

April 14, 2017

Happy Sabbath and Days of Unleavened Bread!

I am writing from the capital city of the Republic of Benin, Porto Novo, and have just returned to my hotel after conducting a Bible Study at the home of a long-time deacon. Yesterday, I asked the local deacon his opinion on a good subject for the Bible Study and he replied – “Marriage and Dating”. I think it is interesting that no matter where you are in the world, at the core, as human beings, we all face similar challenges. For young ladies here in Benin, they want to find a good, converted, stable man in the church and the men sometimes lack courage to step up and lead a relationship. And so we gathered, about 15 of us, and discussed the Proverbs 31 woman, examples of strong masculine role models in the Bible and Paul’s instruction to the Ephesians regarding how husbands and wives should treat one another. The bugs were a bit thick after dark in the open air, but thankfully there were no mosquitos. I have enclosed a photo of our Bible Study to give you a feel for the evening.



I arrived in Benin yesterday after completing my first land border crossing in Africa – that was quite an experience with no less than six different check points and lots of money being waived around by people attempting to bribe border guards into allowing passage without proper documents. Thankfully the Togolese and Benin border crossing is between two French-speaking countries that have good relations and no guard asked me for a bribe. Upon arrival in Benin, we were greeted by our deacon and a young man in the church and then completed a 2 ½ hour drive to Cotonou. Benin is the original home of the satanic practice of Voodoo and was also the principle country which captured and then sold slaves to the Europeans for export to the Americas. The effects of both these practices still linger in the nation, but the government, by many accounts, is working hard to address the country’s issues.

This past week, I was blessed to spend the Night to be Much Observed and the 1<sup>st</sup> Day of Unleavened Bread with our brethren in Lomé, the capital city of the Republic of Togo. Togo is listed as #10 on the top 10 poorest countries in the world, but God has been very generous with his people by blessing a long-time leader in Togo with a well-paying job that has allowed the church to build a relatively nice hall and enjoy a truly fine meal for the Night to Be Much Observed. Most people in this area of the world eat only once or twice a day. So, having such a copious meal is truly a luxury. On the 2<sup>nd</sup> day of the Feast, we drove to visit brethren in Momé-Hagou about two hours north of Lomé. There were about 20 who assembled for a mid-day discussion. We distributed a portion of clothing that you generously contributed (the other portions went to brethren in Ivory Coast and Benin) and discussed the difference between the Passover and the Night to be Much Observed (one of the key questions raised). The hall does not yet have electricity or plumbing and it was about 100 degrees and very humid, so it was a bit tiring, but we had a really wonderful time as everyone laughed at my pronunciation of their Éwe names (Éwe is one of the major local dialects in Togo)

There is much I look forward to sharing upon my return, so I will leave you with these highlights for now. Have a wonderful Sabbath and don't forget to eat unleavened bread every day. One of the ladies in Ivory Coast prepared a batch of unleavened bread for me to eat during my trip. I eat some every morning and am reminded about the meaning of the days.

In Christ's service,  
Tim Pebworth  
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