

CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP TRAINING INSTITUTE and GRASSROOTS LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

sponsored by *Ivory Coast Christian Mission*

Bob & Connie Sheffler
3330 W. Festive Dr.
Bloomington, IN 47403
tel. 812-391-6096 / cell: 812-391-4229
email: robertsheffler@yahoo.com
website: www/grassrootsld.org



Forwarding Agents
Mr. & Mrs. John Ready
3912 S. Yonkers St.
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tel. 812-333-9855

equipping leaders to train others

IVORY COAST CHRISTIAN MISSION - newsletter for May 2011

STEPHEN OFORI IS NEW OVERSEER FOR FELLOWSHIP OF CHRISTIAN CHURCHES

The Christian Churches in Ghana have an association called the Fellowship of Christian Churches. **This association organizes preaching/teaching conventions, youth conventions and other projects to encourage the churches.**

Last Fall, Stephen Ofori, the director of the Christian Leadership Training Institute, was chosen to replace Enoch Nyador as the new overseer (president). Godfred Mintah, who works as the supervisor for our TEE work in Ghana and assists Stephen in many ways, is chairman of the education committee within the Fel-



Stephen challenging the Fellowship.

lowship. Godfred is on the opposite end from Stephen in the group photo.

The bi-annual (every two years) National Easter Convention was held in the Ashanti Region (state) of Ghana. During the convention, Stephen and the other officers for the association were officially installed. **Pray for Stephen as he continues to direct the Institute and carries out the volunteer work of president for the association.**

CHRISTIAN VOCATIONAL GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING

Each year the Christian Leadership Training Institute sponsors a special seminar for leaders held at nineteen (19) locations - one in the country of Ivory Coast, two in the countries of Liberia and Nigeria and fourteen (14) in the country of Ghana. The two for Nigeria were held in March. The other seventeen are scheduled for the months of May, June and July.

The theme for this year's leadership training seminar is *Christian Vocational Guidance and Counseling (theology of work)*. **The seminar explains the importance of being a Christian witness within your vocation.** It emphasizes the priesthood of all believers and explains



The new officers of the Fellowship along with their wives.

To learn more about TEE and how it fills a leadership gap, visit our website at grassrootsld.org



Stephen teaching at the leadership seminar in Nigeria.

that the work of the "clergy" is not more important to God than any other vocation. All work must be done to the glory of God.

These seminars bring many benefits to the churches. There is always great fellowship among the leaders. **The leaders are encouraged, they are challenged**

and they are trained for better service in the Kingdom. Before and after the seminars, meetings are held with leaders of the TEE (theological education by extension) classes to hear reports, give out books for the upcoming classes and solve problems in the classes.

This annual project entails much planning, expense and travel. **Stephen and Godfred Mintah are grateful for the new 4X4 vehicle** purchased for the Institute last fall with a loan taken by Ivory Coast Christian Mission. The bank was hesitant to give Ivory Coast Christian Mission a loan. They felt we could easily and quickly raise the money through special offerings. However, it has been seven months and we still have \$11,700 to pay back on the loan.

LAND PROBLEMS IN NIGERIA

The TEE classes are going well in Nigeria, but the **Cross River Christian College is struggling with class schedules and land issues.** Because of limited finances, many of the students are teaching in primary schools at locations far from the college. Classes are held during the break times of the public school schedule so that the students can work to support themselves and their families.

Recently the college had to pay \$4,000 to cover legal fees and repurchase the land they had already paid for. They originally purchased the land from a family that occupied the land for farming. Later the clan of this family declared that the

family did not have the right to sell the land. In court it was decided that the college had to pay all legal fees and purchase the land from the clan. They could not



Cross River Christian College

collect back money given to the family within the clan that originally sold them the land.

If they do not build a wall around the land, the clan can claim it back and sell it to someone else. One condition for selling the land is that it must be developed soon. Although they have a nice building on the land, they must develop every part of it or put a wall around it to fully claim it. Until the wall is built, the clan and fraudulent land dealers will keep trying to sell parts of it that are not fully occupied. A wall will cost \$20,000.

This is a common problem in Nigeria and a few other African countries. In Nigeria the government claims to own all land. They do not give a title to the land, but only a certificate of occupancy. **The people who originally occupy a land have the right to sell the right to occupy the land, not the land itself.** Much of the land has never been surveyed and documented with the government. Often the land is sold by someone who claims to have the right of occupancy, but does not. **Often a court must settle the dispute and the decision can go to the highest briber.** In addition to this, if the government decides they want land for a government project, they can take it. You must be sure that the government does not have plans for a land before your purchase it. Again, corrupt government officials can take advantage of the circumstances.

POLITICAL PROBLEMS IN IVORY COAST

Roujee Morris and the TEE classes that he supervises in the capital city of Abidjan have been staying under cover the past few months. Last fall, the incumbent president lost the election. However, he did not relinquish power to the newly elected president. He continued to control government agencies and the military. And, they continued to take orders from him. Vigilante forces and some military forces defended him. They attacked anyone who attempted to remove him from power. Civilians who protested the incumbent president were attacked. In one incident, unarmed ladies marched in the streets and six of them were killed.

United Nations forces, who have been there since the civil war in the mid 2000's, protected the newly elected president. He set up temporary administrative offices in a hotel, but he has been prevented from taking control of the government by rogue forces on the ground. **External diplomatic efforts were of no avail in convincing the incumbent president to step down.**

Finally, in only three days, forces loyal to the new

president were able to gain control of the entire country except for the capital city of Abidjan. They systematically fought until they took control of Abidjan. They eventually had the incumbent president cornered in a bunker and were able to capture him. **At this writing, things are still not fully settled in the capital city.**

At one point Roujee Morris wrote, ***"We are grateful to be alive and safe even though life is very uncertain and scary at times. The level of hatred, violence and intolerance is unbelievable. The situation is more complex than complex."***

ISLAM IS DIVIDING NIGERIA

The northern states of Nigeria have an Islamic background. While we lived there in the 1980's there were occasional conflicts between Christians and Moslems in the north that often spread to the south. Occasionally there were conflicts between factions of the Moslems. The conflicts were violent and many were killed. Both types of conflict had to be squelched by military forces.

Our daughter, Chris, attended a Christian boarding school at Jos, a city in the mid north about 150 miles into the conflict area. She lived in a hostel. One morning the house father told them not to worry about the gun shots they heard. **The shots were coming from two factions of the Moslems who were fighting over who would control the central mosque.** That particular conflict did not involve Christians and Moslems.

Today the city of Jos is divided several ways. There are areas where Christians do not dare to go. There are areas where Moslems dare not go. Also, the members of one sect of Islam dare not go into the area dominated by another sect of Islam. Division, violence and hatred have greatly increased due to the influence of Islam in that city.

The conflicts have grown worse over the years. In the past, Moslems in the north were allowed to follow their Sharia laws which involved cutting off hands and stoning to death. These laws were not the official laws of the government, but the Sharia courts and their punishments were allowed to take place among the Moslem communities. **In recent years the northern states have been allowed to make the Sharia law the official law of state governments.** This has caused more conflict between Christians and Moslems and also conflicts between federal and state law enforcement agencies. Islam is not only dividing the city of Jos, **it is dividing the nation.**

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LIBERIA

TEE classes continue in Liberia. However, a more durable motorcycle is needed for Solomon Gargar who has to travel weekly over rough roads to teach two rural classes. The maintenance costs are high due to the type of bike he is using. **A bike that is made for these roads will cost \$3,000.**

GRASSROOTS LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Go to grassrootsld.org to see the new web site for Grassroots Leadership Development. It has been changed and updated. The new site is more informative and easier to navigate.

No training seminars are yet scheduled for 2011. One is tentatively scheduled for February 2012. I believe the economy has forced many missions to cut back on operating expenses and to delay new projects.

I (Bob) have taken early retirement in order to free up funds for the work of the Christian Leadership Training Institute. Ivory Coast Christian Mission is meeting its budget for the work of the Christian Leadership Institute in Africa, but we are only able to make monthly payments on the loan for the new pickup. We are praying for extra funds to purchase a new motorcycle for the work of the Institute in Liberia.

Praise and Prayer Requests

1. Thank God for the courage of African Christians to press on in the face of difficult conditions.
2. Ask God to give them the strength to continue pressing forward in His Kingdom work.
3. Thank God that the conflict between presidents in Ivory Coast is almost over.
4. Pray that the country and the TEE classes in Ivory Coast will quickly recover.
5. Pray for Sunday Ude and the funds to build a wall around the property of Cross River Christian College.
6. Pray for Stephen Ofori as he directs the Institute and serves as chairman of the Fellowship of Christian Churches.
7. Pray for funds to pay off the loan for the pickup and funds to purchase a motorcycle for the work in Liberia.