

The Lighthouse

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MISSION WORK REPORT – BENIN

HOPE FOR MISSION WORK IN BENIN

One experience I had lived in my home country Ghana before getting into mission work is for us members to take the church to our hometowns and villages without anyone's prompting. I had joined my friends who took their leave from work to go to their hometown and work to begin a congregation there. We come back to inform the city church where we worship that a new work has begun in their hometown.



Leonel on the left and Guy on the right

I see this happening in Benin. I have not been to worship in one of the new congregations in a suburb of Cotonou, begun almost a year ago and was there for the first time on April 13, and was amazed. Two young men, Leonel and Guy, both in their mid twenties have taken on the challenge to establish a new congregation in a suburb of Cotonou called Sedje. This is how it happened. First of all, Leonel, dropped out of the University after the first year because his parents did not have the financial resources to keep him in school. He took up a job teaching in a high school in Sedje at a meager salary. He did not have the means to keep going to worship at the Vedoko congregations every Lord's day so he encouraged his best friend Guy to team up and begin a congregation in Sedje where he lives and work. In worship that Sunday was a mixed group of 45 young men, women and children, all there

because of Leonel now living in Sedje. On that day, they took a special collection to pay for the rent of their meeting place, which is \$20 a month.

A practice we kept even after the beginning of the Bible Training Center is to encourage every male in the church to try his hands at preaching the gospel. The graduates are encouraged to train members of their congregations to teach, preach and lead the services. I have been to two congregations where some of our brethren who are not trained preachers taught some powerful lessons. To my readers: these are some of the things that keeps making my weekends when I go visiting the churches.

DC BROWN IN BENIN

The month of April is marked by the arrival of brother D.C. Brown, Minister for the Pearland Church of Christ Houston, Texas in Benin. DC arrived on April 20 and left on the 27th.



These were baptized by Paul and Jonas in Save on April 24. Two more were baptized the next day.

ITINERARY OF DC BROWN

Sunday: April 20 – 7.00 PM: Arrival at Cotonou Airport

Monday: April 21 – AM: Visit to Porto Novo school. He taught the class one of his lessons on developing church leadership.



PM: Visit to Cotonou market on way back from Porto Novo. We bought a 2500-watt gasoline generator, a set of loudspeakers and a new dirt bike for Paul in Save and a foot sewing machine for the wife of Pascal in Dassa.

Tuesday: April 22 – 9.00 AM: Meeting with

BTC students on campus, during which he presented the same lesson on developing church leadership during the extended chapel time to all BTC students.

PM: We left Cotonou for Save (4 hours drive). Stop by at Dassa to visit with Pascal and present sewing machine to his wife. To Pascal and his wife, it was like Christmas in April. They could not contain their joy. I once heard them pray for God to provide Pascal's wife such equipment. We drove quickly from Dassa to the village of Soklogbo to visit with members of the church who had been waiting for us for hours.

About 25 members welcomed us. We did not teach a lesson but encouraged them and moved on.

Wednesday: April 23 – 9.00am to 1.00pm DC begun leadership seminar in Save. DC presented two lessons. The meeting was held in the town hall. About 50 were present at each session.

PM: 3.00 pm to 6.00 pm Visits to some local congregations was planned. We first went to Besse to participate in a baby naming ceremony. While there, we were informed that a some members wanted to be baptized. We took them in my truck and were about to make the 20 mile drive back to Save around 4.00 pm when our vehicle troubles started. The car would not start. We tried pushing without success. Besse is one of the remote and primitive villages in Benin. Luckily, we have a very faint mobile phone network to enable us call Save.

Thursday: April 24 The seminar continued. AM: 9.00 to 12.00 and from 3.00 to 6.00 PM and Friday April 25 AM: 9.00 to 12.00.

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I presented two lessons during the seminar myself.

The plan was to travel to Parakou, Northern Benin on Friday April 26 and visit some works in the Parakou area before returning to Cotonou Saturday. Due to the breakdown of my truck, we visited the brethren in Kaboua and Atchakpa villages in a taxi. The truck could not be fixed on Friday and after waiting for most of the morning, we took a taxi back to Cotonou.

Sunday April 27 AM: Worship the Vedoko congregation which was celebrating ladies day. I taught the Bible Class and DC gave the exhortation. About 130 women were a part of the worship, most of them dressed in the same attire. DC left for home in the evening.

DC Browns trip was an uplifting one especially for the leaders of the congregations in the Save area. 9 souls were baptized of which two are Fulani migrants. These are the first migrant cow herdsman that we have baptized.

THE BIBLE TRAINING CENTER

We have now mastered our schedule so well that BTC runs like a very well oiled engine to the praise of God. The mid semester break was from April 21st to the 26th. Those who could afford it travelled to visit with their families and congregations.



Ladies day in Cotonou. After worship, these women gave a spiritual concert. They prepared meals to for a potluck after the services.

STAFF PROFILE - KOFFI HIHEAGLO

Brother Koffi Hiheaglo is a key player on the BTC team. He is our Accountant, Dean of Students and Director of the French Bible Correspondence Course work we do here.



Picture of Koffi taken in 2006

My association with Koffi dates back to my mission workdays in Togo in 1987. Koffi was then a young undergraduate student in the University of Lome, Togo. His senior brother that we call Dey, now preaching, was converted at that time and was working with me. When I needed someone to help me improve my French language skills, Dey recommended his junior brother Koffi. I started taking French language lessons with Koffi till I got enough skills to teach him the word of God. Koffi came to visit me in Benin in 1994 and was baptized. He has finished with his university education having obtained a Masters degree in Economics and was looking for a job. That was the time I was also looking for an administrator to work with me in establishing the Benin Bible Training Center. God made the choice. It did not take any difficult time encouraging Koffi to leave Togo and join me in Benin for us to begin the training program that had been a dream and the subject of long prayers. Koffi is therefore a founding member of this work.

Due to our long-term association in the work, Koffi has grown tremendously spiritually and in the knowledge of the scriptures. He is in his own right a great teacher of the Bible.

Koffi teaches French, Management and Logic in our school in addition to his other responsibilities.

Koffi is married to Sister Berthe and they have three children, David, Valerie and Emmanuel. Keep Koffi and his family in your prayers.

BTC CAMPUS HIT BY THUNDERSTORM

On the night of May 25, we had an experience that was exceptional. At 12.20 am, there was a loud thunderous explosion right over our

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campus. With the loud blast, the lights went off while we were shaking in our beds. My wife said the power transformer took a hit and I put on the torch light to see the time. We prayed and went back to bed while the rain continues until morning.

In the morning, we woke up to notice that light switches in several buildings popped out of the walls, thunderbolt marks were left on one of the walls (these marks are similar to bullet marks left on walls), electric bulbs were blown and burnt completely, the electronic panel on the generator was blown, TV sets, DVD players that were in the walls were all burnt. In the office building, it entered the network and damaged some of our computers. It took us a couple of days to know what equipments were actually damaged because we did not have electricity for the next two days. When it was restored, the transformer that supply us power also took a hit like Joyce said. Only one phase out of the three is working and that is what we are on for now.



Observe the marks on the windowsill and on the edge of the wall. These were not there when we went to bed.

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