

# Evangelism Training



Come join us at Skyway Hills Church of Christ for evangelism training from some of those God has blessed in the field. It's a daylong seminar to help you and your congregation grow.

Trainers include Doc Turk, who leads campaigns to west Africa and works with African evangelist John Morkli. In the most recent campaign, 3,400 souls were brought to Christ, and 50 new churches were planted. We give glory to God for this great harvest.

Through this course, you'll learn a simple, godly approach to share the gospel in less than five minutes. It's an approach that is working not only in Africa, but also in the U.S., where churches are now seeing regular baptisms, bringing yet more glory to God.

Evangelism training starts at 9 a.m. Saturday, Jan. 28, at Skyway (3800 Highway 80, Pearl MS 39208) and ends at 5 p.m. A free lunch will be provided, but you'll need to RSVP to [toknowhim@skywayhills.com](mailto:toknowhim@skywayhills.com) to attend. Read this Christian Chronicle that follows to learn more about God's amazing work in west Africa.





JERRY MITCHELL

A girl carries her baby sister across a cattle field near the West African village of Koumassi, Togo.

## ‘The Gospel is for the poor’

**DESIRE TO FULFILL** the Great Commission drives a minister in West Africa’s fertile fields.

BY JERRY MITCHELL | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

### DZODZE, Ghana

John Morkli has a dream. “The vision is to get a movement to send the Gospel to every corner of Ghana and Togo,” said the 49-year-old preacher and businessman. “I’m trumpeting what Jesus said, ‘Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and teaching them to observe all things I have commanded you.’”

He gives God the glory for what

has happened here.

Three decades ago, the first Church of Christ opened its doors in this town of less than 20,000, a few hours northeast of Ghana’s coastal capital, Accra. Today, Greater Dzodze has expanded to more than 30 congregations with an estimated 5,000 members.

And this community is far from alone. Churches of Christ are springing up across this part of West Africa. Last year, a 10-day campaign in northern Togo led to 2,800 baptisms. February’s campaign was no less breathtaking with 1,537

baptisms and 47 new churches.

New churches continue to rise in these fertile fields, despite no preachers and no facilities in many places, said Keith Johnson, Africa coordinator for World Bible Institute. “The work in Africa is growing faster than anywhere else.”

Ghana-Togo Mission has planted and aided more than 250 congregations in Ghana and 150 in Togo by building each a frame with a tin roof to block the summer heat and to keep members dry during Africa’s rainy season.

See **WEST AFRICA**, Page 16

## In Nashville, five churches come together

**AT SUNDAY NIGHT** gatherings dubbed ‘Greater Together,’ Christians worship and enjoy fellowship meals.

BY BOBBY ROSS JR. | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

Aaron Tremblay, now a minister in the Nashville, Tenn., area, preached for 10 years for the 75-member Leominster Church of Christ in Massachusetts.

In Tremblay’s native New England, congregations tend to be small and isolated, the 37-year-old minister noted.

“But what helps them continue on, even though in some cases the churches are only 25 or 30 people, is that they stay connected,” he said. “That’s the only way they survive.”

It’s different in Tennessee: Hundreds of Churches of Christ — often with 300, 500 or even 1,500 members — encompass the Nashville area.

Historically, those congregations compete for members and attention, Tremblay and other preachers told *The Christian Chronicle*.

But as overall attendance numbers shrink in Music City — and across the United States — the ministers see a profound need for Christians to come together.

To that end, five Nashville-area congregations — including the church where Tremblay preaches — organized a special series this summer dubbed “Greater Together.”

See **NASHVILLE**, Page 8



RABEEH ELASSAL, BLUE LAHLIA PHOTOGRAPHY

Christopher Jackson, left, and Aaron Tremblay at the Smyrna Church of Christ.



# WEST AFRICA: Fields are ripe for disciple makers

FROM PAGE 1

When Johnson left his native South Africa in 1985, he was told the continent would be sending missionaries to America in the next 50 years, he said.

He shook his head. "It's already happening."

As for why the Gospel is spreading faster in Africa than elsewhere, Morkli explained, "The Gospel is for the poor."

And when the poor become disciples of Christ, they are eager to help others just like them, he said. "When people are rich, they say they don't have the time."

## 'STORING UP ... TREASURES IN HEAVEN'

Morkli pointed to a neighborhood. Many homes here are built with unfinished concrete blocks. Most have tin roofs, while some have only thatched roofs. None have clean water.

To get water to drink, people must walk miles to a creek, which they share with the animals.

"People have nothing here, so they're not thinking, 'I'm leaving my things behind,'" Morkli said. "Instead, they're thinking of storing up their treasures in heaven."

Doc Turk, a servant at the Pine Tree Church of Christ in Longview, Texas, who oversees Ghana-Togo Mission, works closely with Morkli.

"If there's a Paul in this century, it's John," Turk said. "He never stops. He's the greatest disciple maker I've ever seen."



A man is baptized in a pond after a roadside revival in Dzodze, Ghana.

So far, the mission has built six preaching schools in Togo and two in Ghana. "We need to quickly train men to take care of these churches," Turk said. "We've probably got 100 preachers in training in Togo, and we've already graduated five or six classes in Togo."

Last year, he said, Ghana-Togo Mission received a little over \$700,000 in donations, with unwavering support from 11 churches across Texas, Louisiana and Arkansas. Every penny supported church planting, disciple training, preaching schools, church construction and local preachers, because there is no overhead, he said.

On the U.S. side, "we are all self-funded," said the former industrial sales and oil field manager. "I retired early so I could do this full time."

The mission work goes forward, depending on the Lord to provide, he said. "We stay at a zero balance and pray for what is needed next."

Decades ago, he and his wife began spending their vacations on short-term missions. He swore he would never go to Africa, but God had other plans, he said.

He promised missionary Ben Fulks he would join him. That once-a-year trip to Ghana turned into three trips, and Fulks eventually asked him to

become his replacement.

"I'm kind of like Moses," Turk said. "I don't bring much to the table, but the least qualified is the one whom God seems to do the most with."

In Togo, there is a race for souls, because many are coming out of animism and idol worship, he said. "They haven't heard anything and are unreached. They're wide open to the Gospel."

The people there embrace the Gospel easily, because they "have a childlike faith," he said. "They live a simplistic life. If they eat a decent meal a day, they consider themselves blessed."

And when they hear that Jesus died for their sins, flocks of people become disciples, he said. "God is doing big things. I'm hanging on for the ride."

## DEMAND FOR PREACHING SCHOOLS

Johnson said construction of preaching schools across Africa is struggling to keep up with the intense demand.

"At present we work with Bible schools in Ghana, Togo, Kenya, North Cameroon and Zambia," he said. "We are also working on potential schools in South Africa in four different provinces: Zambia, Mozambique, Malawi, Zimbabwe and Botswana."

World Bible Institute, which seeks to develop preaching schools and mission efforts that are indigenous and self-supporting, is providing the

curricula to all the schools, which are teaching many new Christians.

"We want to work alongside fellow servants of Jesus," said Johnson, a longtime youth minister turned preacher. "We're not telling people what to do."

He felt compelled to get involved in the work in Africa because he was born, along with nine brothers and sisters, in Port Elizabeth, South Africa, he said. "I couldn't forget where I came from."

World Bible Institute — directed by Chancellor J.J. Turner and the elders of the McDonough Church of Christ in Georgia — works with "preaching schools all over the world," Johnson said, "but my concentration is in Africa."

The institute's president, David Hamrick, recruited Johnson in 2018.

For the past several years, he has traveled across the continent, "spending time getting to know languages, customs and people," he said. "Just recently, I made a

sweep through South Africa, Botswana and Lesotho to check on locations to start preaching schools."

The support of individuals and churches has made this work possible, he said. "We want to thank them for making a difference in Africa."



Johnson

## TAKING A STEP IN FAITH

Dzodze Bedzeme Church of Christ, where Morkli is the preacher, is renting a roofed space that seats no more than 160. The rest of the more than 300 who attend each Sunday must sit or stand outside. Recently, the attendance spiked to 400.

The congregation is hoping to buy a now-closed motel for \$48,000. The Ore City Church of Christ in Texas has already donated \$15,000 toward the purchase.

"It's a better location and could seat 500," Morkli said.

Through individual donors, Ghana-Togo Mission built the nonprofit Dzodze Ghana Mission Clinic, whose motto is "We treat. God heals." The facility treats about 25,000 Ghanaians a year. Any profit from the clinic is



Students rejoice over the water well at Grace International Christian School.



Morkli



used to help keep the mission afloat. “Most of our church members are poor, so this clinic takes care of them,” Morkli said.

Medical care is free for preachers and their families, he said. “We are also supporting some preachers.”

Clinic Administrator Mac Thompson Gbeti said they are praying they can turn the clinic into the full-fledged hospital that the area desperately needs.

“If pregnant women have complications, we would have a surgical unit,” he said. “Now we have to refer them to another hospital, which means they have to be carried on a motorbike.”

That has led to fatal outcomes in the past, he said. “A woman delivered on the clinic grounds the other day.”



Gbeti

About \$7,000 in donations from a private donor enabled the construction of the clinic’s operating room.

And Morkli took a step in faith, borrowed money and began to purchase the equipment needed: an anesthesia machine, patient monitor, surgical equipment, lighting and a large generator, so there will be no power outages.

The total price tag: \$53,000.

If the clinic can become a hospital, it would make it possible to treat more patients, Gbeti said. “We already have 50 beds donated.”

Preaching schools aid people with needs, too. Gladstone Agbesi, director of the preaching school at Atkpeme, Togo, said the school spends about \$400 a month to feed 40 children in the community.

“Sometimes you see people showing up, and they need help for the children,” he said. “They have children come to church without parents, so when we check, we find out they are orphans. A number are HIV-positive, and we buy medication for them.”

## SEEING THE BLESSING IN LOST SIGHT

When Morkli was 8, he worked in his family’s store. After a customer bought a cigarette, he asked Morkli to light it for him.

The boy opened the wooden stove. “When I bent over, something exploded into my eye,” he recalled. “I was totally blind.”



The Anie Church of Christ meets in a village in rural Togo.

He received little medical care. Although his sight eventually returned, his eyes remained damaged.

From the start in high school, he excelled in business and math, scoring high among his 2,000 peers. But by his junior year, his eye problems worsened, and his grades suffered.

He now believes that was a blessing. “I would not have gone to Bible college,” he said. “I consider that incident as grace.”

In 1997, he heard the gospel message through World Bible School, a Texas-based online Bible course, and was baptized. The Holy Spirit set him on fire for God’s kingdom,



PHOTOS PROVIDED BY JERRY MITCHELL

A woman slices fresh mangoes to sell to people in Ehi, Ghana.

he said. “I had the zeal and decided to go to Bible college.”

In 1998, Morkli began attending preaching school in nearby Ho, along with Gbeti and Gladstone Dordunu. The trio were such constant companions they became known as “The Three Musketeers.”

After graduating four years later, Morkli helped start three congregations. Then he returned to his native Dzodze, where he helped start the Dzodze Ablorme Church of Christ.

“We started with prayers and five or six people,” he said. “By one year, our attendance was 50 or 60. After another year, our attendance grew to 200.”

Today, 700 attend the congregation. The Ore City church donated money to help build a permanent meeting place. Soon, Sunday school classes were filled with 100 children.

Morkli said he thought, “Why not start training our own children so they can be of the Christian faith?”

Grace Christian International School started in 2008 with a handful of students. Today, the school’s attendance tops 400 and continues to grow.

Earlier this year, donations funded a new water well, enabling students to drink clean water and saving Grace the thousands of dollars it had spent on bottled water.

The dirt road leading to Grace continues to flood and erode. “Sometimes the rainwater is entering the classes,” Morkli said.

The school, which is hoping to add a computer lab, will soon house

a missionary college in honor of Fuls, who oversaw the Ghana-Togo Mission for decades before retiring.

## HE CHOSE TO SERVE THE LORD

Each week, Morkli and his team, sometimes joined by American missionaries, travel to different parts of Ghana and Togo, checking on churches, encouraging leaders and teaching at preaching schools.

Wherever possible, they share the Gospel as Morkli did to 1,000 people gathered for a funeral. “When you invite people to gospel meetings, they will not come,” he said, “but when you invite them to funerals, they will. You take advantage to preach the Gospel.”

The team puts benevolence at the heart of its mission, aiding widows and providing food and clothing to the poor.

“I see it as just preaching the Gospel,” Morkli said. “As I began to preach, my mind began to open to many things.”

That’s how the clinic began. The church bought the land for burial grounds, but Morkli saw other uses for the property.

“I knew this location would be good for a health facility,” he said.

When some church leaders hesitated, Morkli continued to encourage. He paid for the first cement out of his pocket, and the clinic opened in 2015 with support from contractor and missionary Ray Franks, who also bought the property and contributed to the construction of the Abor Church of Christ building.

Ghana-Togo Mission remains the backbone for their work, Morkli said. “My ambition over the next 10 years is to make sure the work is self-supporting and not dependent on the U.S. for our activities.”

Johnson marvels at the work here for God’s kingdom.

“John is a talented businessman who could be earning more than \$100,000 a year, but he has chosen to serve the Lord.”

**JERRY MITCHELL** is a journalist and author who joined Keith Johnson the last two summers on mission trips in Ghana and Togo. He teaches and preaches at the Skyway Hills Church of Christ in Pearl, Miss. His book, “Race Against Time,” is now available in audio and paperback.

**SUPPORT** may be sent to Ghana Mission, c/o Doc Turk, 560 Oakwood Drive, Kilgore, TX 75662. Donate online at [worldbibleinstitute.com](http://worldbibleinstitute.com).