

# Travel to Fourth Biennial Ghanaian-Nigerian Seminar (Jan 2010)



*January 24-28, 2010*

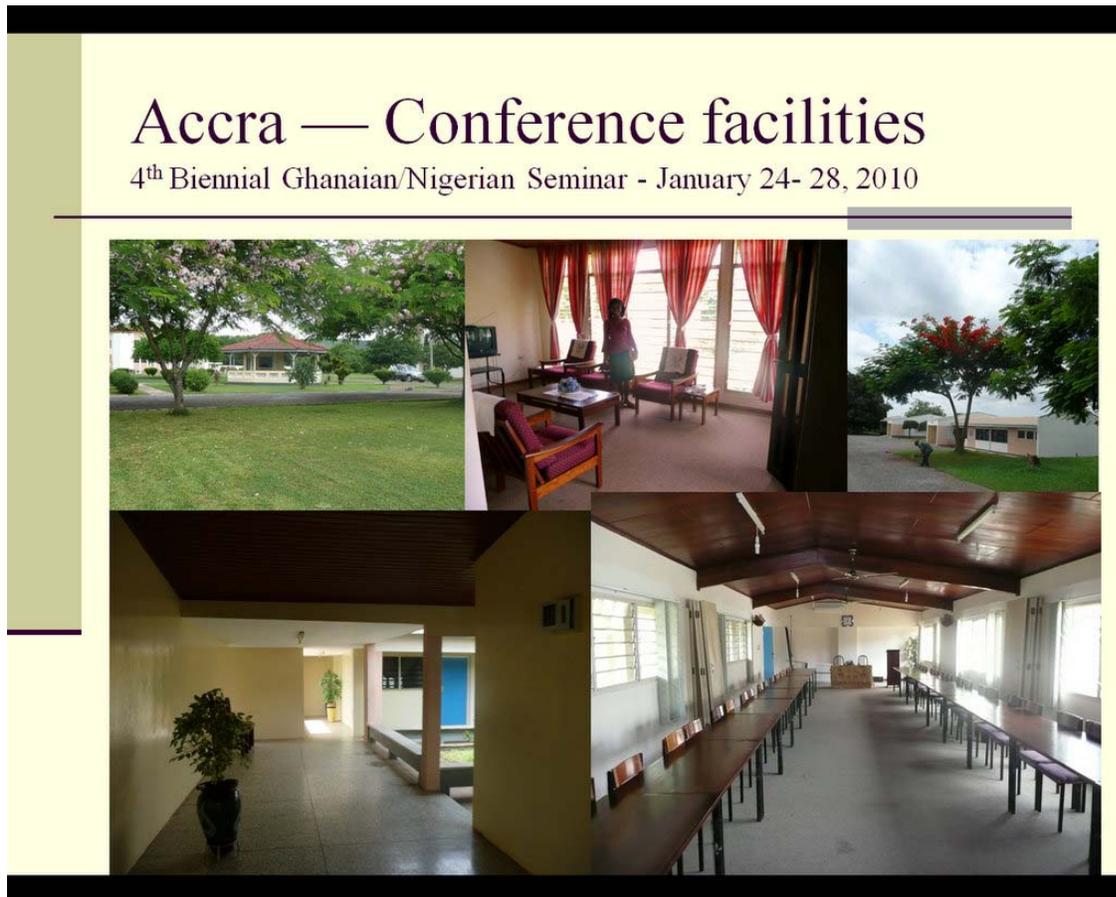
*Presbyterian Women's Center — Accra, Ghana*

# Travel to Fourth Biennial Ghanaian-Nigerian Seminar (Jan 2010)

## *Report from Richard Doctor for 21-30 January 2010*

**OVERVIEW:** The seminar was held at the Presbyterian Women's Center near the outskirts of Accra, the capital city of Ghana. We first visited it in June 2007 to scope it out and this was the first time the facility was used. The grounds are well-built, clean, well-organized and well-managed. There is air-conditioning in the meeting hall. The seminar was organized by Bro. Homer Montague who served as the general chairman. At the close there were ~53 in attendance:

Ghana	27
Nigeria	14
Uganda	1
US/India	11



*Photo Collage from June 2009 visit. The Presbyterian Women's Center*

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*Seminar group photo (by Bro. Len Griehs)*

Brethren from Ghana (27). [1] Kumasi region: Bro. Samuel Amoo, Bro. Adam Amoo (now teaching near Accra), Bro. Noah Amoo, Bro. Isaiah Amoo, Sr. Salomey (Amoo) Hicks, Bro. Edward and Eva Nkansah, Bro. Kyei Berrko, Sr. Rebecca and Sr. Sarah Asare, Sr. Florence Sika, Sr. Grace Boatema, Sr. Pauline Afryie; [2] Ashiman: Sr. Emelia Bohema, Bro. Samuel Anooisan, Bro. Ampofo Ofori; [3] Adesu – Western region: Bro. Thomas Nti, Bro. John Quaidoo; [4] Dunkwa-on-Offin region: Bro. Leonard Plange, Bro. Nana Adu, Bro. Enoch Amoah; [5] Cape Coast - Abura Dunkwa region: Bro. and Sr. Jerome Rogers; Bro. Emmanuel Menu and Sr. Comfort Nyieku; Bro. Enoch Annan

Nigeria (11). [1] Delta region, Bro. Moses and Roseline Obire; [2] Uyo region: Bro. Oscar Akpan, Bros. Nathaniel and Hagensick Umoh; [3] Nbwasi: Bro. Donatus and Sr. Beatrice Ariwodor; [4] Kwale: Bro. Godwin and Sr. Helen Edoja; [5] Lagos: Bro. John Isife; [6] Aba: Bro. Peter Eke.

Uganda (1). Kampala region, Bro. Jjuuko Eliezer

India (1). Bangalore, Bro. Khurrsino Miranda

US (10). Bro. Homer and Sr. Beverley Montague; Bro. Ray Luke; Bro. Lee and Sr. Ila Hicks; Bro. Bob Goodman; Bro. Leonard and Sr. Gretchen Griehs; Bro. Kent Humphreys; Bro. Richard Doctor.

The seminar was held from Sunday Afternoon through Thursday morning. There were 5 panels that included brethren from the US/India/Ghana and Nigeria; 4 discourses of 30 minutes by

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brethren from Nigeria (a 5th scheduled discourse did not take place). These discourses are always followed by a question and comment period of 15 minutes; there were 13 discourses and studies of 45 minutes by the brethren from the US and India; 4 devotional and song services; one extended session on "Harvest Reports" by brethren from Ghana, Nigeria, Uganda and the US; and 3 Sister's studies.

Philip's DVD Players. Because of the challenge and cost of sending books, the idea of loading Truth materials onto SD cards and using low-cost Philip's DVD players (~\$125 with protective bag and power adapter) as a means of more widely distributing a greater volume of more detailed study materials. For example, not only the *Chart of the Ages*, but additional charts such as



diagrams of the *Tabernacle*, the audio versions of the *Scripture Studies* (not the printed version in PDF) and PowerPoint presentations, discourse, and hymns can be placed securely into the hands of many brethren.

The first 5 players were distributed in June 2009. Bro. Bob Goodman, Orlando, FL (pictured, *left*) has been working tirelessly on this project and he arranged for 20 more to be brought along with the brethren on this trip. They were distributed among those traveling from the US so that they would not appear to be a commercial enterprise and so that they would not offer a tempting target for pilfering. One of these did not work upon arrival.

The feedback that we are getting is that the programs with accompanying video content are the most widely used. The players appear to be

holding up in use. The discourses without video can only be followed by those with the highest fluency in English. What is typically being done is that the videos are being shown to a group with the volume turned low and that a speaker in the local dialect provides a running translation. Hence, presentations such as *For This Cause* are the type of presentation that the players are being used to present. Bro. Bob is now investigating linking a translation in the local dialect to the various presentations. I believe that additional training in the use of the players is beneficial.

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Discussion on 53 Lessons. Considerable discussion both in the meetings and in fellowship focused on the most effective way to present the Harvest message. 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*. Some of the best established classes such as Kumasi, Ghana and the brethren in Nigeria use the Scripture Studies, however the feedback from all the brethren is that the Scripture Studies are exceedingly difficult to use because of the language. Recognizing the complexity of the original text, it has seemed wise to see it explained in more simple terms by employing the 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. For example, the *53 lessons* reference terms from the Rig Veda and other classic Sanskrit literature that forms the core of Hindu belief, but is not culturally appropriate outside of India. The *53 lessons* simplify the materials in the Harvest Message 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*.

Seminar. The seminar began Sunday afternoon so that there was a chance for all to arrive and provide some flexibility for the ambiguity of travel. Some of the brethren from the Delta state region of Nigeria required 4 days to reach the seminar. This extended travel was necessary for these Nigerian brethren so they could meet up with all the brethren from the different regions who needed to join the van. These brethren needed to cross 3 international borders to reach Accra (traveling from West to East the borders are: Nigeria, Benin, Togo, and Ghana.) Nigeria (351,649 sq mi) is approximately 30% larger than Texas with an estimated population of around 150 Million. The most populous country in Africa, Nigeria accounts for approximately one-sixth of Africa's people. Although fewer than 25% of Nigerians are urban dwellers, at least 24 cities have populations of more than 100,000. The variety of customs, languages, and traditions among Nigeria's 389 ethnic groups gives the country a cultural diversity. Travel after dark is unsafe as a consequence of the increasing problems with marauding bands, hence, the brethren were forced to camp out at night.

Ghana (92,456 sq mi) with a population of 24 million it is only slightly smaller than Michigan with its population of 10 million. Some of the African brethren here are in their 70s, but it is necessary to keep in mind the demographic realities of working in West Africa. Consider the following demographic statistics for Ghana; *0-14 years: 37.3%* (male 4,503,331/female 4,393,104); *15-64 years: 59.1%* (male 7,039,696/female 7,042,208); *65 years and over: 3.6%*.

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Hence, the mortality rate in Ghana for those aged 65 is just over 96%, that is, you have a 4% likelihood of seeing a birthday past that date. Moving across any border in any direction finds your survival rate plummeting. After age 65 those surviving dropping to 2%, consequently, you are middle-aged in your 30s and the demographic profile is markedly different from the US.



*Brethren in convention sending their love. The physical arrangements permitted the brethren to use tables for laying out their books. The air-conditioned hall was a comfortable 85 F.*

In all, the Lord richly blessed the seminar. Ultimately, the growth and development of Christ in each of us is the object of we seek for most earnestly. This growth is indeed evident in the brethren and this gives us the encouragement to keep up the efforts.

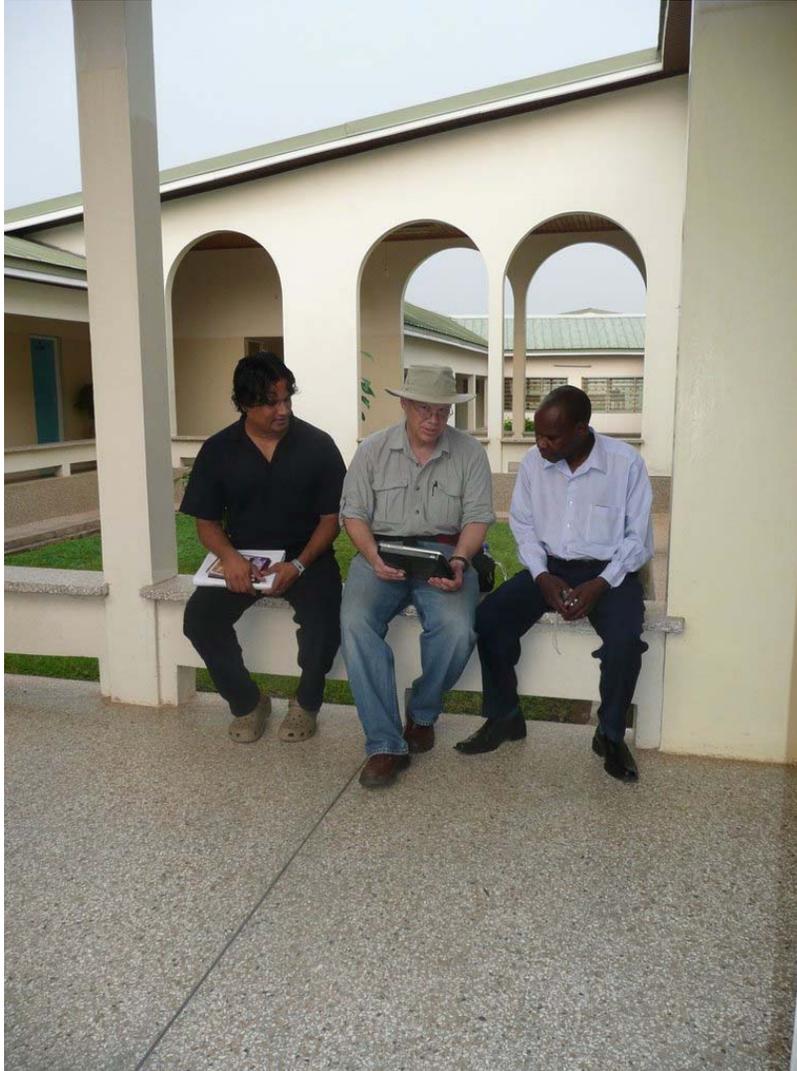
It was a special blessing to meet so many of the brethren only known by name and correspondence for the first time. There is no simple and easy recipe for making saints, so there are challenges, conflicts and problems to be sure, but that is part of what the Christian way is about. In addition to the scheduled sessions there were several significant side meetings:

- A meeting with the interested brethren from Nigeria to discuss Bible Student Committee for Africa sponsorship of Convention in Nigeria.
- A meeting to discuss the initiation of an expanded witness work in the Cape Coast area.

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The arrangements were far superior to a Western-style hotel and its distractions. PWC invited opportunities for quiet and fellowship. The cafeteria-style serving of the food provided an excellent opportunity to meet with various groups of the brethren on a less formal basis for fellowship. The kitchen staff was very good to us.



The PA system was predictably annoying. In general the maintenance at the facility was excellent. The construction was solid and sensible. The concrete and terrazzo floors are common in better African construction to serve as a defense against termites. Because Accra is near the coast, the humidity is slightly lower than the zones inland where the rain falls more heavily. Temperatures peaked at 95°F during the day and cycled down to 81°F at night. It only rained one day -- followed by termite swarms the next (*but that is another story.* )

*PWC a comfortable venue designed for discussions. Here Bro. Bob Goodman, Orlando FL (center) explains the operation of the Philip's DVD player to Bro. Jjuuko Eliezar (right) and Bro. Khurrino Miranda (left).*

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**Sunday January 24, 2010** *Weather-Overcast in the morning 85 F @ 6:00 AM—92 F afternoon*

Chairman: Bro. Emmanuel Menu

3:45 - 4:00 Welcome: Bro. Homer Montague

4:00 - 5:15 **Panel Discussion: “Dwelling Together in Unity”**

Bro. Homer Montague, Moderator with Bros. Adam Amoo, Noah Amoo, Samuel Amoo, Edward Nkansah and Leonard Plange

5:30 - 6:00 *Supper*

7:15 - 7:30 Song Service

7:30 - 9:00 **Panel Discussion: “How the World Tempts Us”**

Bro. Leonard Griehs, Moderator with Bros. Donatus Ariwodor, Richard Doctor and Khurrsino Miranda

9:00 *Songs in the Night*

*By my count there were 44 attendance at the starting session.*

**Monday, January 25, 2010** Chairman: Bro. Jerome Rogers

7:30 - 8:00 *Breakfast*

9:00 - 9:15 *Morning Devotions*

9:15 - 10:00 Discourse: Bro. Khurrsino Miranda “The Sign of Jonah

10:00 - 10:15 *Short Intermission*

10:15 - 11:45 **Panel Discussion: “How Can We Bring the Brethren Together?”**

Bro. Ray Luke, Moderator; Bros. Richard Doctor, Moses Obire and Lee Hicks

12:00 - 12:30 *Lunch*

1:15 - 1:45 Discourse: Bro. Donatus Ariwodor “Choose Ye This Day... (Joshua 24:15, 16)”

1:45 - 2:00 Questions on Discourse

2:00 - 2:15 *Short Intermission*

2:15 - 3:45 Harvest Reports/Testimonies: Bro. Homer Montague

3:45 - 4:00 *Short Intermission*

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4:00 - 5:15 **Study:** Bro. Kent Humphreys “**Matthew 24:42-51**”

**Sisters’ Meeting:** “**Women in the Bible**”

5:30 - 6:00 *Supper*

7:15 - 8:00 Discourse: Bro. Len Griehs “The Philosophy of the Ransom”

8:00 - 8:15 *Short Intermission*

8:15 - 9:00 Devotional: Bro. Bob Goodman “Seek Ye First the Kingdom of God”

9:00 *Songs in the Night*

### **Tuesday, January 26, 2010**

7:30 - 8:00 Breakfast

Chairman: Bro. Enoch Amoah

9:00 - 9:15 *Morning Devotions*

9:15 - 10:00 Discourse: Bro. Kent Humphries “In the Hand of God”

10:00 - 10:15 *Short Intermission*

10:15 - 11:45 **Panel Discussion: “Passing from Death to Life”**

Bro. Bob Goodman, Moderator with Bros. Ray Luke and Khurrsino Miranda

12:00 - 12:30 *Lunch*

1:15 - 1:45 Discourse: Bro. Monday Okoekoh “Be Slow to Anger”

1:45 - 2:00 Questions on Discourse

2:00 - 2:15 *Short Intermission*

2:15 - 2:45 Discourse: Bro. Peter Ekeh “The Great Creator Whom We Worship”

2:45 - 3:00 Questions on Discourse

3:00 - 3:30 *Intermission*

3:30 - 4:00 Discourse: “Bro. John Isife “Our Calling and Election”

4:00 - 4:15 Questions on Discourse

4:15 - 4:30 *Short Intermission*

4:30 - 5:15 Discourse: Bro. Ray Luke “Psalm 19”

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- 5:30 - 6:00 *Supper*  
7:15 - 8:00 Discourse: Bro. R. Doctor "Our Lord's 10 Resurrection Appearances Plus 1"  
8:00 - 8:15 *Short Intermission*  
8:15 - 9:00 Discourse: Bro. Len Griehs "God's Promises to Israel"  
9:00 *Songs in the Night*

### Wednesday, January 27, 2010

- 7:30 - 8:00 *Breakfast*  
Chairman: Bro. Thomas Nti  
9:00 - 9:15 *Morning Devotions*  
9:15 - 10:00 Discourse: Bro. Lee Hicks "Called to Be Saints"  
10:00 - 10:15 *Short Intermission*  
10:15 - 11:00 Discourse: Bro. Kent Humphries "A Virtue of High Price"  
11:00 - 11:45 Vespers Practice and Fellowship  
12:00 - 12:30 *Lunch*  
1:15 - 2:00 Discourse: Bro. Bob Goodman "The Sin Offering"  
2:00 - 2:15 *Short Intermission*  
2:15 - 2:45 Discourse: Bro. Moses Obire "The Nature of our Sacrifice"  
2:45 - 3:00 Questions on Discourse  
3:00 - 3:15 Discourse: Bro. Ray Luke "In God's Hand"  
4:15 - 5:15 **Sisters' Meeting: "Women of the Bible"**

### **Fellowship: Distribution of portable DVD players (Bro. Bob Goodman)**

- 5:30 - 6:00 *Supper*  
7:15 - 8:30 Vespers Practice and Fellowship  
8:30 - 9:00 Vespers: Bro. Len Griehs  
9:00 *Songs in the Night*

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**Thursday, January 28, 2010**

7:30 - 8:00 *Breakfast*

Chairman: Bro. Goodwin Edoja

9:00 - 9:15 *Morning Devotions*

9:15 - 10:30 Prayer, Praise and Testimony, Bro. Lee Hicks

10:30 - 10:45 Closing Remarks, Bro. Homer Montague

10:45 *“God Be With You”*



*Bro. Homer Montague (left), Bro. John Quaidoo, Bro. Thomas Nti*