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# The Lighthouse

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## MISSION WORK REPORT – BENIN

### SHORT HOLIDAY IN ACCRA

My wife Joyce had been in Accra for almost 6 weeks for several activities. I joined her and we spent two weeks together before coming back. For me it was for a short rest. Whenever we leave Cotonou and get to Accra, "Joyce keeps saying to me how come I have time for us but not the same when we are in Cotonou?" For such short periods, I do have time to think for and about myself, which is not always the case in Cotonou. There is so much to do every day to keep this gigantic machine we have created which keeps asking to be fed and maintained running. Apart from the administration and teaching at BTC, there is the care of the churches. Then there are the members who come with every kind of personal problems that they think I can help solve. In all, I just keep doing my best and thank Joyce for her support.

### ACTIVITIES IN COTONOU

I spent the two weekends of February 24 and March 2<sup>nd</sup> worshipping and teaching in the 2<sup>nd</sup> congregation we have in Akpakpa. This congregation joined the breakaway group that adopted the one cup in the services. I managed to stabilize this group and win their confidence back. They were first of all ashamed because they way they treated me in 2006. Brother Joseph, who works with us in the office and teaches at BTC, is assigned to these brethren as their preacher. He drives the 25 miles on his bike to meet with them two times a week.

I worshipped with the congregation in Todi Agossouko on 23<sup>rd</sup> March. Brother Marc who preaches for this congregation phoned to say he is having problems. Worship ended at noon and I sat with the leadership till 3.00 pm. After all my explanations, which calmed the brethren, Marc asked them a question. What did our missionary say that I did not tell you?

Some of my unofficial duties require solving not solving church problems but even at work places, between our members and those with whom they have problems, etc.

### TRIP TO NIGERIA TO ATTEND AGRIC SEMINAR IN NIGERIA



The Agric Seminar attendants  
From left to Right: George, Harouna, Joyce,  
Oumarou and Esperance

BTC students Oumarou and Harouna, BTC teacher Esperance Mensah and my wife and I made a 10-day trip to Nigeria from 28 February to 9<sup>th</sup> of March. The purpose was to attend the drip irrigation agricultural seminar organized by the Jos School of Biblical Studies in collaboration with Healing Hands International of Nashville, TN. We took advantage of the trip to Nigeria first to visit the West Nigeria Christian College and School of Biblical studies in Abeokuta where we spent two nights. We went there to discuss with the Director of that school, Brother Biodum Owolabi about the possibility of our using some of their graduates to work in our satellite school in Porto Novo. Western Nigeria and Eastern Benin share a common border, the same dialect and culture. We have a large number of Yoruba speaking people in Benin who have asked us to get them Yoruba speaking teachers. Brother Owolabi assured us that some of his graduates claim citizenship in Benin and Nigeria and would be willing to work with us. The conclusion is that we have to go back and meet these preachers at another time.

We continued to Abuja and spent the weekend there. Brother Peter Egre, Elder in the Kado

## 2

congregation and a long time friend, received us. We worshipped with them on Sunday and set off for Jos on Monday. Brother Steve Worley and his wife Dolores and Sister Allison, an intern at Jos accommodated us.

With about 40 others, including some of the students of the Jos school, people from the villages near Jos, we studied the drip irrigation techniques, which are designed to teach families to produce food to feed themselves.

### ANNUAL LECTURESHIP IN COTONOU

In January, I had a meeting with the Preachers in Cotonou for us to plan our work for the year. We have decided that 2008 would be the year of evangelism. We would place emphasis on this subject all through the year. The congregations in Cotonou and the towns and villages nearby would have a lectureship during the Esther holidays.

All the congregations met on Sunday morning in their respective places with the preachers teaching the same subject in the Bible class and also preached the same passage and theme for the sermon. We all met together in the afternoon to close up the session. This lectureship was not very well attended compared to previous years.

We hope to organize this kind of evangelism lectureship in all the regional capitals so as to keep our congregations on tract for our Vision 2020 for Benin.

### PERSONALITY PROFILE – PAUL TOHIONON

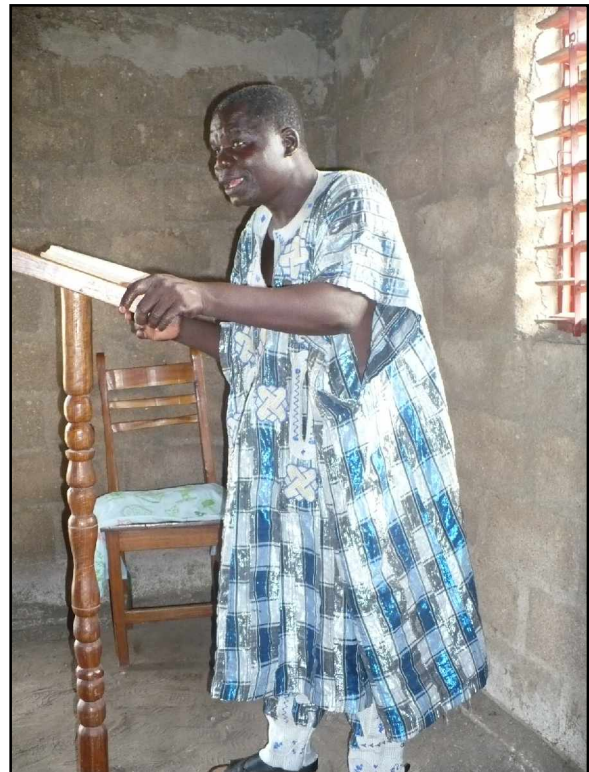
From time to time as I have space, I want to give the profile of some of the Evangelists who work with us in various ways. This month, I present to you **Paul Tohionon**, one of our very effective preachers.

I met Paul in 1993 in Cotonou. I was preaching in the night market. The church was just beginning in Cotonou. This is how I met Paul. I go to the night market where a great number of people come to buy their food. One evening my interpreter did not come so I asked for anyone in the audience to come and interpret for me and Paul volunteered. He then kept coming back every weekend. At that time I do feel that because Paul love to hear his own powerful voice amplified is the reason he keeps coming

## The Lighthouse

back to interpret for me. What I did not like then was that he takes so much of my time, speaking for 5 minutes when I have spoken for only two minutes, saying more than I have said. We became friends and when the time came for him to go back he invited me to visit the denominational church that he preaches for in a very remote village, and teach the same message I have been preaching in the city. Paul and I were chased out of the meeting place with cutlasses, stones and sticks. I need such an interpreter who is a fluent speaker. Paul moved to another village called Tan and begun a church there. In 1995, Paul enrolled in the Benin Bible Training Center and graduated in August 1998. In the same year, he got married to Marie, a young woman from Tan. Paul and Marie have six children, the latest addition coming only two months ago.

After his graduation, Paul moved to Save in 1998 and quickly began a church in that town, then two others within short distance quickly followed. Paul help establish 10 congregations within the Save area. The Pearland Church of



Christ near Houston, TX had taken over the support of this work, which in part has led to its growth. Paul sent two men from the area to BTC who are currently in training. When they graduate, we expect to see more growth. Paul

### 3

also baptized two preachers from a denominational church in Save and they worked with Paul to plant two congregations. Brother D.C. Brown Pulpit Minister from Pearland is expected in Benin in April to hold a seminar in the Save area.

#### **PUBLIC EVANGELISM IN MONO REGION**

Joachin Tounou graduated from BTC in May 2007 and begun working in his village. He baptized 12 people by end of 2007. The brethren from Come and the other churches in the area held a weekend open air evangelism from 14 to 16 March during which they reported three baptisms.

#### **RADIO MINISTRY**

The Todego brothers keep our radio work going. They have persuaded the radio station to allow them to do live broadcasts with the public phoning in. Since we use French and Fon for the 30 minutes broadcasts, this leaves each speaker 10 minutes with the rest of the time for our opening and closing song and questions from the audience. They are receiving so many calls live and on their cell phones they are not able to do the follow-ups. When they have to return the calls, they are handicapped and I am not able be of help to them in this.

#### **THE BIBLE TRAINING CENTER**

The school reopened for the second semester on March 5<sup>th</sup>. All the students came back from their 4 weeks holidays to join those who did not travel. All our teachers were available to begin the semester. Prior to this, the Dean had assigned every teacher his lessons

Once again, I have taken the lion's share of the teaching. I am teaching Hermeneutics and 1&2 Corinthians in the First Year class, Church History and Christian Evidences in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Year class and Denominational Doctrines and Ministerial Ethics in the final year. I also plan to teach special studies on Tuesday and Thursday evenings from 7 to 8 pm as soon as I get the lessons prepared on conflict resolution. I have to keep several fires from being set off, and if they do, have to keep them from burning, yes, conflicts. Hope I can begin in March or early April and finish that before end of June 2008.

## **The Lighthouse**

In all, we have 12 teachers of which 5 are full-time and the others are on part-time basis. We have brothers Ajayi Inoussa and Akalo Komlan coming from Tsevie in Togo to teach in the first year class. They come every other week and make a lot of sacrifice to be on our team. Joachin Tounou has just graduated but is teaching one subject so that my workload can reduce some. He loves the course on Introduction to NT Greek. He was actually passionate with the subject and was a great help to his classmates when I was teaching them. After they finish classes, he would gather them and they would work out the exercises with his help. He was therefore excited when the proposition was made that he becomes my assistant in teaching the course. He was very impressive in the first class as I allowed him to teach the class. The next class, I was out of town and now he has taken over this class and is doing a great job.

At the beginning of each semester, we make copies of study outlines for the 27 courses for the three classes. Two equipments that are a great blessing are our copying machine and the comb binder. You would not believe it, our copier needs servicing almost each month. It gets so hot that copying is suspended most of the time.

Our students in the third year have begun taking courses on using computers. For a long while, our problem was the lack of teachers. This semester, we have one young woman from the Vedoko congregation come to teach once a week for 2 and a half hours, the class on how to use the computer. We now have for the first time a woman joining our teachers. She is doing this on part time basis.

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