



# BIBLE STUDENTS' COMMITTEE FOR



# AFRICA

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## Newsletter

## Spring 2008

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### Greetings from the BSCFA

Why do the brethren not remember our Lord's sufferings and resurrection on the same dates for "Easter" and "Good Friday" as the rest of the churches? It is because any undertaking to change the dating of the Memorial must be viewed with deepest concern in consideration of the special warning in Daniel 7:25. The scriptural record is clear that our Lord suffered and died on a Friday, and that he rose again early in the morning on Sunday. Since the church came to recognize that Sunday, rather than the Sabbath (Saturday) as the appropriate day for worship, there was also a desire to see every Passover follow this pattern. This would not be possible without changing the manner of calculating the dates.

However, historical records show that our observance is in conformance with primitive church custom for calculating the Passover. The British people were on the edge of the known world in Roman times and until a formal visit from the Roman Catholic Church, they like all the early church used exactly the same formula as ours for determining the date.

A historian, Bede (731 A.D.) writes: "Now the Britons did not keep Easter at the correct time [NOTE: as he saw it], but between the fourteenth and twentieth days of the moon – a calculation depending upon a cycle of eighty-four years." Bede notes further, that when presented with the changes in custom then in force throughout the

Roman Church, there were, "...Britons, who stubbornly preferred their own customs to those in universal use among the Christian Church." They were the last to change from the ancient observance in 653 A.D. Yet, leaving aside these questions of timing, how thankful we are for knowing and "remembering" Christ Jesus and being covered by his precious blood as we and our brethren partook together of the symbols of bread and the "fruit of the [grape] vine" after sunset on Friday evening April 18 (Nisan 14 – Jewish Calendar).

And yet there are fuller blessings, for which we give thanks. Each follower of Christ Jesus must have a taste at least of all the Master's experiences. Let us not forget, then, to look about us for opportunities for serving the "brethren," the "little ones," the members of the body of Christ who may need our help. Let each be careful not to add to the reproaches that must fall upon all the followers of the Lamb, but on the contrary to offer words of sympathy, and to help bear each other's crosses, difficulties and trials by the way. Thus can we best show to our Lord and Head how we would have appreciated the opportunity of helping Him bear His cross on the way to Calvary.

We know that the Lord is so completely in control of the reaping with his unseen providences guiding the entire Harvest work to its completion. Therefore, we all are eager to trace His leadings in connection with the Harvest work and with its privileges of serving our brethren in Africa and throughout the world. May the Lord richly bless you in spiritual things this coming year.

*Bro. Richard Doctor, Chairman BSCFA*



**February 2008 Ghanaian/Nigerian seminar attendees**



*Group photograph of brethren at Obile*

## **Report from Nigeria** **Agwa Bible Students Convention**

The Agwa convention was held on March 22 and 23, 2008. Its theme was "For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us" (1 Corinthians 5:7). The convention was co-chaired by Bros. Hen Bassey and Chucks Edward and eight ecclesias were in attendance.

The following brethren served:

1. Bro. Vitalis Ekeh gave the welcome discourse.
2. Bro. David Obayagbona spoke on "Development of God's Diamonds."
3. Bro. Lazarus Ukpai's sermon was entitled "Two Parts of a Christian."
4. Bro. Peter Ekeh's talk was "Message to the Laodiceans."
5. A question meeting was conducted with Bros. Cajetan Egbu, David Obayagbona and Lazarus Ukpai serving as panelists.

Bro. Celestine Oledibe chaired a meeting of the Nigerian Bible Students General Convention Committee. There were several items discussed concerning planning for the next Nigerian General Convention scheduled for August 21-23, 2009. Additionally, a report was given concerning the February 2008 Ghanaian/Nigerian seminar. It was also announced that a Nigerian seminar would be established primarily for the elders and leaders of the newer classes to assist them in becoming well grounded in the Truth.

## **Visitations by Bro. Cajetan Egbu**

During the period January 15-22, 2008, Bro. Cajetan Egbu traveled to four ecclesias including Aba 1, Ohoba, Obile and Agwa. Additionally, he met with a number of individual brethren in various homes. At the newer classes, the primary focus was to review "The Chart of the Ages" as well as to introduce a program that was developed in India entitled "53 Lessons on the Divine Plan of the Ages." At Agwa Bro. Boniface Obiukwu gave a discourse on the subject "Upright with God," and Bro. Cajetan spoke on the topic "End Time Events."

## **Report from Ghana**

**February 13 – March 1, 2008**

During the above interval, there was a sustained presence of brethren from the United States and South Africa enjoying fellowship with some of the local friends in Ghana. The spiritual blessings on this occasion included studies, discourses, panel discussions, testimonies, devotional experiences and witness activities. Additionally, one of the highlights of this entire period was the arrival of 15 brethren from Nigeria who participated in the third biennial Ghanaian/Nigerian Leaders' seminar conducted in Accra, Ghana at the Maple Leaf Hotel from the afternoon of February 17, 2008 through the morning of February 20, 2008. There were visitations to various classes in Ghana by some of the American brethren after the conclusion of the Ghanaian/Nigerian Leaders' seminar, but specific assignments were arranged in advance to involve all of the friends, including the



*Sisters entertaining at an evening devotional service*

sisters, in some aspect of the proceedings held at the Maple Leaf Hotel.

The participants from America included Bros. Bob Goodman, Bernard Hicks, Lee Hicks, Ray Luke, Homer Montague, Austin Williams as well as Srs. Ila Hicks, Carmella Luke, Beverly Montague, Lynn Murray and Cathy Sandridge.

Those from Ghana who took part in the program included Bros. Samuel Ainooson, Adam Amoo, Noah Amoo, Samuel Amoo, Enoch Amoah, Enoch Annan, Fred Assah, Moses Baah, Kyei Berko, Edward Nkansah, Thomas Nti, Thompson Tuffor as well as Srs. Salomay Amoo, Rebecca Asare, Sarah Asare, Grace Boatema and Florence Sika.

From Nigeria, the participants included Bros. Joseph Ajise, Charles Aluede, Donatus Ariwodor, Ikechukwu Ashiegbu, Chuks Edward, Cajetan Egbu, Peter Ekeh, John Isife, David Obayagbona, Moses Obire, Celestine Oledibe, Lazarus Ukpai as well as Srs. Georgelyn Egbu, Roseline Obire and Juliana Ukpai.

Bro. Dean Oswell attended from South Africa.

### **February 13**

Following a welcoming address in the afternoon the exclusively Ghanaian portion of the seminar began. Reprint studies on various topics were conducted by American elders, Bros. Ray Luke, Austin Williams and Lee Hicks. There was also a song service in the evening as part of the first day's activities.

### **February 14**

This was a typical day for the Ghanaian Leaders' seminar that commenced at 9:00 A.M. and ended at 9:00 P.M. Three Ghanaian brethren gave discourses followed by questions on the topics "The Times of the Gentiles," "The Kingdoms of this World," and "The Kingdom of God." Reprint studies were led again by the same three American brethren as the previous day. Additionally, a song service as well as question and testimony meetings were held.

### **February 15**

Discourses with questions were given by Ghanaian leaders on "Sin's Penalty—The Cause—Death," "The Three Ways" and "The First Resurrection." Two additional Reprint studies were led by American elders as well as a power point study on "Marriage Pictures in Scriptures." Question and testimony meetings were again provided in the evening.

### **February 16**

Three more discourses with questions were presented by the Ghanaian brethren on "The Better Resurrection," "The Hidden Mystery" and "The New Covenant." Two additional Reprint studies were led by American elders and one power point study concerning "Israel" also was provided. This final evening for the Ghanaian seminar again featured question and testimony meetings.

### **February 17**

A final discourse given by one of the Ghanaian leaders was followed by a testimony meeting and brought to a conclusion the Ghanaian seminar.

Later in the day, after the Nigerian brethren arrived, the Ghanaian/Nigerian seminar began. Following a welcome address there were two mini-talks, one on “Moses” and the other on “Joshua.” These were given by Ghanaian leaders and attested to their growth resulting from a program of conducting leadership seminars during the past few years. It was the first time the Ghanaian brethren were given speaking assignments at any of the Ghanaian/Nigerian seminars. After a brief intermission, all the brethren had an hour of fellowship and an opportunity to renew acquaintances. During that period, however, a “sisters only” study was conducted on the topic “Women’s Role in the Church.” In order to make their session a profitable one, the sisters had received some material in advance to prepare themselves for the occasion and the feedback received indicated it was a valuable experience. Following supper, there was a song service and the American elders had a panel discussion on the topic “Let Patience Have Her Perfect Work.”

#### **February 18**

Discourses were given by two of the American

elders and then two more mini-talks were provided by the Ghanaian leaders on “Abraham” and “Gideon.” Next there were three discourses with questions given by Nigerian elders on some stimulating topics which included “Development of Christ Likeness,” “Wolves in Sheep Clothing” and “Knowledge and Love of God in Perspective.” Interspersed between the first and second of these presentations was a talk given by an American elder. After a testimony meeting and supper, a power point study was presented on the theme “Write the Vision and Make it Plain.” In the hour that followed, a question meeting was held for all the brethren. At that time and in a separate location, a second “sisters only” meeting was conducted regarding “The Chart of the Ages.” Assignments were given to the sisters prior to the seminar to explain various features of the “Chart.” Thus, the power point presentation on the “Vision” was a very appropriate introduction for this study. This was another very successful meeting both in terms of the sisters expressing their understanding of basic features of Truth doctrine as well as emphasizing the important role they have as



*Arrival of Nigerian brethren at seminar site*

members of the ecclesia.

### **February 19**

There was a panel discussion by the American elders on “When Did or Will the Reign of Christ Begin?” A good exploration emerged as to the views held by different brethren on this topic and it was handled in a very positive and constructive manner. The morning session ended as selected brethren gave “Harvest Testimonies.” It was encouraging to hear the different experiences the friends had in witnessing to the Truth in different cultures. Four more discourses with questions were given during the afternoon session by Nigerian elders on the topics “Possession Worth Striving For,” “False Witness,” “Message to the Laodiceans,” and “Glimpse of God’s Throne.” There was an extended period of fellowship after a day of intense studies and during the last half hour of the evening, the sisters presented a most moving program of devotional hymns as part of a “vespers service” conducted by Bro. Austin Williams. This was the third such opportunity for the sisters to have a specific role where they could contribute during the Ghanaian/Nigerian Leaders’ seminar and their services on this occasion provided a special blessing for all in attendance.

### **February 20**

The formal proceedings of this seminar concluded with a lengthy testimony meeting in which the brethren were able to express thanks to the Heavenly Father for the experience. The heart felt singing of “God Be With You” gave all the brethren opportunities to say farewell and embrace one another, especially during a repeated refrain of “Till We Meet at Jesus’ Feet.” Before departing via vans to Nigeria and several locations in Ghana, the friends packed their vehicles with various items of donated clothing and eye glasses. Additionally, because of the extreme generosity of some of the brethren from America who were not present at the seminar, MP3 players and CDs of Truth materials were provided for 19 classes in Ghana and Nigeria. For those brethren who remained at the Maple Leaf Hotel, there was an opportunity to have dinner and fellowship that evening at another hotel.

### **February 21**

A public meeting was held at the Maple Leaf Hotel featuring a power point presentation on the topic “The Gospel of the Kingdom.” For those visitors who came to the viewing, the brethren were given opportunities for one-on-one discussions concern-



*Cross section of brethren listening to a discourse*

ing God's divine plan for the human family. Tracts on "God's Millennium" also were distributed. During the afternoon, some of the friends enjoyed sightseeing in various parts of Accra and also made purchases of native crafts as mementos of their visit. Since Bros. Dean Oswell, Samuel Ainoonson and Adam Amoo were planning to spend the next week presenting the Truth to the public, a few of the American friends who were returning to the United States the following day went to an evening witness activity to support these three brethren. Bro. Lee, Sr. Ila and Bro. Bernard Hicks as well as Sr. Lynn Murray remained actively engaged in serving the Ghanaian brethren for more than a week. On this date they visited I.K. Ecclesia, Zion Camp No.1 and Zion Camp No. 2 as well as Akropong Ecclesias. These are all new classes where discourses were given and requests made for future visitations by the American brethren.

**February 22**

Bro. Bob Goodman, Bro. Ray and Sr. Carmella Luke, Bro. Homer and Sr. Beverly Montague, Sr. Cathy Sandridge and Bro. Austin Williams all departed from Ghana for the United States. All the subsequent reported activities were engaged in by Bro. Lee, Sr. Ila and Bro. Bernard Hicks as well as Sr. Lynn Murray during their travels. On this day they visited Ayanfuri, and The Western Region where discourses were given and questions

asked before returning to Dunkwa.

**February 23 and 24**

A seminar lasting two days was conducted with the leaders from Dunkwa and The Western Region. Sr. Lynn Murray taught Sunday School classes for the children.

**February 25**

The day was spent in traveling from Dunkwa to Cape Coast.

**February 26**

A one-day seminar was conducted at the home of Bro. Rogers. Local brethren as well as Bro. Lee and Bro. Bernard Hicks gave discourses.

**February 27**

Visitations were made to a number of villages where discourses were given. Bro. Debra symbolized his consecration.

**February 28**

The American brethren visited Winneba and met with Bro. Enoch Annan and another brother. After giving a discourse the friends traveled to Accra and met Bros. Samuel Ainoonson and Dean Oswell who had been witnessing in the area.

**February 29**

Bros. Bernard and Lee Hicks gave discourses at Dorymu at the request of Bro. Joshua Dorh who



*Attendees at Spring 2008 Ghana Leaders seminar*

had once been active among the brethren.

### **March 1**

We remained at the Marisa Guest Home and received many brethren who visited us where we testified to the Truth.

All of the American brethren found the time they spent in Ghana to be very rewarding. Bro. Dean Oswell, the Nigerian friends and all the Ghanaian brethren who attended the Ghanaian/Nigerian Seminar expressed great joy and appreciation for the privilege of coming together in one location to give thanks and praises unto the Lord.

### **7th Ghana Leaders' Seminar**

Approximately one week prior to this year's celebration of the Memorial, Bro. Moses Obire traveled from Nigeria in order to serve the Ghanaian brethren at another leaders' seminar. As had previously been the case, Bro. Moses enjoyed sweet fellowship with Bros. John Isife and Donatus Onochie in Lagos prior to his flight to Ghana. He was met at the airport by Bro. Samuel Ainooson who accompanied him to the Amoo residence in Kumasi where the seminar was conducted. Reports from Bro. Moses Obire as well as several of the Ghanaian leaders indicated this gathering for six days from April 11-16, 2008 was filled with many spiritual blessings. The attendees' hearts were drawn together in a special manner in preparation for their partaking of the Lord's Supper. Several in-depth studies were conducted on such themes as "Berean Study on Love," "The Great Day of Atonement," "Our Lord's Memorial Supper," "The Footsteps of Jesus," "Our Baptism into Christ," "What Is a Christian? What Are His Standards?" and "Assembling Ourselves Together – Volume 6, page 309." Discourses given by the Ghanaian leaders included "Selection of the Church," "The Evidence of the Holy Spirit in Our Lives," "Evidences of Acceptable Consecration," "The Holy Spirit," "Our Inheritance in Christ," "Consecration, Justification and Sanctification," and "Elect – The High Calling." The testimony meetings, question and answer sessions as well as opportunities for personal and individualized fellowship made this entire experience of inestimable value and the brethren reported there was much gratitude for the manner in which the Heavenly Father blessed this seminar, especially since there were friends present from several regions in Ghana.

The interrelated nature of these lessons strengthened the brethren's faith and deepened their general understanding of consecration. Some of the friends who had not previously participated in commemorating the Lord's Memorial indicated they were able to do so appropriately this year. The reports from various classes gave evidence that overall, the friends had a heightened appreciation as to the necessity of the consecrated to faithfully observe our Lord's death, in the proper spirit and at the appropriate time. Earlier in this newsletter, it was noted that at the Ghanaian/Nigerian seminar, several MP3 players and CDs were given to the brethren for use in their home ecclesias. One of the CDs received was entitled "The Profession of Our Faith." It contained 60 discourses that were given through the years by various American brethren who were well established in the Truth. The discourses assigned to the Ghanaian brethren for presentation at this past leaders' seminar in April 2008 were selected from "The Profession of Our Faith." This enabled a listener to benefit from hearing what an experienced brother said about that subject as an aid to his own preparation of a discourse on the same topic. God willing, during the June 2008 visit to Ghana for a leaders' seminar attended by Bro. Richard Doctor and Bro. Homer and Sr. Beverly Montague, the American brethren also will hear how the Ghanaians have been progressing in their understanding of the Truth since they will be given the same speaking assignments that they had presented during Bro. Obire's earlier visit. Additional classes of brethren will receive MP3 players and CDs this June if they were not represented at the February 2008 seminar held in Accra.

### **Report from Cape Coast**

In the Winter 2007 issue of this newsletter, a detailed report was provided by Bro. Edward Nkansah concerning his monthly pilgrim visits from Kumasi to the area of Cape Coast in order to promote deeper interest in the Truth by various individuals who had become familiar with the Harvest message. This endeavor by Bro. Edward at the cost of great sacrifice in being away from his family and employment is beginning to show increasing fruitage. During the June 2008 visit to Ghana by the American brethren, one of four public meetings is scheduled to be conducted in Abura Dunkwa, a section of Cape Coast. Since the follow-up on any interest in the Truth must be

done by the local brethren, these summer plans testify to the increased readiness of the friends in this region to apply themselves even more diligently to their studies as well as witnessing efforts. Additionally, for the first time since the four yearly leadership seminars conducted by Bro. Moses Obire of Nigeria and the American brethren have commenced, this June two leaders from the Cape Coast area will be included to give discourses and participate in the concentrated studies that leaders from Accra, Dunkwa, Kumasi and The Western region have been taking part in for some period of time. The continuing thrust of the brethren who have traveled to Ghana from abroad has been to help promote the indigenous Bible Students' leadership by the Ghanaian brethren to the point that they are fully able to conduct all of their affairs. The increasingly positive reports from Bro. Edward Nkansah regarding the spiritual progress made by the brethren in Cape Coast is most encouraging.

## Report from South Africa

We begin with a request from Bro. Dean Oswell to remember Bro. Israel Loji in prayer as he recently traveled again to Johannesburg where his wife has been hospitalized for a second time, necessitating a blood transfusion while also suffering with persistent tuberculosis. (Bro. Israel was immersed by Bro. Dean Oswell and a photograph of this occasion was published in the Fall 2007 issue of the Africa Newsletter).

Despite the turmoil in his life, Bro. Israel continues to be very active in his service to the Truth, by engaging in the translation of the "53 Lessons on the Divine Plan of the Ages" into the French language. This effort will benefit the large field of interested Angolese especially, as well as Burundi, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Mauritian and many others in Africa whose language is French. Since the Dawn magazine has been sent bi-monthly and a brother from France has supplied two sets of the Volumes as well as French tracts, Bro. Israel has arranged a Francophone meeting weekly for interested parties.

Bro. Dean Oswell also reports having secured a facility in the area where a large public witness can be conducted and many brethren in Africa are now able to meet online for fellowship including studies and testimony meetings. Brethren from America and elsewhere who might like to participate in some of these meetings and to offer en-

couragement should contact Bro. Dean by e-mail for further details at [africabible@yahoo.ca](mailto:africabible@yahoo.ca).

Bro. Dean also maintains contact with brethren in Kenya and is involved with Truth interests in Zimbabwe through telephone contact and text messaging. The situation in Zimbabwe is very dire as



*Bro. Dean Oswell*

can be determined on the Internet at [www.thezimbabwean.co.uk](http://www.thezimbabwean.co.uk).

## Correspondence Received

Bro. Noah Amoo, a consecrated high school student from the Kumasi Ecclesia reports as follows:

"I was given an opportunity to give a sermon at the morning services in my school and chose the theme 'Know Your Stand.' This was based upon the Tabernacle Shadows and the students had to identify whether they were in the camp, the court or the holy. I also explained that baptism was not for the washing away of sin but represented a covenant made with God. My classmates had a puzzled look on their faces because they did not understand these matters but I am very thankful for the Truth and will continue to study it as well as live it to the best of my ability."

Newsletter items as well as fully tax deductible donations may be sent to:  
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