



## **Bangui Evangelical School of Theology (BEST), Central African Republic Highlights from 2009-2010**

**Programs Offered:** School of the Bible and the Advancement of Women; Bachelor's in Bible translation; Bachelor's in Theology; Master's in Research (includes tracks in Old Testament, New Testament, systematic theology and missiology with a specialization for those ministering in Muslim contexts); Master's in Leadership and Christian Management; Doctoral program in Systematic Theology; and will be adding Old Testament and New Testament as fields of study in the Doctoral program in the coming year.



**Graduation:** On July 31, 46 people completed their studies and training at BEST: 8 Bachelor in Theology; 15 Master in Old Testament, New Testament, Systematic Theology and Missiology; 14 Master in Leadership and Organizational Management; and 9 from the Women's school. To date, nearly 700 people have graduated from the school. These students represent the following countries where they will return and serve: Angola, Benin, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kenya and Madagascar.

**Practical Ministry:** The staff and students of BEST work to build the Church and its leaders through several different avenues:

- Preaching, teaching, seminars, conferences and retreats are held to strengthen current and future leaders in the local church.
- Monthly meetings with other theological institutions are improving educational standards.
- Staff and students teach at other theological schools in Bangui.
- The school has opened its doors so that churches can meet on campus without fear.
- A group of students is actively engaged in prayer for Muslims.
- Students with Muslim backgrounds are involved in outreach to Muslims.
- The kindergarten and primary school on campus are known as safe places where parents can send their children to school.



- One alumni working in Senegal was appointed as the regional director for World Vision. He is heading up a children's program.
- *Pastor Bennet ZAZA* and his wife run an orphanage for children of HIV/AIDS victims.

**New Programs:** BEST plans to launch a program in the area of economic development based on biblical principles. Poverty is an obstacle to the spread of the Gospel in African society, and pastors must be equipped to address the physical needs of a community. The aim of the new program is to educate people and encourage entrepreneurship. Christians opening small businesses will create new jobs, giving a hand-up in the attempt to overcome poverty. The program coordinator also plans to open the English Language Institute, which will be used as a laboratory for the program.

**BEST Scholarships:** The scholarship program was started several years ago and helps students who are sent by their churches for training but do not have enough money to cover all of the costs associated with studies. Funds were used to pay for tuition, books, housing and utilities. Churches that send students are responsible for providing living expenses for students and their families.



**Student Focus:** *Frederic Razafimaharo* is a third year theology student from Madagascar who is married with three children. He and his family have carried heavy burdens this year. Financial support has diminished due to unstable political and socioeconomic crises in their home country. Battles with typhoid and malaria were extended because of lack of funds for medical care. After his mother passed away in May 2010, he was not able to participate in her burial because of the lack of finances. Although he and his family have had financial struggles, they are able to sing praises to the Lord for all His provisions. He is able to see that God is teaching him as well as building his faith through adversity. He plans to teach in a theological seminary in Madagascar upon graduation.