

An Opportunity to Witness for the Lord in Nigeria

By Dale Stafford

On the last day of September of 2004, Bill Barrett and I embarked on a trip to Nigeria to assist and to provide ministry to the saints in Africa. On our first Sunday there we headed to Ugwueke with Hensley* and Friday* . After traversing muddy roads in which we had to get out and walk on several occasions, we finally arrived at our destination. We were greeted by Pastor* as we arrived at the little congregation. In attendance were nine women and children. The congregation had been members of the Community of Christ, but Hensley had made contact with and talked to them about the restoration. Bob Shrunk and John Eichhorn contacted them on their trip earlier this year and the congregation decided to join the restoration movement.

Bill taught a Sunday school class on the purpose of the Church and I gave the sermon. During my sermon I talked about witnessing for the Christ. After church was over and we were sitting around and talking with the members of the congregation, I was prompted to ask if any of them had anything they would like to ask? A woman by the name of Peace* raised her hand and asked “Can you come back and help us witness to our friends and neighbors?” After discussing the matter with Hensley it was agreed that we would come back on Monday and help them witness to the community.

Because one woman simply asked if we could we help them to witness, we had one of the most interesting days in our ministry for the Lord. I believe many people’s lives were also touched by the spirit of God.

We arrived back at Ugwueke late Monday morning. We divided into three groups to witness to members of the village. I went with Pastor* and two women from the congregation. Bill Barrett went with Friday and two or three members of the congregation. Hensley* and Prince * went with several other members.

Our group went to a small circle of houses. We knocked on several doors and 8 to 10 people came out of the various houses. Pastor * introduced me and asked me to tell them about the gospel. After pondering what I should say I began to talk to them about the purpose of the gospel. I began with Adam’s fall and proceeded down through history explaining God’s love and the sacrifice his Son made for each one of us. The Spirit gave me freedom of speech and the words flowed. Other topics covered were about there being two baptisms, the Book of Mormon, the apostasy of the church and the restoration of the gospel. I talked to them for about twenty minutes and we then moved on.

After walking a short distance we arrived at a couple of homes. Again the same procedure occurred and I talked with another group of about ten people. The spirit was again present. With each group encountered the spirit seemed to grow stronger and I felt that the spirit was validating what was being shared. We then moved on to a third area, this time about 15 to 20 gathered around to hear what we had to say about the gospel. As people would walk by they would stop to see what was happening. By the time we finished witnessing there were about 30 or 40 children and adults that had gathered around.

As we continued to walk around this village which was devoid of any modern conveniences, such as electricity, it was as though we had stepped back in time. We took time to administer to several people. We administered to a man who had been sick for three years and a young child who was sick. Later we administered to a woman who was

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severely handicapped by a stroke and the spirit lead me to pray that the Lord would prepare her heart to meet Him.

Later our group met up with the others. As all of us began to walk down an old dirt road towards the center of the village, we passed a small eating establishment. We were beckoned to come over and sit by some tables and within five minutes we were surrounded by about 40 to 50 people. Hensley asked me to go ahead and witness to them about the Lord Jesus Christ. As I began to speak, the spirit filled my mouth with the words to say. As I proceeded I could tell that I was speaking with the power and authority of the Holy Ghost. I can't recall everything that I was given to say, but I do remember that the Lord called them to repentance and to prepare their lives for his second coming.

We then proceeded to an open area in the middle of the village which was almost like a town square. People began to follow us and this time more people gathered. There were a lot of adults and even more children. This time I motioned for Bill Barrett to take the lead. As he began to expound and encourage them to repent, the spirit once again was there in great abundance as the people listened. After Bill finished, I felt led to ask the little children a question. I simply asked them "who loves you more than your parents?" One little girl raised her hand and said "Jesus". As I continued to talk to the little children I could tell that they were listening and absorbing what was being said.

While Hensley and Prince were witnessing they were approached by five young men who were smoking and drinking. One of the young men asked them sarcastically, "What does God think about us?" Hensley told them that he knew God loved them in spite of their drinking and smoking. Two of the young men became angry and left. Of the three that remained, two said they were going to quit drinking and smoking and would start going to church again.

Hensley and Prince also talked to several families who were members of the church and had quit going to church. Several of these families promised they would start going to church again.

Bill Barrett's group also had several good experiences and also administered to several people while they were witnessing.

This particular experience reminded me of what it would have been like to be with Christ as he walked from village to village and house to house. It would have been wonderful to be a part of that ministry as people followed Christ around and as they stopped to listen to what he had to say. Perhaps the Lord gave us a glimpse of what it will be like when his priesthood are endowed and go out two by two to witness.

When we finished our day at Ugwueke, we felt richly blessed and encouraged by the day the Lord provided. I also felt that the hearts of many people were touched by his presence and I pray that many of their lives were changed.

Never discount the impact you can have on the lives of others. Often it can be as simple as a word of encouragement or an act of kindness. This wonderful day took place because one woman simply asked the question, "Will you come and help us witness to our friends and neighbors?"

* Last names have been removed for privacy.