

The Lighthouse

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MISSION WORK REPORT – BENIN

ACAC Nigeria 2008

The month of August brought new challenges. BTC was on holidays. The break was really good for Joyce and I after a very busy 4 months period. In the morning, though my eyes popped open automatically at 6.00 a.m., I can close them and stay in bed for a little longer. What a good break!

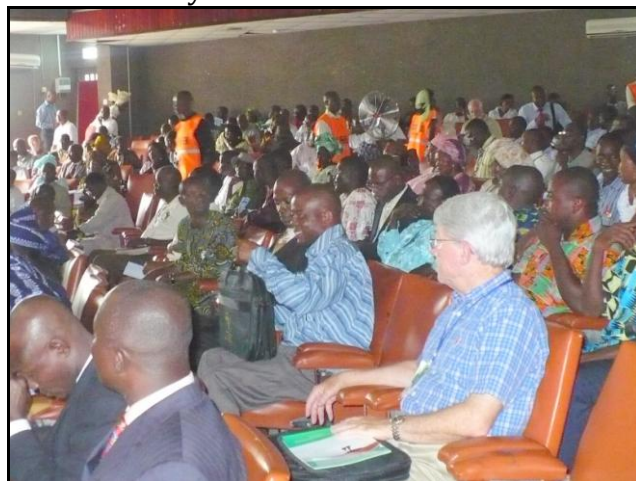
The conference held every 4 years dubbed Africans Claiming Africa for Christ conference took place in Badagry, a small town in Nigeria from 5 to 10th August. I had been appointed a resource person by the Organizing Committee of the ACAC Nigeria 2008. I spoke on the subject: "**Developing mission consciousness in African churches**" under the THEME *MISSIONS: Developing Missions and Education in the Church tract*. I got a wonderful review after my PowerPoint presentation of the subject. During question time, one of the participants asked what can be done so that my message gets to even those who did not attend the conference. After the conference, I am more convinced than ever that Africans have the desire to take over Africa for Christ and this underscore our work as the trainers of those with the desire to serve Christ on the frontlines (places where the gospel is yet to reach) in Africa. Koffi and Esperance from BTC attended the conference with me.



The ACAC-NIGERIA 2008 Banner

With the growth of congregations in French-speaking Africa, we have brethren from Togo,

Benin, Cameroon, Mali and Senegal present who did not understand English. I did some translation for these brethren. It is apparent that the Nigerian brethren are not aware of the presence of French-speaking churches and were impressed with my translation skills. I made so many friends.



A small section of the participants of ACAC Nigeria 2008

Seminar on the Holy Spirit at Tchaada

The churches in and around Porto Novo organized a Bible lectureship on the Holy Spirit from September 11-14th.

As usual, I was expected to be the main speaker. I presented lessons on three subjects on Friday and Saturday but have to leave right after my presentation and travel to Accra to attend the wedding ceremony of one of my junior brothers who got wedded on September 12. Joyce and I came back with them to Cotonou where they spent a week with us before going back to Accra.

Some of the subjects discussed were the following:

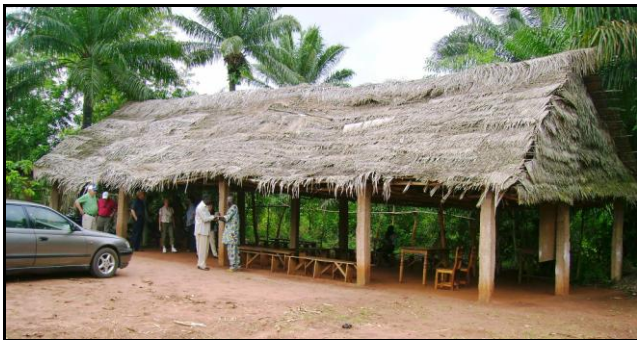
- The universal gift of the Holy Spirit
- The work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Christian

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- The difference between the baptism of the Holy Spirit and water baptism
- The miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit
- Speaking in tongues
- The sin against the Holy Spirit
- The fruits of the Holy Spirit
- A discussion of other Bible teachings on the Holy Spirit.

The subjects were so well received a repeat is planned.

There was open air preaching every evening of the seminar. Brother Christian Todego and the local brethren took care of that.



Meeting place at Tchaada

Interview for new students

Interview for the class of 2008-2011 was conducted from 8-10th September. Twelve men from Togo and Benin were invited for a written test in French Grammar and Bible Knowledge. One person did very poorly in both tests and though a good man, his academic knowledge was so poor he was judged incapable of following classroom work adequately in French and submit required classroom assignments. The eleven others passed for the oral interview the next day. Among this number, one man did not receive a good recommendation from his local Preacher as well as the two people that he himself gave us to contact for information on his character. He was also judged not suitable to engage in the highly disciplined work of a preacher student. The 10 others were given letters of admission.

We had four other students who applied from Guinea, Chad, Togo and Cameroon who did not attend this interview. They have been invited to be in Cotonou on the 6th of October to take the test and if they pass, would be admitted. We therefore expect at least 14 men

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for the new class. In the past, some withdrew at the last moment. If this did not happen this time, 14 new students would begin their 3 year training beginning October 6.

The student representation is from the following nations: Benin 10, Togo 1, Chad 1, Cameroon 1 and Guinea 1.

Preparations for the new class

To prepare for their arrival, as well as the 8 men in the second year and the 12 in the 3rd year, all the teachers have submitted their study materials for copying and binding. Because of the woeful lack of text books and study materials available for our students in the French language, we provide teaching and study outlines of all our courses. I see piles of copy paper and plastic ring binders beside the copier. Brother Joseph and the others do keep the copier over heated at times like this.

I myself am going back to teach lessons on public speaking. The only reason is that the study material available had been done in 1997 when I first taught this and needs revision. Am spending most of my computer and reading time researching and working on my material. I see the other teachers doing some on their lesson materials.

Preacher's meeting in Cotonou

On September 6, several of our preachers meet again in Cotonou.

Many of my colleagues gathered again in Cotonou to discuss plans on working more effectively together. The discussion was on two major points, mobilizing the youth to serve the Lord and the establishment of new congregations in the country. Every Preacher agreed on the principle that the church must grow. Individually, each expressed the difficulty of where to gather the people for worship.

We in Benin have no difficulty beginning a new congregation. Wherever we go, the doors are open. People listen, until Sunday morning when they ask, "Where do we meet for worship?"

It was also decided that during the second weekend of November, as many Preachers as can, would be meeting in the village of Agoe,

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near the Togo border for a weekend of personal evangelism and outdoor preaching at night to strengthen the church in this village.

Open air preaching at Agla, Allada and Come congregations.

These congregations came to borrow our projector and PA systems for outdoor preaching.

Radio Ministry

The Todego brothers, Achille and Christian continue to be our men of the moment on the radio. At least there had been four baptisms which are directly related to their work. They reported the baptism of two couples; one who is worshipping with the church on campus. The two have been connected with a very large group of port workers in the city. They go four days in the week to a very large hall outside of the Cotonou port to teach the workers who gather there and wait for their shifts to enter the wharf to load or discharge cargo. Between 700 and 1000 people gather at a time there, though they keep going and coming. At first they have to keep shouting at the top of their voices to be heard. We bought them two battery operated megaphones which they now use to great advantage.

They have also started a leadership training program in Cotonou attended by most of their radio listeners. One of the radio listeners, by name Alex is among the students who have applied for enrollment in the Bible training school. At the interview, he said he wanted to know the scriptures as well as be eloquent in preaching as Achille. These two young men have created such an enormous amount of work for themselves that I am now seeking a way to relieve them of some of their work, get others to share their burdens.

BTC Graduate passes away

The African church and especially the one in Togo lost a giant in the faith. For a little over three months, we have been praying for the healing of Brother Faustin Koudaya, BTC graduate of the class of 2004-2007 and Minister for the Noukafu Church of Christ in Lome, Togo. First, we were informed that of

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his sudden illness. The prognosis was hernia for which he had an operation in a Togolese hospital.

Joyce and I went to Lome, Togo to visit Faustin in his home on August 25th and at that time, the prognosis was new, pancreatic cancer. He told us that it all begun with severe pains in the abdomen. After the hernia operation, the pains continued. A member of the Church took him to Accra, Ghana where the correct diagnosis was cancer. The doctors asked him to go home and raise almost \$2,000 and come back for treatment. (Medical insurance does not exist here) When we were in his home in August, he was looking so lean and totally depressed as he had no way of raising the money the doctors were asking for. We prayed together and said words of encouragement.



Early morning September 11th, I had two different phone informing me that Faustin Koudaya (*in graduation gown in this 2005 picture -*) has passed

away. My first thoughts went to his wife Happy and son Abel who he left behind in a bad financial situation.

Several brethren from Benin, including almost all the Ministers joined us in Lome on August 26th where we had a short wake keeping in the evening and his burial was on the 27th. Faustin was 52 years when he passed away. There were a lot of tears and swollen eyes.

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