in Burkina Faso. There are 320 students in the bible college with wives and children and staff there are over 1000 people living on the 40-acre compound. The facility is immaculate by Burkina Faso Standards. Dr.

Jepthi the superintendent (now also serving as the VP of the Assemblies of God in Burkina Faso) does an outstanding job and the school is running very efficiently and is immaculate by Burkina Faso standards. They've built several buildings since I was there 2 and 4 years ago and was expanding the chapel while I was there (the students do the construction work). The spiritual life of the bible college is genuine, vibrant, enthusiastic. You can see it—especially in chapel (run entirely by the students). I attended chapel all week and witnessed prayer, worship, and the messages from the 3rd year students—so refreshing. Dr. Jepthi seemed relaxed, and it seemed that everything was very intentional and structured and seemed like it could run smoothly without him (the mark of a great leader). While I was there, they were actively working on at least three construction projects. A very impressive campus and ministry.

I was most impressed with the class's response to the teaching. **Koubri Bible College was probably the most positive experience I've ever had in 30 years of pastoral training overseas.** The first day I noticed the students all putting their cell phones up front to record the class. The second day we moved to larger auditorium. They took copious notes. There was never enough time for Q & A.

The third day I passed out the *Plan of God* booklets after class and only had about 50 French booklets and there were 105 students (½ fluent in French and ½ fluent in Moore'). There was a quick scuffle, and the books were grabbed up with some attitudes flying. I found out the next day they had to recollect all the books and redistribute them to the French readers. The books are translated into French, Moore' and Gumanche' and the material can be downloaded free from Gateway's website—but they wanted hard copies. *Koubri Bible College* is the largest Moore' bible training facility in Burkina. When I saw the intensity of the men grabbing the books, I felt like I was witnessing men *taking the kingdom of God by force*. The hunger, the humility, the “poverty of spirit” (in the truest sense) is incredibly encouraging!

The believers in Burkina are HOT spiritually. Hot to soak it in and Hot to really understand. The faith, leadership, organization, vision, and strategy of Pastor Michelle Ouedraogo (Previous AG president), Dr. Etienne Zongo (AG president Burkina), Pastor Filimay (Leader in the Apostolic Mission denomination), Pastor Andre' (Dir., Gonse' bible college), Dr. Jepthi Sawadogo (AG VP and President of

Koubri Bible College), Pastor Michelle Bonkougou (Assoc. Pastor Tangin Barage AG Church and Spt., Tangin Barage school) and so many other men and women of God is very encouraging. God is preparing the next generation for ministry in Burkina Faso. In the face of much adversity, the Assembly of God churches are not dependent on the west for ministry—all by the Grace of God!

The general attitude of the BKF people is humble, very friendly, quick to smile, quick to greet, hospitable... this is pervasive throughout the land. The Christians combined with this culture of humility are a tremendous blessing to work with.

Two significant issues facing Burkina Faso:

1) Islamic influence in Burkina Faso:

Islam has always had an influence in Burkina Faso. Historically the Muslim and Christian cultures have lived relatively peacefully together in Burkina Faso. However, terrorist activity spawned by radicalized elements of Islam coming from neighboring Mali (North and Northwestern border) and Niger (Eastern border) is having a negative impact over the past 8-10 years. This terrorist activity and influence has all the characteristics of the devil himself: pharisaic attitude, bullying, violence, arrogance, self-righteousness, false humility, all “goodness” and “God-fearing(ness)” to be seen by others. Islam in its more radicalized sense and practice is a religious Mafia. In the villages of Burkina Faso most everyone knows everyone (Muslim and Christian), so the hypocrisy among the radicalized Islamic elements influenced by the outside is quickly evident and divisive.

However, saying these things there is a culture in Burkina Faso of kindness. That kindness seems to pervade the Christian and Muslim relationships. The Christians are not afraid to approach the Muslims with the gospel and the gospel is moving forward, *NOT retreating*.

2) Huge displacement issue in Burkina Faso:

The displacement issue is in the North and moving South and is driven by terrorism that’s largely fueled by these terrorist organizations outside Burkina Faso in Niger and Mali. The local Muslim populace of the villages are typically *not* directly involved in the terrorist activities. The local Muslim populace while affected by the terrorism, are not directly targeted; it’s the Christians and non-Muslims are the ones directly threatened. The people are told to speak Arabic or

quote the Quran or make some statement of faith in Allah. The Christians refuse and are subsequently driven out. The persecution of the Christians in these areas is blatant and intentional, some are killed. Typically, pastors in the local churches and male teachers in the local schools are targeted because of their influence. If the male teachers leave the school closes. If the pastors leave, the church closes. These villages are losing their spiritual, moral, and educational infrastructure. The demographic problem is huge because the villages are simply losing their populations. The populations are moving to the big cities, and this is causing great infrastructure hardship in the larger cities in the south of Burkina. Ouagadougou, the Capitol city has undergone huge changes because of the influx of refugees. The problem will only get worse since the French government is not helping to eliminate the terrorists.

In my opinion the greatest thing we could do as a church is to come along side our brothers and sisters in Burkina Faso with this type of bible training. Gateway Bible Church has had a substantial ministry to an already very organized and intentional bible training ministry in this country. In addition to supporting me in the pastoral training, I believe we could help in a lasting and tangible way by drilling a well.

Koubri Bible College needs a well drilled on the grounds. The forty-acre campus and compound houses 1000 people (over 300 students who live on site, most are married with children along with the staff and their families). There are not enough wells to service 1000 people sufficiently and still meet the agricultural needs. The new well would provide their agricultural needs complete with a 7,000-gallon tank. In the Assembly of God Bible colleges, each family is self-supporting from their own plot of land on the compound apportioned to them. The food feeds that family but is also sold at local markets. Monies raised are used for expenses during their three-year stay at the bible college. So a well would actually not only be providing water, but ultimately food, clothing and supplies for all who live on the compound.

I would love for our church to sponsor a well on this site. *Koubri Bible College* is the largest bible college in Burkina Faso. An additional well would be a huge blessing to the school; and for us, it would mean a significant share in the blessing of the Gospel as this school trains and sends pastors throughout Burkina Faso.

The most precious commodity the people of Burkina Faso is the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the Word of God. Just as in the West, the future of the country lies not in the economy or political environment, but in the health of the church of Jesus Christ. The church of Jesus Christ is strong, vigorous, and growing in Burkina Faso.

I am humbled and honored to have this opportunity to serve the Church of Jesus Christ by training men to help them study and minister the Word of God.

Paul exhorts the Colossian believers, “Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with *an attitude of* thanksgiving; praying at the same time for us as well, that

God may open up to us a door for the word, so that we may speak forth the mystery of Christ, for which I have also been imprisoned; in order that I may make it clear in the way I ought to speak. (Colossians 4:2-4)

God has opened a door for the word and your prayer is vital.

Financial needs for Burkina trip March 17th through April 10th, 2023

Flight US to Africa to Spain then back to US	3,973
Cash for all expenses, travel in Burkina, interpreter, food, lodging etc. (All expenses for food, travel and lodging in Spain is provided by churches in Spain)	2,900
Additional Monies to sponsor a well at Koubri Bible College (We already have \$2,000 the well costs \$7,000)	5,000
Total: (including the well)	11,873

<u>Financial Breakdown for BKF Trip January 2022:</u>	(2022) ^{compared to} (2023)	
• Ticket Delta/Air France TPA → OUA → TPA	\$1,795	3,973 (addl. Flt. to Spain incl.)
• Cash for all expenses	\$2,500	2,900 (400 added for

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| | | projected
increases) |
| • Total cost for the trip | \$4,295 | 6,873 |

The following is simply an account of how the money was spent last year (Jan. 2022) while I was in country.

Breakdown of \$2,500 used in 2022:

Date Amount spent Purpose

Date	Amount total \$2,500	Purpose
1/5/22	100	Diesel Pastor Andre' driving to and from Gonse' bible college 1 st week (travel)
1/7/22	100	Gift to Andre' for all the driving and care for first week
1/7/22	100 (from Jay Wilks—\$ not from church) Jay asked that it be given to someone at my discretion.	Given to Andre' to give to a bible student in the bible college or to someone in his church that he thought would need it most. (Gift)
1/9/22	100	Given to a woman who rear-ended our truck in Ouagadougou on her moped. She was shaken up pretty bad but was not injured. Her <i>OLD</i> moped was still working but front was busted up. Grace and blessing. (Misc./Gift)
1/12/22	50	Covid Test (24 hr.) PCR 1 st one (Misc.)
1/12/22	50	Misc. cash into CFA: about 35,000 CFA 10,000 CFA about \$18 given to driver from Koubri) 11,000 CFA to taxi driver first time at airport running around to get test results from medical clinic. (Misc.)
1/14/22	1,100	Interpreter (Joel). He charges \$80 per day; I paid him \$95 per day

1/14/22	100	Gift to Koubri Bible College for drivers from Koubri → to Oua. all week 2 nd week (about 40 miles one way). (Travel)
1/15/22	200	Michelle and Christine (drivers for the whole trip all kinds of things. Local trips to local teaching, airport, covid tests, etc. (Travel)
1/15/22	300	Room @ \$20 dollars a day (1/1-1/15) I ended up staying two extra days which they included.
1/15/22	200	Food the whole trip (1/1-1/17) Lunch and Dinner along with a supply of Bread and bottled water each day. About \$5 per meal.
1/16/22	100	Offering to small church in Sunday offering. Region of Saavah in S.W. Ouagadougou. (Gift)
1/16/22	100	Cash changed to CFA: 12,000 (\$20+ for Antigen test (2 nd Covid test)) 16,000 (\$25+ to Taxi driver Joseph 2 nd day at Airport health clinic and home) 25,000 (\$50 PCR test 3 rd Covid test). (Misc.)
	\$10	The final \$10 I had left over and when one of the drivers dropped me off at the airport. His name was Whatereo'. He never really said a word... just did his job with impeccable responsibility and humility. (Travel) What was supplied was exactly what was needed—to the penny.