

The Lighthouse

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MISSION WORK REPORT – BENIN

A LITTLE HISTORY: 16 YEAR OF MISSION IN BENIN:



In this picture are two men, Doh (left) and Dohsey (right) Hilla, their wives and children. These two men (elder and junior brothers) were my first ever converts in Cotonou, baptized in April 1992.

On 12 February 1992, my wife, son George Jr. and Brother John Kado arrived in Cotonou. We rented a house that use to be a popular drinking bar; it was so popular that anyone could easily get directions to our house. These two young men at that time were our immediate neighbors. Doh and Dossey as new converts led their whole family to Christ. They were also part of our initial evangelism team, helped us baptize most of our initial converts. I remember them carrying benches, chairs, tables, PA systems, etc. on their head walking a good distance both ways, as we go out preaching in the neighborhood night market. I worshipped with the Vedoko congregation on 1st March 2009 and took this picture of the family. Dossey is one of the church leaders in this congregation.

The Benin Church of Christ was granted official registration in May 1992. There were no known Christians in Cotonou at that time. There was a very small group of members in the village of Se at that time. They were

converted by Brother Godfried Kwao, a school teacher from Ghana. One of those men converted by Godfried is still a faithful member of the Church. He is Brother Prosper Segniho, the current Chairman of FACE Advisory Board. Prosper had also exerted a lot of good influence in the Se Church and also help plant a new congregation in a village where he had been the Director of a secondary school.

From February 1992 till August 1995, the Cotonou church was meeting in my sitting room. We did not have furniture but a chalkboard. Our daily routine then was to go out after breakfast and talk to anyone sitting under a shade tree about the Gospel. John Kado and I were “absolutely crazy” for Christ. We knew no limits or boundaries. Our efforts started paying off as the number that meets in my sitting room could no longer fit in and we move into the yard.

In August 1995, the Benin Bible Training Center was inaugurated by Elders from the Benton Church of Christ, Charles Cavitt (of blessed memory) and Bill Morgan. There were 15 students enrolled at that time. The students and the Vedoko congregation were a fast moving mission church. We began two congregations in the city of Cotonou, at Agla and Akpakpa. We reinforced the Se congregation and started several other congregations of which a few did not exist at the time due to several reasons or the other.

From these humble beginnings, the Lord had led us to fruitfulness. We can only estimate the number of souls added to the Lord in Benin and all of French-speaking Africa.

THE BENIN BIBLE TRAINING CENTER

Classes begun for the second semester on 9th March:

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We have 31 students enrolled. 13 students are in the first year, 8 in the second year and 10 in third year.

Our school calendar for the semester

Beginning of classes: 9 March 2009

End of classes: 5 June 2009

Mid-semester break: 20 to 24 April 2009

Revision week: 8 to 12 June 2009

Exams week: 15 to 19 June

Graduation: Sunday 28 June 2009

Two men continue to travel every other week from Togo to come and teach. They wake up at 5.00 am on Mondays to catch three of four different taxis to get to Zinvié to teach. BTC teachers, Adjayi and Akalo are putting in a lot of sacrifices to help us succeed.

PERSONAL ACTIVITIES

3 day Gospel Meeting in Come

I taught a couple of lessons on Friday and Saturday in the meeting place of a denominational church in Come from 12 to 13 February. I got trapped into accepting the invitation when some of my Graduates came with the organizers to my office. I taught on the subject of Holiness and a parable of Jesus.

Literature development: I prepare new lessons are for use on Sunday Morning and Wednesday evening Bible classes in Zinvié. I have spent a lot of computer time adapting lessons on the following subjects:

- Christian service to one another
- The book of Job

I did the lessons and Brother Xavier Nkembe did all the teaching.

Worship with the English congregation

15 February: The brethren who worship in English invited me to teach a lesson on "The Responsibilities of Christian Families to build a strong Church". This church is getting stronger and stronger.

Celebrated a marriage

1st March: I celebrated the marriage between Leopold and Rachelle in the Vedoko congregation. Sister Rachelle had taught BTC students how to use the Computer for 2 semesters.

Attended a funeral: BTC Graduate Bernard Gazozo (Class of 2005-2007) passed away peacefully in his sleep in Togo on 23rd March. The burial took place on 29th March, in his village. Several of his colleagues joined Koffi

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Hiheaglo and I to make the one day journey attend the funeral.

My work with the Zinvié congregation continue with help from all the students and preachers resident on campus. I am preaching two sermons a month in Zinvié for now.



Section of members in Zinvié at worship

THE STORY OF A BTC STUDENT

One of our students who will graduate in June 2009 wrote this letter to his sponsor. I felt like sharing it, actual names had been removed.

In July 2005, the God of mercy visited me in the person of a friend by name Amadu. We spent some time discussing about Islam and Christianity. He put me into contact with a missionary by name Moses who came from Nigeria. 4 weeks after our discussion, I went to Niamey, our capital city and visited Moses. After two weeks of discussions with him, I made the commitment to leave Islam and become a Christian. At 5.00 pm, on the 1st of September 2005, I gave my life to Jesus Christ. While doing this, I was fully aware of all the dangers that await me upon my return to my village. To be well grounded in the Christian faith, I hesitated to go back home and spent 42 days with him in his house because I now have nowhere else to go.

Upon my return to my village, by fear of persecution, I wanted to hide my new faith; I confessed to others and denied the fact to others. To prove to my relatives that I am still a Muslim, I would attend some of the prayer and religious meetings.

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Unfortunately, the news got to my parent's ears. They asked me if what people are saying is true. I could no longer hide my faith.

Things became very tense at home. My parents called a religious Imam to come and counsel me. His objective was that I renounce my Christian faith. He told me that Christianity is a confused religion that the Europeans brought. He told me that the Bible had been falsified; all the parts that spoke of Mohamed had been removed by these Europeans. I could not renounce my Christian faith. I told them I cannot renounce because I have been washed with the Christian's water already. As a result of this, I was no longer allowed to take part in any family activity at home. I became an unclean animal, I cannot even eat with them anymore, I am now an infidel to my family. I was insulted, threatened by everyone, including children and even strangers.

They kept discrediting the Bible's authenticity and credibility. They gave me a book with the title: The manual and guide for the true Muslim. In this book were the following ideas: An analogy between Moses and Mohamed; A false interpretation of Deuteronomy 18:18-19 and John 1:19-25 saying that it is prophet Mohamed that is the subject of these verses. It also had testimonies by certain Islamic scholars on the scientific proofs of the Koran. They made several false translations to support the assertion that some very important verses had been removed from the Bible. When I met the missionary again next time I was in the city, I asked him so many questions. He reassured me and made my faith stronger.

I was living in fear in my village because anyone could harm me. I have to leave my village to go live with Christians in the city of Niamey. I stayed with another missionary and having nothing to do, I registered to study Philosophy in the University.

My love for Christ and his words were so much that when I heard of the opportunity to go to the Bible Training Center in Cotonou, Benin, I left my studies and enrolled to train as a Gospel Preacher. My objective was to learn the Holy Scriptures to enable me answer

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all the questions that I could be asked on Christianity and my faith.

My three years training in the Bible School has taught me more, opened my eyes and answered several questions in my head as a former Muslim. As I go back very soon to my country after the training, only God knows the challenges that await me. All I ask is your support and prayers.

Praise be to God Almighty and to His Son Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior for dying for me and for all humanity.

WORK IN THE PORTO NOVO AREA

First year BTC student Brother Oti had evangelized a group of denominational preachers in the Porto Novo area. Our man on the spot, Christian Todego responded immediately to their invitation. He is planning another teaching program for this group of people. He just finished typing a 3-page study program to share with them. It would be similar to what we do in the other regions, invite the leaders in the denominations and teach them a couple of Bible books, win their confidence and be invited to teach more and more people. Keep this program in your prayers.

MOTOR CYCLE ACCIDENTS

Two of our preachers had motor accidents in the course of the period under review. Clement Djebede and Daniel Barka. Their motor bikes got damages and we have to help them with the repairs. Both men were carrying their wives. By the grace of God, no bones were broken.

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