



Caroline and Dick Seed

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Location: South Africa



What we do: Training Bible teachers in key theological institutions across the African continent and beyond



Bringing hope where people have given up on God and the church

Dear friends,

This is our first letter under the strapline, “Working with CMS to bring hope to those who have given up on God and the church.” In this issue, we reflect on the work to which the Lord has called us: to train effective Bible teachers for a globalised world.

This reflection comes at Christmas, the time when the Church remembers God’s gracious sending of the Messiah into the world to live, die and rise again, to redeem the lost and bring hope of eternal life. It is the message which the Bible teachers have received, yet sometimes struggle to hold onto under the pressures of secular agendas, internal conflicts and all kinds of external disasters. Through 2 Corinthians 4:1-18, we reflect on Paul’s encouragement of ministers of the gospel, drawing on examples from our work during 2024.

We do not lose heart (2 Corinthians 4:1-18)

Theological education is tough. There are many problems. Teachers can easily become disheartened. But we must remember that God has called us to the task. In this passage, Paul encourages us not to lose heart, because we are made sufficient by God.

We have this ministry by God’s mercy (4:1)

The apostles have the ministry of proclaiming the gospel and teaching Christ through God’s mercy to them. Teaching is given by God as a gift to the Church, even though the Church does not always understand it. This enables us to have confidence in God’s call and equipping for the ministry. As Paul says, “our competence comes from God” (2 Corinthians 3:5). He makes us sufficient for the task. We were reminded of this in March as we visited one our first graduates, Canon George, at Msalato Theological College in Tanzania. Since completing his training with us in 2021, George has gone on to train lecturers in another five colleges.

We have confidence in God’s Word (4:2)

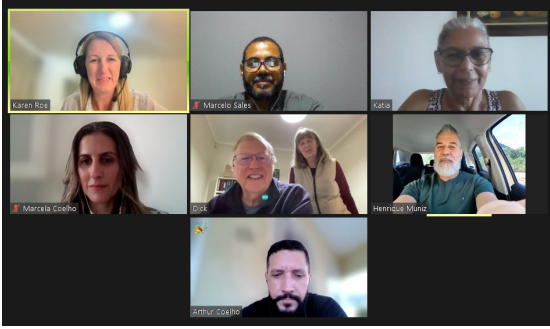
The confidence of the theological educator is in the Word of God. We do not follow the world into twisting and distorting the message to suit the world’s deceitful purposes. Instead, we seek to interpret the Word plainly in a way that is faithful. At the beginning of 2024 we completed training online with a group of Bible teachers from northern Brazil who have made a stand for Jesus by refusing to be pressurised into turning away from God’s Word. It was a privilege to experience their passion for Jesus as we taught them to teach and encouraged them in the task of growing the church in their region.



With Canon George in Tanzania

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churchmissionsociety.org/seed

With Jesus
With each other
To the edges



We see the world through the lens of Christ (4:3-6)

Many in the world do not understand the gospel, even though they may have heard something of the good news. Paul says, “The god of this world has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.” This was brought home to Caroline in September when she went to Indonesia to encourage the Evangelical colleges to keep their research and writing biblical. The Christian church there is small and under pressure from other religions. Yet, they shone with the light of the “knowledge of God’s glory displayed in the face of Christ.”

We rely on God’s grace in all our difficulties (4:7-15)

Paul says that we have the treasure of ministry in “jars of clay” so that despite all our difficulties, it can be seen that the grace and power of God is at work. The Christian Leaders’ Training College in Papua New Guinea struggles with many difficulties such as poor transport, little electricity and internet and financial hardship. Yet, their excitement at being trained to teach in the Bible colleges across the Pacific region was palpable. God’s grace was clearly at work in their lives.

We encourage one another towards eternal glory (4:16-18)

Paul ends the chapter with a resounding conclusion: “Therefore we do not lose heart.” Although the work of the Bible teacher is filled with difficulty in this world, the troubles are but “light and momentary” in comparison with the eternal glory that awaits us in Christ. In September, Dick had the privilege of participating in the Fourth Lausanne Congress in Seoul, where he learned first-hand of the struggles but also the joys and hopes of ministers and teachers in the persecuted churches across the world.

Bible college teachers are under pressure to conform to the philosophies of the world. They struggle to cope with all kinds of difficulties and discouragements. They are sometimes tempted to give up on God. But we are all encouraged not to lose heart, knowing that God has called us by his mercy and holds us by his grace in the knowledge of Jesus Christ. We are made sufficient for the work of ministry by God.

Dick and I do this work by the grace of God, as you help us with your prayers. Over the next three months, please pray for:

- ▶ registration of the new postgraduate diploma,
- ▶ integration of faith and learning workshop in Uganda,
- ▶ the ICETE theological education conference in Albania,
- ▶ the Africa Mile Deep Strategy meeting in Rwanda.

May the Lord bless you richly over the festive season.

In Christ,

Caroline and Dick Seed



Photos from top to bottom: Training Bible teachers in Brazil; biblical research in Indonesia; training in Papua New Guinea; Korean Christians at the Lausanne Congress



▶ Bringing hope where people have given up on God and church

We’ve loved hearing recent mission stories from others in our area of work.

Jonathan in Ecuador has grown spiritually and got his first job as he’s gained life skills, and a Breakfast Club in Hull celebrated 25 years of food, community and steps of faith.

Read more at churchmissionsociety.org/bringhope

Please note that opinions expressed in updates are those of mission partners, not necessarily of Church Mission Society.

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