

# The Lighthouse

Volume 17 – Issue 1

June - July 2008

## MISSION WORK REPORT – BENIN

### END OF BTC SEMESTER ACTIVITIES

June-July now marks the end of our academic year. As usual, all the teachers who were behind in their teaching schedule came under pressure to finish their lessons, the biggest offender being myself. My various travels often lead to missed classes. I however finished all my assigned courses, as is the case with all the professors.



**BTC Professors for semester**

We had our end of semester professor's meeting on Tuesday June 24. At this meeting, we do review the work for the semester; the teachers express whatever difficulties they have experienced in the classroom and outside the classrooms. Disciplinary questions are also discussed. I then assign new subjects for the next semester. As much as is possible, we try not to change subjects for teachers unless they request it or the students complain about a teacher's performance. I am taking on new subjects as I feel the need to improve the material being used. I normally teach a subject myself, do the lesson material, and make it available for the teachers at the next semester. For example, we have been using the same material on public speaking and preaching since 1995. I have taken on this subject so that I can prepare new lessons on the subject.

At the teacher's meeting, Xavier Nkembe from Cameroon was introduced. Xavier comes from Cameroon and graduated from BTC in 2006. His

addition to our staff has now put someone from the Central African region on our staff making BTC more representative. He also takes on some of my subjects so I would be teaching only 3 subjects instead of 6 next current semester. My taking on so many subjects is creating problems since I am called upon for other things during class period, including the running of the school.

### End of BTC Semester Calendar

Classroom work ended on June 13. The students have one week for the revision of lessons for the examinations from June 16-20. The students, with or without their teachers do this.

The examinations took place from June 23-27.

We then have one week to prepare for the graduation ceremony and to prepare for the International seminar.

The graduation took place on July 6

### Preacher's meetings in Cotonou

In most places, preachers have regular meetings but not in Benin. I called a preachers meeting on June 14 because the leaders of the youth activities in the various congregations came to inform me of the lack of cooperation with their ministers in the youth work. 90% of our members are under 25. In the past 5 years, active activities for the youth like Bible Camps and other youth meetings are held regularly. In December 2007, some of the youths were prevented by their ministers from attending such meeting and this has led to some crisis in three congregations in Cotonou. 15 preachers attended the meeting. A good debate was held and each party expressed their point of view to the satisfaction of all. Hopefully, the way forward is now clearer.

The Agenda for the meeting was as follows

1. Reflections on the progress of the work in Benin, obstacles and opportunities
2. Youth Ministry
3. Women's Ministry
4. Evangelism Ministry
5. Relationship between Evangelists

Keep us in your prayers.

## Graduation

Our 5<sup>th</sup> graduation ceremony took place on 7 July 2008. 11 men graduated in the presence of over 700 people gathered under large tents. For the first time, a team from the USA witnessed our graduation ceremony.



The graduates from five French-speaking nations are as follows:

### Benin

1. Jean Dohigbe
2. Marcel Togbe
3. Michel Zinsou
4. Raul Baya

### Togo

1. Alakoum Kagnossa

### Cameroon

1. Rodrigue Popabou
2. Rigobert Tchouansi
3. Etienne Danawa
4. Dafta Yakouba

### Chad

1. Justin Menga

### Niger

1. Oumarou Nouhou

We normally have a good crowd during our graduation ceremonies and this time too we had a good number. We have 710 people present, mostly members of the churches, friends of the students and their families who often come to rejoice with them.

## BTC Advisory Board Activities

1. George Jr. and I travelled to Accra on June 29 for a meeting of the Educational Committee. This Committee is working on

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the establishment of a vocational training institute as parts of the activities of BTC.

2. The Health Committee meets in Cotonou and have been planning on the establishment of a Health Center in Benin.
3. The Executive Committee is also working on having the FACE foundation registered in Benin.
4. Full Board meeting in Cotonou on July 4<sup>th</sup>.

## Two seminars

Another highlight of the month under report is the visit of the brethren from the USA to Benin was to teach the word of God. It had always been my dream to get all of the BTC graduates together for a Bible study session, to see how they are doing on the field after graduation and also help answer some of their questions. We were able to pull this off with Dr. Jay Lockhart, Minister Benton Church of Christ, Dr. Milton Sewell, Chancellor – Freed Hardeman University, Ed Jones – Elder in the Benton Church of Christ and Jerry Johnston, Deacon also from Benton.

### INTERNATIONAL FRENCH-SPEAKING PREACHERS' LECTURESHIP PROGRAM OF ACTIVITIES

#### Monday

1. 09h00-09h30 – Introduction, Songs and Prayers
2. 09h30-10 h15 –Bible Authority – Jay Lockhart
3. 10h15-11h00 – God's Positive Principles – Milton Sewell
4. 11h00-11h15 – Break
5. 11h15-12h00 – Where God leads, He provides a way – Ed Jones
6. 12h00-12h30 – Questions and Discussions
7. 15h00-15h15 – Introduction, Songs and Prayers
8. 15h15-16h00 – God's Rewards For Christians Who Keep the Faith – Milton Sewell
9. 16h00-16h45 – Worship – Jay Lockhart
10. 16h45-17h00 – Break
11. 17h00-17h45 – Discussions with a Deacon – Jerry Johnston
12. 17h45-18h30 – Questions and Discussions

#### Tuesday

1. 09h00-09h30 – Introduction, Songs and Prayers
2. 09h30-10h15 – Leadership – Jay Lockhart
3. 10h15-11h00 – Christian Behavior That Works – Milton Sewell
4. 11h00-11h15 – Break
5. 11h15-12h45 – Discussions with an Elder – Ed Jones
6. 12h00-12h30 – Questions and Discussions
7. 15h00-15h15 – Introduction, Praises and Prayers
8. 15h15-16h00 – The Personality and Work of the Holy Spirit – Jay Lockhart

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9. 16h00-16h45 – Break
10. 16h45-17h00 – Serve the Lord With Gladness - God's Healthy Living Plan – Milton Sewell
11. 17h00-17h30 – Questions and Discussions

#### Wednesday

1. 09h00-09h30 – Introduction, Songs and Prayers
2. 09h30-10 h15 –Discussions with a Preacher – Jay Lockhart
3. 10h15-11h00 – Discussions with an Educator – Milton Sewell
4. 11h00-12h15 – Discussions with the Director of BTC – George Akpabli
5. 12h15-12h30 – End and Announcements

### Visit of American Brethren

By the grace of God and after long prayers, five of us were at the Cotonou Airport to meet our visitors on July 4th. This time four men and six women arrived.

Ed Jones (Benton Church), Joanie Roberts (Woodlands Oak Church), Brenda Riggs (Pearland Church), Gretchen Whitmire (Pearland Church) and Paula and Jerry Johnston (Benton), Arleene and Jay Lockhart (Benton), Laurel and Milton Sewell (Freed-Hardeman University).



We have BTC graduates, Preachers who are not BTC graduates and several church leaders present. They sat and absorbed the wisdom of these great teachers. Jay's subjects, which are theological, generated many questions that he answered without leaving any doubts in the minds of the class. After the seminar when I asked if it should be repeated, the unanimous answer was that it should be every two years.

The other seminar took place in the meeting place of the Agla Church in Cotonou. This seminar had been announced only to the women in four of the five congregations in Cotonou. They met on the mornings of Monday through Wednesday. About 75 women were present.

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Here are the lady speakers and their subjects:

- a) Peace and Unity - Joyce Akpabli
- b) Footprints of Jesus - Arlene Lockhart
- c) Personal Evangelism - Paula Johnston
- d) Love - Brenda Riggs
- e) Prayer - Gretchen Whitmire
- f) The Value of the Kingdom - Laura Sewell

On Saturday June 5<sup>th</sup>, before the seminar, visits were made to the church in Se where some of the children provided some brief entertainment – a ballet – to the visitors. We then drove off to Porto Novo to visit the leadership training school at Tchaada. We met with the leaders.

After the seminar on Wednesday, July 9<sup>th</sup>, we took off in a rented bus for the three day journey into the towns and villages of Benin to visit and encourage the brethren there. George Jr. and I accompanied the American visitors.

Our trip took us to Parakou, seven hour's drive from Cotonou. While there, we visited churches in the following villages, Beterou, Sinahou, Wari-Marou, N'dali and the group that meets in Parakou. On our way home, we visited the following villages, Kaboua, Atchakpa and Agon. The members of these congregations kept waiting for our arrival. The visiting brethren took turn praying and giving some exhortation while the African brethren everywhere we went kept presenting the same need, adequate meeting places. Work is in progress on meeting places in Kaboua and Atchakpa, which are being financed by Pearland Church of Christ.

The church in Ndali meets in the home of the Preacher. The reality is that all we need in the villages to have a full house is a place where brethren can meet.

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