



BIBLE STUDENTS' COMMITTEE FOR AFRICA



Newsletter

WINTER 2010

Greetings from the BSCFA

Jesus knew that his disciples would face a difficult and hostile world, where they would confront arrogant, lying men whose hearts had been hardened. So he said to them: "Be ye therefore wise as serpents and harmless as doves" (Matthew 10:16). Now the dove is a most gentle bird and it is difficult to imagine an individual simultaneously having both the characteristics of a serpent and a dove, but this is what Jesus expects.

Jesus recognized the need for incisive and critical thinking, realistic appraisal, and decisive judgment. Such a mind is sharp and penetrating—this is the sense of our Lord's "wise as serpents" words. Such wisdom sifts the true from the false using mature judgment based on God's word (Hebrews 4:12) since all things need to be judged by a renewed Christian mind exercised in the speaking of wisdom (1 Corinthians 2:6). With wisdom comes firmness of purpose and solidness of commitment. Who doubts that wisdom of mind is one of man's greatest needs? Yet, we usually find there is an almost universal quest for easy answers. In Isaiah's day, this was the group that said, "Speak unto us smooth things" (Isaiah 30:10). Those lacking spiritual wisdom are prone to embrace all kinds of superstitions and irrational fears. One sad example is the pitiful case of King Saul at the close of his reign.

But we are also to be "harmless as doves." We must not stop with the cultivation of "critical thinking." The gospel also

demands a harmless and tender heart. In such a heart mercy will dwell. What is more tragic than to see a person who has risen to the disciplined heights of wisdom who at the same time has sunk to not showing mercy. It is for this reason that we were admonished, "The merciful man doeth good to his own soul: but he that is cruel troubleth his own flesh" (Proverbs 11:17).

Taking this lead, we on the committee continue to hold firmly to the soul-satisfying explanation of Pastor Russell's *The Divine Plan of the Ages* and the "vision" so ably set forth in the *Chart of the Ages*. Recognizing the complexity of the original text, it has seemed wise to see it explained in more simple terms employing the proven and successful "53 Lessons," originally created in India by Bro. Jayappa based on the Pastor's work. These lessons are undergoing review and revision to meet the needs of local African cultures. They simplify the materials using the same systematic approach to study the original. These lessons are being employed when visiting villages with the object of explaining the truth to those with a hearing ear and open hearts.

Recently, a revised "53 Lessons" has been employed to great effect in Ghana, first by Bro. Khurrsino Miranda. Now they are being used by the brethren serving as pilgrims throughout the country. As steady growth takes place which may not be hastened until it develops mature fruitage unto the Lord, the best established groups work directly with the text from the volumes of *Studies in the Scriptures*.

Some of the various ministries throughout the Truth movement serving the brethren in Africa, may be found at the African Bible Students web-site:

<http://www.africanbiblestudents.com/>

The witness through MP³ and DVD players and the distribution of literature continue, and judging the fruitage directly, it is proving to be a blessing. For this coming year by the Lord's grace we will be actively working toward further extensions of the pilgrim work and support for the brethren in Ghana, Nigeria, and elsewhere to encourage their conventions.

We ask that you bear before the Lord, these attempts to serve the Present Truth and may the Lord richly bless you in spiritual things this coming new spiritual year.

—*Bro. Richard Doctor*
Chairman, BSCFA

Report from Nigeria

Oron Nation Ecclesias Convention

The first convention of Oron Nation Ecclesias was held May 30, 2009. Its theme was, "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). The convention was co-chaired by Bros. Frances Edet and Hen Bassey. The ecclesias represented were from Ibadan, Udung Uko, Okobo, Iquita, and Oron City. The following brethren served.

1. Bro. Hen Bassey gave the welcome discourse, "Contend for the Faith."
2. Bro. Cajetan Egbu's sermon was "The Pure in Heart." He also gave a baptismal talk.
3. Bro. Frances Edet's talk was "Thankfulness to God."
4. The testimony meeting was led by Bro. Richard Ultan.
5. There were also six immersions.



Brethren Who Symbolized Their Consecration at Oron Nation Convention

Nigerian General Convention

The General Convention was held at Owerri from August 21 to 23, 2009. Its theme was “Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time. Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.” (1 Peter 5:6,7)

Brethren who took part in this gathering were from Ibadan, Agwa, Oron City, Awarra, Onitsha, Okpuala Ngwa, Okobo, Aba 1, Aba 2, Ohoba, Obile, Lagos, and Udung Uko. The maximum recorded daily attendance for this gathering was 302.

The chairmanship of this gathering was rotated among six brethren; three other friends served as testimony leaders. Ten brethren gave discourses including Bro. Jim Watkins from the United States. He, along with Bros. Cajetan Egbu and David Obayagbona, served as panelists during a question meeting moderated by Bro. Celestine Oledibe. Additionally, 49 brethren symbolized their consecrations as part of the overall services.

The convention ended following a business meeting, film showing, reading of “Songs in the Night,” closing prayer, and a final hymn.

Bro. Jim Watkins then remained in Nigeria for several days to serve the brethren in various areas including Owerri, Aba, Oron, and Ibadan before returning to America. All of the friends expressed their gratitude that Bro. Watkins was able to be in their midst.

Report from Bro. Moses Obire

“I am very glad to report that our Heavenly Father, Jehovah the Almighty God, has again given us His special grace to hold another Elders’ Seminar in Nigeria. This fourth seminar held at Kwale, Delta State, Nigeria began on October 1st and ended on the 3rd. A total of twenty brethren from nine ecclesias attended. They included Bros. Dike Esiaga, Peter Eke, Sunday Enang, Monday Ntukidem, OkuGod Asaha Udom, Donatus Onochie, John Isife, Godwin Edoja, S. Jada, Festus Onusa, Okolie Onyeka, Joseph Ominike,



Group Photograph Taken During Bro. Watkins Visit to Oron Nation



Attendees at the 4th Nigerian Elders' Seminar

Henry Igurube, Philip Osuya, Ossai Sunday, Vincent Aggreh, Believe Aggreh, David Obire, Moses Obire, and Donatus Ariwodor.

The topics covered at the Seminar included thirty minutes of Discourses prepared by attendees condensing each assigned chapter of the *Divine Plan of the Ages*. Others were detailed studies on: 1) "Questions and Answers on the Sin-Offering and the Covenants," by Bro. Russell; 2) Fashioning Ourselves as Obedient Children (*Reprints*, p. 5481); 3) "To Every Man According to His Several Ability" (*Reprints*, p. 2784). Other features at the seminar were Power Point presentations on: 1) Who Are the Bible Students?; 2) The Ransom; 3) God's Miraculous Timepiece. As usual, the result of the three days of studies and sweet fellowship was a manifestation of areas of strength and weaknesses both on an individual and class level. Brethren testified to the mind purifying ef-

fects of the subjects treated which aroused a sense of longing for more such studies.

As the seminar drew to a close, brethren expressed their feeling of meeting soon to continue the sweet fellowship.

Once again I testified that I felt the uplifting effects of the subjects to such an extent that I wished (and I am still doing so) all elders in Nigeria were at the seminar to be so affected. I call on all Nigerian Bible Students especially elders of the various classes in the country to avail themselves of the opportunity these seminars afford in accurate knowledge acquisition to help them improve their relationship with the Heavenly Father, the Lord Jesus Christ, the brethren, and the truth, as well as enhancing their teaching abilities. We all stand to gain from studies as indicated by the Scriptures. (Jude 20,22; Acts 2:42). Thank you."



Some Attendees at June 2009 Dunkwa Leaders' Seminar

Report from Ghana

June 5 - 13, 2009

Bro. Richard Doctor as well as Bro. Homer and Sr. Beverly Montague visited the brethren in Ghana together once again during the month of June as noted above.

They were happy to be greeted at the airport by the Ghanaian brethren, especially Sr. Emelia Boahema who had not been able to travel with the Americans for a couple of years because of illness but on this occasion she was able to be with them and lend her translation expertise when needed.

Although the printed schedule was closely followed, some of the important aspects of the trip occurred while conversing in the van during travels. It was learned, for example, that some of the Ghanaians do not read Twi even though they speak it. Thus, when materials are translated into that dialect, it does not benefit everyone. Nevertheless, Bro. Noah Amoo has taken it upon himself to begin

the translation of the Manna texts into Twi and it will be a blessing to those who can read it when it is completed.

In the Cape Coast area, a stop was made to see how Bro. Rogers utilized the "53 Lessons" for witnessing before proceeding to Dunkwa-on-Offin to retire for the evening before commencing the leaders' seminar on the morning of June 6.

The seminar was a success, both from the standpoint of the overall presentations of the brethren as well as their appreciation of and participation in the studies led by the American elders.

Speakers and discourse topics at the three-day leaders' seminar included Bro. John Quaidoo—Baptism; Bro. Samuel Amoo—*Keep Yourselves from Idols*; Bro. Kyei Berko—*The Law Covenant*; Bro. Noah Amoo—*The Second Presence of Our Lord*; Bro. Paul Antwi—*Evidences of Consecration*; Bro. Thomas Nti—*The Sin Offering*; Bro. Leonard Plange—*The Church's Part In the Sin Offering*; Bro. Jerome Rogers—

The Narrow Gate, The Hard Way; Bro. Thomas Duah—*The Living Word*; Bro. Edward Nkansah—*World Crisis and Outcomes*; Bro. Emmanuel Menu—*The Times of Restitution*; Bro. Moses Baah—*The Death and Resurrection of Jesus*—Bro. Enoch Annan—*Understanding the Second Presence*; Bro. Nana Adu—*God's Plan As Shown in the Covenants*; Bro. Enoch Amoah—*Armageddon, Then World Peace*. This report would not be complete without acknowledging the tireless translation support from Sr. Emelia Boahema, who accompanied us throughout the entire visit in the company of Sr. Sarah Asare.

Bro. Plange arranged to secure a large canopy outside his home for the occasion and it was quite serviceable. It gave a sense of being in the holy of the tabernacle although the friends sat in chairs. Along the outside of the tent, a few goats were seen and in many ways their actions seemed to fit the descriptions of the old human nature of the new creatures.

Time was found within the schedule to distribute the *God's Kingdom Is at Hand* tracts that Bro. George Tabac provided in abundance. This was an important component upon an emphasis concerning the need to spread the Gospel message by whatever means available. Additionally, a distribution of five DVD players was made to leaders who labored in each of the main regions where brethren are located. These were given to Bros. Plange, Amoo, Nkansah, Nti, and Rogers. Bro. Richard Doctor also took the time to conduct a "hands on" orientation of how to use these materials properly. In his report of activities in Accra, Bro. Edward Nkanasah subsequently made the following comment that augurs well for their appropriate utilization:

"Before I end it all, I would like to give thanks to you brethren for the wonderful gift that you gave to the five pilgrim brethren in Ghana. I know that it is going to help us in the harvest work. We are going to put the DVD players to

good use, and I hope that by the Lord's assisting grace when you brethren come to Ghana again you will see more improvement in our studies than you saw previously. The DVD player is easy to travel with, and will help us with our studies when we get home. I started playing some of the CDs like *Creation vs. Evolution*, *The Truth About Hell*, *From Strength to Strength*, and *Why Does God Permit Evil?* By the Lord's grace I will finish the rest of the CDs including *God's Kingdom*, *Israel Born to Destiny*, and *Can These Bones Live* before I hear the talks on the CDs. What makes me happy is that there is a Bible Student Library on this DVD player. Since this has been provided for us, we have no excuse not to give a witness, for the good Lord of the Harvest has provided us with all the necessary tools that we need for the harvest work. So woe unto us if we do not preach the Gospel or use it in the Lord's service."

Following the leaders' seminar, visitations were made to note how the "53 Lessons" were being utilized in Dunkwa, the Western Region, Kumasi, and Accra. Since there were varying degrees of success noted in different areas, suggestions were made where necessary concerning the most effective means of using these materials. During the January 2010 trip to Ghana by American brethren, the same locations will be revisited to note the level of progress made over the past half year in these same regions where the "53 Lessons" have been utilized.

The American brethren concluded their stay in Ghana with a testimony meeting. All the friends recounted the Lord's blessings. One brother who had been involved in the witness work in the Accra area expressed a desire to redouble his efforts in this region since the potential now seems so encouraging for success.



Attendees at September 2009 Leaders' Seminar in Kumasi

Kumasi Leaders' Seminar Report

The tenth Ghanaian leaders' seminar (September 10-15, 2009) was again conducted by Bro. Moses Obire of Nigeria at the residence of Bro. Samuel and Sr. Elizabeth Amoo.

The overall conduct of the seminar was very comprehensive with the brethren all being assigned various discourses taken from material contained in the *Overland Monthly* related to Israel and its place in God's plan. Some of the presentations were considered excellent but as some brethren were unable to use all of the time allotted for their talks, the same discourses will be assigned again during the January 2010 Dunkwa leaders' seminar that the American brethren will attend. As usual, Bro. Obire conducted a series of doctrinal and character studies that enhanced the brethren's understanding of consecration and these were well received.

One important aspect of Bro. Obire's visit was a business meeting in which the pilgrim brethren gave reports concerning

the use of the "53 Lessons" in their witnessing as well as the utilization of the DVD players. Additionally, the friends discussed having a summer leaders' seminar in June 2010 which would not involve participation by brethren from outside Ghana. Representatives were chosen from Accra, Cape Coast, the Western Region, the Central Region, Winneba, and Kumasi who would make the arrangements. Those selected for this service include Bros. Samuel Ainooson, Jerome Rogers, John Quaido, Enoch Amoah, Enoch Annan, and Kyei Berko. They expect to have twelve discourses during the three days and the Pilgrim brethren would only be involved in leading studies such as Bro. Obire or the American brethren do when visiting Ghana. Although the brethren from America and/or Bro. Obire would be available for consultation, this is an encouraging development and demonstrates the increased level of leadership the Ghanaian brethren are beginning to manifest in their spiritual affairs.

Central Region Convention

During the period November 22-24, 2009, the Central Region Bible Students convened for their sixth annual convention in Dunkwa-on-Offin at the Red Baptist auditorium. The speakers on this occasion were Bros. Enoch Amoah, Leonard Plange, Thomas Nti, Thomas Duah, Edward Nkansah, Thomas Duah, Jr., and Emmanuel Menu. Discourses were on the topics *How God Answers Prayer*, *Deny Yourself* (from Matthew 16:24), *The Sin Offering*, *Love*, *Christian Union*, *The Bible*, *The Great Commission*, *On This Rock*, and *Baptism*. Additionally, there were two testimony meetings, a DVD showing on "Why God Permits Evil" and a vesper service. The friends who testified spoke concerning the growth of the truth in the Central Region as well as their joy and appreciation for the blessings received at this gathering.

July 2009 BSCFA Meeting Highlights

1. An election was held to determine which brethren would serve on the BSCFA Board of Directors for the next year. The results were:
Chairman: Bro. Richard Doctor
Secretary: Bro. Bill Dutka
Treasurer: Sr. Nannette Nekora
Other Board members elected include Bros. Ray Luke, Homer Montague, Jim Parkinson, David Rice, George Tabac, and Austin Williams.
2. Funding was approved to continue the initiative of having four pilgrim brethren serve in the various regions in Ghana for witnessing purposes as well as to strengthen the brethren in local classes.
3. In an effort to reduce postage costs, the Bible Students Committee for Africa (BSCFA) Newsletter will be online at:

africanbiblestudents.com/bscfa/index.html

Individual subscribers on our mailing list as well as brethren living outside

the U.S. and Canada will still receive copies via regular mail unless requested otherwise.

A Memorial Meditation

JESUS OF NAZARETH

In the gray twilight of a dreary morn,
A prisoner stood, defenseless and forlorn,
While, to a Roman judge, with boisterous breath,
His fierce accusers clamored for His death.

It was the Christ, rejected and abused;
The King of kings, his sovereign claim refused;
The Son of God, abandoned and betrayed,
An outcast, in the world which he had made.

It was his chosen people whose demand
That timid judge was powerless to withstand;
And, while their baseless charges he denied,
He gave their victim to be crucified.

His chosen people! those he loved and blest;
Whose little ones he folded to his breast;
Who cried more fiercely, as unmoved he stood,
"On us, and on our children, be his blood!"

Oh, Holy Savior! may thy grace reverse
The dreadful import of that reckless curse;
And, on their children, thy atonement prove
"The blood of sprinkling," through Redeeming Love!

—Francis De Haes Fanvier
Reprints, p. 843.

Our Lord's Memorial Sunday, March 28, 2010 (after 6:00 p.m.)

"If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you."—John 15:18

Newsletter items as well as fully tax-deductible donations may be sent to:
Bible Students Committee for Africa
P.O. Box 111, West Hempstead, NY 11552