

As a result of the success of the preaching in the East, the brothers in Benin City in the West of Nigeria have decided to broadcast their own programmes using the same pre-recorded addresses, simply changing the phone numbers to target the Mid-Western region of Nigeria.

It is hugely encouraging to see large numbers of people still interested in searching out the things of God. We ask for God's continued blessing on the work being done and the efforts to bring yet more to a knowledge of his wonderful plan and purpose.

How you can help...

There are so many ways in which you can help your brothers and sisters all across the world. The enclosed leaflet tells you about some of them, including GiftAid, The Giving Machine and the importance of legacies. If you would like any more information about funding or anything else to do with our work then please contact us.

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All the brothers and sisters mentioned in this newsletter and many others across the world depend heavily on donations from UK ecclesias. As funds diminish and more ecclesias are formed it becomes increasingly difficult to provide support for them. PLEASE REVIEW YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS AND HELP YOUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS WORLDWIDE



CBM Newsletter January 2010 West Africa

This edition of the newsletter focuses on three countries in West Africa: Sierra Leone, Cote d'Ivoire & Nigeria.

Sierra Leone:

Sierra Leone is rich with natural minerals such as titanium ore (used in paint) and diamonds but its people are the some of the poorest in the world. Years of civil war and decades of misrule have destroyed the entire infrastructure and social fabric Social indicators are now the lowest ranked by the United Nations (Human Development Index ranks the country poorest out of 177 countries).

The country has the highest maternal, infant and child mortality in the world. Nearly one-third of infants will die before they reach the age of five and one in eight women die in childbirth. Poverty is endemic with 70.2% of the population living below the national poverty line of 2,111 Leones per day (about 34p). Life expectancy is a mere 41 years and the adult literacy rate is 35.1%.



Despite all this the Truth is thriving; the first ecclesia was established in Freetown approximately 20 years ago. It struggled through the war years but since then has grown to over 120 members, with a strong CYC and Sunday school. There is also a nursery school of 80 children, funded by Meal-a-Day. In 1998, 200 miles to the east, another ecclesia was formed in a town called Kenema, and yet another ecclesia in Wanjamma village nearby. Wanjamma is a typical African village with most living below the poverty line, but there are now 30 brothers and sisters living there with a Sunday School of 60.

Sierra Leone has benefited from new ecclesial halls and with the help of project aid the brothers and sisters have started many projects including



agricultural projects to grow food and provide cash crops. There are adult literacy classes in each ecclesia, and thriving CYCs and Sunday Schools.

In 2008 Meal-a-Day took over a school of 150 war orphans in a village called Talia Makia. Interest has since grown amongst the

villagers which resulted in ten baptisms in 2009 and the establishment of a new ecclesia. In 2009 we were privileged to baptise 39 new brothers and sisters across the four ecclesias with as many again receiving instruction.

Listen, my dear brothers: *Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom he promised those who love him?* James 2:5

Cote d'Ivoire (Ivory Coast)

We are used to the blessing of living as part of a community. Imagine if your ecclesia numbered less than 20 and that this was the only meeting in the country. This describes the meeting at Abidjan.

In Abidjan there is a huge contrast between the wealthy few and the rest of the population. The brothers and sisters live in the area known as Port Bouet, predominantly an area of shanty towns. The meeting room provides a centre for all ecclesial activities, including preaching in the immediate locality. The existing room had got into a poor state, with water pouring in from an adjoining building next door. The children at the Sunday School had to be taught outside in temperatures that soar into the high 40s and any baptisms had to be carried out on the beach where the surf is so strong that one sister was swept off of her feet as she was about to be immersed.

The members suggested ways in which the capacity of the main meeting room could be extended, how the children could be protected from the worst of the sun and how a baptismal bath at the room would make the process less dangerous. Plans were drawn up and the brothers turned their

hands to completing the work. The result is a meeting room which is spacious and well ventilated. The energy with which they set about the work reflects the energy that is put into everything, such as the singing which would put many much larger meetings in the UK to shame. Brother Maximus has taught himself to play their small keyboard, and now the wiring has been made safe they can give full voice to their joy in believing.

Nigeria

In Nigeria, radio preaching has been used to great effect. Nigeria is still very religious, with nearly everyone believing in God (whether they are Christian or Muslim). As a result, Nigerians are happy to speak openly about their beliefs.

In 2007 the brothers in the East of Nigeria decided that they wanted to reach more of the population using radio broadcasts.

They approached the local radio station and pre-recorded a series of 13 first principle addresses – enough material to broadcast a thirty-minute Bible address each Sunday afternoon for 3 months. The radio broadcasts went out to great effect, once an initial objection by the radio company about the address on the Soul was overcome (they objected to the idea that we don't believe in an immortal soul, but relented once the brothers asked for their money back!). During each broadcast, mobile phone numbers for local brothers were given out and in the words of one, the phones were 'red hot' with people calling for more information. A large number of contacts were made and as a result it was agreed that a further series of broadcasts would go out.



Subsequently, more programmes have been broadcast and interest has remained high. To date we have had three baptisms directly resulting from the radio programmes. Such was the volume of contacts that broadcasts were suspended for a period during 2009 to allow for essential follow up work. A brother in Aba purchased a minibus to allow the brothers and sisters leading the follow up work to more easily reach the areas covered by the broadcasts.