

WEST AFRICAN ADVENT

 The word "MESSENGER" is written in large, bold, block letters. Behind the letters is a stylized map of the African continent. The map is filled with a grid pattern, and the letters of the title are superimposed over it.
 

# MESSENGER

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## The Sacredness of Church Membership

By **FREDERICK LEE**

Associate Editor, Review and Herald

Is it possible that the sacredness of church membership is not appreciated as it should be? It often appears so. Too many members are lost to the church merely because they do not keep in active contact with the church where their membership is recorded. As church boards go over the list of names on the church books from time to time, they find those whom they are unable to trace and from whom they have not heard for many months and even years.

What should be done with such delinquent members? They have not committed any great sin, perhaps, for which they should be disfellowshipped. They have not lost faith in the principles they have professed to believe. They have simply neglected to keep the line of fellowship open, but for this they must be put on the list of missing members. If they are missing too long, then they must be pronounced dead to the church and their names taken off the records.

It is with no feeling of satisfaction that a church must do this. It is always a painful process to take off names and always a joyful one to add them.

The general rule of the church regarding missing members is that they may be dropped when they have been absent from the church for two years and have made no contact with the church during that period. However, before this is done the church officers should be sure they have put forth every effort possible to find such persons to learn of their Christian experience. When this has not been done a serious mistake may be made in dropping a member.

In one instance, certain members of a small church were disfellowshipped because they had not been heard from for a long period, when they were in fact at the time working faithfully in one of our institutions. While it may have been well known in certain quarters where these people were, yet the local church may not have had any knowledge as to how they might find them. And it is even possible in our growing work that the local conference officials might have no knowledge that certain people are employed at some institutions in our work. As the membership of the church grows, and large city and institutional churches are developed, it will become easier for a member to be lost.

Thus the largest responsibility in regard to continued church membership rests upon the member himself. He can offer no excuse for loss of membership status if he does not keep in touch with his local church. No matter how well known he may think his affairs and his location may be, there is always a possibility of an unintentional mistake being made if he does not preserve some active contact with his church.

### An Active Membership

Perhaps too many feel that once a member always a member. This may be the situation in some churches, but it is not so in the Seventh-day Adventist church. Church membership is a matter that has to do with active belief. The church is made up of people who hold the same faith and seek to perform a common task which they believe has been

committed to them by God. When one no longer believes in the truths held by the church or is not an active member in the church, then he ceases in fact to be a church member in spirit whether or not his name is upon the record book.

Christ, in His instruction to His disciples, made it possible for the church to keep its records clean. The church should strive toward perfection. It should seek to keep its records as nearly like the records in heaven as possible. However, with the finite insight of man, those appointed to care for the church and keep it pure cannot possibly know the true standing of all the members of the church before God. When it is clearly evident that a member has no regard for either the truths of the church or the commandments of God, then it is the duty of the church to act, and sever his membership after it is seen that the member is unrepentant.

Perhaps some feel that a minor thing such as not reporting one's whereabouts to the church should not be a sufficient cause for losing one's membership; yet in substance the indifference thus shown reveals a lack that testifies against him. One who regards church membership thus lightly needs to be given instruction as to its sacredness and the duty of keeping active contact with the church.

To be a member of the body of Christ is a sacred privilege that must not be compared with any other relationship in life. One must never be indifferent to it. The fellowship of church members should be a close one. The activities of the church should be kept in mind. Attendance at Sabbath school, Sabbath worship, and prayer meeting should be considered not only a duty, as it is, but also a privilege. Close contact should be kept with church officers. All members of the church should be free to ask counsel of the church pastor, the elders, deacons, and deaconesses. Requests for visits in the home should be made. Though these officers are often overburdened, they are always only too happy to answer request for help. They should be kept informed as to the status of each member.

When members are to be away from the church for an extended period of time, church officers should be informed as to the whereabouts of the member. If one is to be resident in another place where there is a church, the membership should be transferred. If, on the other hand, the stay is to be only temporary, or if for other reasons one does not wish to have his membership transferred, then it is the duty of the mem-

ber to keep the church fully informed as to his spiritual experience.

In the early days of the work, when churches were small and the organization simple, the quarterly service was the time for reading off the church list. If the member was present, he would stand and witness to his faith. If the member was to be absent, he would write a letter to the church, stating his continued faith in the message. If a member was not thus contacted, church officers endeavoured to find the missing one.

#### Keeping the Church Informed

It would be a fine thing if this procedure could be continued to a certain extent. If a member is to be absent from his church for some months, it would be well for him to write a letter at least once a quarter to some officer of his church, telling of his faith and hope in the Lord.

Another way for the member to keep contact is to send back to his church at regular periods his tithe and general offerings. This at least would be some evidence of his faith in the truth and would keep the officers informed as to his whereabouts. It is the duty of the member to pay tithe to the local church where he keeps his membership. The local church appreciates this not only because all financial and soul-winning goals are reckoned on the active membership list but more particularly because the church can thus keep track of its members and be somewhat informed as to their Christian experience.

What we wish to emphasize here is that it is the duty of the member to be active in his church relationship, to keep in touch with his church officers, and not wait for them to contact him. Although the officers have their own responsibilities, they cannot completely fulfil them unless they have the active co-operation of the member. It is far easier for the lone member to keep the church informed as to his status than it is for the church to seek this information from all its members. It is the duty of the member to take the initiative in these matters. When a member understands the sacred privilege that is his, he will remember to do this.

*Review and Herald*, April 26, 1956.

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Not only to say the right thing in the right place but far more difficult still, to leave unsaid the wrong thing at the tempting moment.—Sala. *Review and Herald*, March 22, 1956.

## The Restoration of God's Truth

Part I

By J. C. Clifford

Former President, Gold Coast Mission

In our recent Sabbath School lessons here in the homeland, from the book of Isaiah, we have seen how far the people of Israel had departed from God. The prophet goes to the root of the evil conditions of his day when he states: "Truth is fallen in the streets." Isa. 59:14. The prophet Daniel foretelling the work of the apostate church, said it would seek to "cast down the truth to the ground." Dan. 8:12. We can see that Satan himself would be the author of this plan to overthrow God's truth, that he might gain control of the lives of men.

It is easy for us to see that the evils in our world today are with us because men have put aside God's truth. But God has not left us alone. It is His plan to restore truth to its rightful place, and for this purpose He has called the church into being as "the pillar and ground (or support) of the truth." 1 Tim. 3:15.

Thus it is our task, as workers and members of the church of God, to lift up God's truth, to proclaim it to the world, and to live it in our lives; for Jesus tells us that we shall be sanctified, or prepared for heaven, by the truth, which is found in the Word of God. John 17:17.

Perhaps no two aspects of truth have been so consistently opposed by Satan as God's two great gifts to mankind in the garden of Eden, namely, the institutions of the Sabbath and of marriage.

Let us think first of the Sabbath which was given to man as a sign and unchanging memorial of God's creative power, Gen. 2:1-3; Exod. 20:8-11. But when man sinned, the Sabbath also became the reminder of God's recreative or redemptive power, Ezek. 20:12, and is thus doubly important to the child of God, who finds in the gospel the "power of God" to deliver him from sin and Satan and to make him a "new creature in Christ Jesus." 2 Cor. 5:17.

But the Sabbath has ever been the target of Satan's wrath, a truth that he would like to cast down and destroy. How many times did God have to condemn His people in the ancient days because "My Sabbaths they greatly polluted." He called this an act of rebellion, Ezek. 20:13.

And in the last days of earth's history in which we live, how cleverly has Satan

schemed to cause men to forget God's holy Sabbath, and to tread it under foot as a common day. It was through his craft that the great apostasy attempted to make Sunday—the ancient day of the sun—into a supposedly holy day, and to reject the example of Jesus and the apostles in keeping holy the seventh-day Sabbath. Only the other day a man tried to convince me Jesus was not a Christian, but a Jew, because He kept the seventh-day Sabbath. Thus "Truth is fallen in the streets."

Then we know that among the Mohammedans Friday is venerated as a sacred day, and again God's holy Sabbath is trodden under foot. When living in South-east Nigeria I learned that the Ibo people had, until the coming of the white man, a week of four and of eight days, which is yet another example of how tradition has trampled upon God's truth. So when God would prepare a people who will be ready to meet Jesus at His coming, the proclamation of the Sabbath truth is a vital part of the last gospel message. Isaiah calls it the repairing of the breach, the restoring of paths to dwell in. Isa. 58:12-14.

Thank God that truth will triumph. We are called upon to proclaim the truth, and to live the truth, that we might be sanctified by it.

In our next article we shall consider how Satan has sought to cast down the truth concerning God's sacred institution of marriage.

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Theodore Parker, American theologian (1810-1860): "Let us do our duty in our shop or our kitchen; in the market, the street, the office, the school, the home, just as faithfully as if we stood in the front rank of some great battle, and knew that victory for mankind depended on our bravery, strength and skill. When we do that, the humblest of us will be serving in that great army which achieves the welfare of the world.—*Sunshine Magazine*, May 1956.

Woodrow Wilson, 28th President of the U.S. (1856-1924): "No man has ever risen to the real stature of spiritual manhood until he has found that it is finer to serve somebody else than it is to serve himself."—*Sunshine Magazine*, May 1956.

It has been, and ever will be lawful to attack vice, if you at the same time spare the individual.—Burton, *Review and Herald*, March 15, 1956

## The Problem of Church Buildings

By J. K. Amoah, District Leader,  
Bekwai, Gold Coast Mission

One of the greatest needs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in West Africa today is that of better church buildings in which to worship the Creator. Here in the Gold Coast we see many development plans going ahead in preparation for the coming independence day. Other colonies are making similar plans for improvement and expansion. But what are the Church members doing about their places of worship in order that they might better serve people who enjoy freedom from sin, trouble, and woe?

The world today is full of covetousness and selfishness. People are always thinking about themselves—what to eat, drink, and wear. Although church members do not go to such extremes, they do try to dress nicely for church services, but are then forced to worship in dilapidated church buildings. Some hold their meetings in leaking thatched-roofed and bamboo buildings. Others worship under the shade of trees, which prevents them from conducting any service during the heat of the day or in a rainfall. Others do not care to weed around their churches, and because of this the grounds are ill kept. Brethren and sisters, these are hard words, but are facts which we all know.

Perhaps we should, as members of this Church, buy less clothing. After taking our

chop money and our children's school fees out of our salaries, we should give a liberal offering for good edifices for God. We should realize that such an investment in a place of worship is even more necessary than in our own homes.

We should constantly keep in mind that church buildings serve not only as places of worship, but as monuments reared in the community to show all men that we love God and are active for Him. Better church buildings tell of the activeness of the members and attract visitors and strangers to our places of worship. We have a good denomination, and our churches should advertise what we are.

Let every church and company begin to raise funds or do communal work to erect a good place of worship for the Most High God, and He will bless the faithfulness of such believers. Let no one say that he is poor and can not help. Remember that the Israelites who had just come from bondage and slavery sacrificed to give their silver, gold, stones, timber, skins, and thread for the construction of the tabernacle in the wilderness. They gave until they were asked to stop, for the materials were more than needed. That is the spirit that should prevail among the people of God today as it did in the days of old. This wonderful record is one that the Church of God should emulate today.

Pastors, Evangelists, Teachers and Church Officers: Your responsibility is great toward this problem. Your motto should be "Arise and Build." Will you not do your best today and rally your members together for this all-important programme? May the Lord bless you as you "Arise and Build."

The enthusiastic members of Ntonso, Gold Coast, built this beautiful church almost entirely by their own efforts. God will be pleased if your church members will follow their good example.



## The Light Shines in Kwahu

By L. Acton-Hubbard, Nursing Superintendent,  
Kwahu Hospital, Gold Coast Mission

"Ye are the light of the world, a city that is set on a hill cannot be hid." Matthew 5:14

Standing on the porch of the Government Agent's house we looked across Mpraeso, over the roofs of Atibie and there nestling in the side of the hill we could clearly see the hospital buildings and the staff dwellings above them.

"You know" he said, "we certainly envy you at night when we see all the light you have over there."

The hospital is blessed with a good electric plant and at night is well illuminated. It looks quite striking from the areas around and is something of a landmark. Such a statement would, of course, bring thoughts most obvious to the mind of any Christian. As I stood and looked down upon those two towns I wondered. Could there be people in those buildings who are also envious of the light? Are there seekers after truth, looking out of their darkness and observing the light, who would like to partake of the blessings we enjoy so much?

"There must be" I said to myself. It was with these and kindred thoughts in mind that I martialed the young people together and told them of my plan. We decided to go out each Sabbath afternoon to visit, distribute literature, and tell, very simply, the story of redemption. How our hearts thrilled at the thought.

The period of the progressive classes was used in learning to sing hymns to the accompaniment of the piano-accordion, under the able supervision of Mrs. Hubbard. Some of the boys got together and planned choral pieces in that style which belongs so much to the Gold Coast. A messenger was asked to salute the chief "Nana Atibie" and ask him if we might hold our little effort in his town. He said we might do so, and we should hold the meetings before his house.

The following Sabbath the group met, and after a short prayer we made our way to the appointed place. The chief, the Queen mother, and the elders assembled with about 80 non-believers to hear the beginning of the story. The Story of Redemption is now eight weeks old. Thousands of "Signs of the Times," "Our Times," and tracts in the vernacular have been distributed. The male students have sung many anthems, and the people

come to hear us. Some have even begun to make their way to our Sabbath Services.

Yes, Friends, the young people of the hospital are sharing the light that has been given to them and the Lord is adding His blessing. The students are holding several before and after meetings and are gaining interests. In the course of one meeting a catechist from another mission in another town intruded and asked awkward questions at the end of the meeting. He was given a hearing and his questions were answered to the obvious satisfaction of the chief, his elders, and the assembled company.

Yes, a new day is dawning in Atibie, Kwahu. The Holy Spirit is in this work and I feel we are right as we reiterate the words of our Lord. "Say not ye, there are yet four months and then cometh the Harvest? Behold I say unto you, lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest." John 4:35

Please pray for us in our humble effort to bring sheaves to the harvest of the Lord in that great day of ingathering.

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### EVEN THOUGH IN DEBT TO FELLOW MEN

"The man who has been unfortunate, and finds himself in debt, should not take the Lord's portion to cancel his debts to his fellow men. He should consider that in these transactions he is being tested, and that in reserving the Lord's portion for his own use he is robbing the Giver. He is a debtor to God for all that he has, but he becomes a double debtor when he uses the Lord's reserved fund in paying debts to human beings. 'Unfaithfulness to God' is written against his name in the books of heaven. . . . The man who would rob God is cultivating traits of character that will *cut him off* from admittance into *the family of God* above."—"Testimonies," Vol. 6, page 391.

### SOLEMN WARNING

"When the church is in difficulty, when coldness and spiritual declension exist, giving occasion for the enemies of God to triumph, then, instead of holding their hands and lamenting their unhappy state, let its members enquire if there is not an Achan in the camp. With humiliation and searching of heart, let each seek to discover the hidden sins that shut out God's presence."—*"Patriarchs and Prophets,"* page 497.

## Seventh-day Adventists Enter Mid-west Nigeria

By D. K. Omoleye,

Voice of Prophecy Secretary, West Nigerian Mission

On the 30th of April, 1956, a delegate sent by the Mission left Ibadan, the headquarters of the West Nigeria Mission, for Siluko-Benin City in the Mid-West to find out about the possibility of starting our work in that part of Nigeria. For years the Mission has been looking forward to the time when God would make it possible for us to enter the Mid-West of Nigeria so as to have a link to join together our work in the East and West of Nigeria.

Thank God that in this year our hope has materialised. The door was opened to us by a graduate student of the Voice of Prophecy, Mr. M. A. N. Utuedoye, who comes from the Mid-West of Nigeria. He decided after the completion of his course of Bible studies, to accept the Message and to follow the light which God had shown him.

He wrote to the Mission Headquarters, Ibadan, for help. In his letter he stated that he and his family had decided to keep the Sabbath which is the seventh day of the week, and that he wanted the Mission to send a worker to come and help them and lay plans to start our work in his village and area.

To this call the Mission responded at once, and I was selected to go to Siluko to look into this new interest.

It took me one day and part of another to reach my destination. I spent over two weeks with the people there, and found that the information Mr. Utuedoye had sent was indeed true. He had definitely made his decision to accept the Truth. During this period of two weeks and several days in and around Siluko, public efforts were conducted, private Bible studies were given, and many house to house visitations were made. As a result the first Sabbath School was organised in Siluko on May 5 of this year with a total number of 21 people in attendance. On the second Sabbath, May 12, the number was increased to 25.

During the activities of the second week, we went to another village called Ikoha, across the river and about 12 miles away from Siluko where Mr. Utuedoye is teaching a very good school. We spent four days here holding several public meetings, giving Bible studies, and visiting from house to house.

Many "Do you Know" tracts were distributed. Here we were able, by the grace of God, to accomplish good results.

The first Sabbath School was organised here with a total attendance of 45, and before we left this place many had promised to give up their evil habits such as drinking and smoking.

Before we left Siluko for Ibadan a piece of land was secured from the native Authorities that we might have a place on which to build a house of worship. The people of the village assured us that they would clear away the bush, and render all necessary help so that the work may be done quickly.

Mr. Utuedoye is an educated man, and was at one time the manager of several schools in the Benin area. When the Government of Western Nigeria launched its free Primary Education scheme in 1955, Utuedoye handed over most of his schools to the Native Authority for management and control. He retained one, however, which he has now decided to hand over to the S. D. A. Mission for management. If this takes place it will certainly help our Mission to get established in this heretofore unentered area of Benin.

Today we are able to see some of the good results of the seeds sown by the Voice of Prophecy Bible Correspondence School of Ibadan. May God bless these new converts in Siluko and the surrounding area so that our work may grow and spread in this Mid-Western section of Nigeria.



A few of the first group of Sabbath Keepers at Siluko via Benin City, May 12, 1956.

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A bad boy might be saved with a little brothering.—Roy L. Smith. *Review and Herald*, March 22, 1956.

## The Village Blacksmith Witnesses

By A. M. Moyer

President, Sierra Leone Mission

Just about three quarters of a mile from our mission headquarters, is a very small village of four houses. The mud-walled thatch-roofed buildings are sheltered from the hot tropical sun by a mammoth cotton tree. This is the village of Brother Daniel Allie, a most faithful church member.

Let us take a look at Brother Daniel working in his little open booth. It is just about ten by twelve feet. The roof starts at about three feet and is almost seven feet high at the peak. Palm branches are used as roofing and all sides are open. Inside Brother Daniel is pounding with his hammer on a red hot piece of metal from an auto spring. The sound rebounds from the surrounding forest and sparks fly from the anvil. Daniel gives a quick smile of satisfaction as you look at his work. To his left is a small boy working the bellows. They are made from two calabashes about twelve inches across with the tops cut off and covered with loose goats' skins, which are moved up and down.

The village blacksmith is a familiar sight in the larger villages, but the unusual part of this scene is Brother Daniel himself. He is badly crippled and his legs are doubled underneath him. He can walk on his bent limbs only with great effort. Most people in his condition would only sit idly about and wait for others to care for them; but Daniel can be found in his little shop early in the morning and late in the evening. He is also training a young boy, who is in a similar condition, to be a blacksmith.

Daniel's anvil is silenced on Sabbath as a testimony to the day of rest. In his village he gathers the small group about him to study the Sabbath School lessons and to prepare for baptism. He has learned to read and write in the vernacular. Just recently he has brought in money so that we may order him a wheel chair to make it easier for him to come to visit our church at Bo.

I was once asked, "Do you have 'rice Christians' in your field?" To this I had to answer, "Yes, we do have 'rice Christians' the same as you have in the United States or anywhere else. Some do come merely for the loaves and fishes." But far more are like this crippled brother, anxious to help themselves and also to help others in their search for God and in their march toward the kingdom.

## News Notes

✘ Pastor C. B. Mensah, acting President of the Gold Coast Mission, and Pastor A. Nzotta, District Leader in East Nigeria, will leave about the middle of August for a one-year course of special studies at Newbold College. May God go with them.

✘ As this paper goes to press the Union Committee is in session. Some of the important items under discussion are:

1. How we can get our members to be more faithful in tithe paying and thus become more self-supporting. This would enable us to enter many new territories.
2. Church Building Programme.
3. Evangelism and revivals.
4. Promotion of a special edition of *The Desire of Ages*.
5. The "Review and Herald" for every worker.
6. The *Church Manual* in the hands of each worker, and in every church.
7. Teachers encouraged to turn to full time evangelism.
8. Recommendations for a revised policy.

Five extra African leaders have joined us to study these problems, making a total of eight in all. Their help and counsel is greatly appreciated.

✘ Miss Fern Gibson, daughter of the Union President, arrived by air on June 15. She has finished two years of college work or her inter-arts level. Her major is English, and her interest lies in the field of editorial work. We welcome her back to Africa after six years in America.

✘ Pastor C. D. Henri, our new Union Evangelist, hopes to move to Lagos this month to start his campaign there. Let us remember him in our prayers.

✘ We welcome Dr. S. Nagel and family back to Ife Hospital. We trust they have enjoyed a good furlough.

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The easiest way to get into trouble is to be right at the wrong time.—*Sunshine Magazine*, May 1956.

## News Notes Cont'd.

### LIBERIA

✘ Brother and Sister Nathaniel Gibson of Liberia have been appointed Liberian Consul General to Nigeria, and they will be stationed at Lagos. This is a very high and important diplomatic post.

✘ Hon. C. Flammer Sherman has been appointed Liberian Consul General to London, England. Sister Sherman is a faithful and devoted Adventist member of the Lower Buchanan Church.

### SIERRA LEONE

✘ Pastor and Mrs. J. N. Vandt are happy to announce the birth of twins, a boy and a girl, on 26th June 1956 at the Bo hospital. Pastor Vandt is the leader of the Moyamba District.

✘ The Ingathering campaign was started in Freetown by Pastor J. B. Leigh, Brother J. Muderspach, and Pastor A. M. Moyer. In four days £171 was collected. Mr. K. Vandt and Mr. Thomas Mormah assisted for one day.

### EAST NIGERIA

✘ Pastor E. E. Hulbert reports continued success in his evangelistic efforts at Calabar. Seventy adults and thirty children attended the 13th Sabbath School there.

✘ The M. V. and S. S. Secretary, Mr. Nwabia has been able to visit and organise the M. V. societies in 20 of our schools with an enrolment of about 5,000 pupils and teachers. We are looking forward to the time when these young people will take an active part in helping to finish this message.

## *The Advent Messenger*

Official Organ of the  
West African Union Mission of  
Seventh-Day Adventists.

P. O. Box 1016, Accra, Gold Coast.  
Editor - - - - - J. O. GIBSON.

✘ Advanced Evangelistic students commenced an evangelistic effort in the Aba township July 8th. We solicit your prayers for the success of this effort.

✘ Baptisms in the Aba, Umuocha, Etche, College, Elele, and Ekpeye districts have been conducted. The total number is in the region of 300 souls baptised.

### IVORY COAST

✘ Permission was granted to us to hold religious meetings weekly in both Abidjan and Bouake prisons. So far the attendance has been far beyond our expectations. We hope, with God's help, to win many souls to Christ by these meetings.

✘ Land has been purchased in Divo on which to build a school. We plan to have it opened by this coming September.

### GOLD COAST

✘ Successful Missionary Volunteer Rallies have been held in three districts. A total of 2,000 youth attended.

✘ 146 Laymen attended the recent Laymen's Institutes conducted by Pastors T. L. Oswald and E. Keslake. The Laymen set for themselves a total goal of 1,614 souls for the next two years. During the report session of the meetings 1,382 souls were reported to have been won and out of these 490 had been baptised.

### WEST NIGERIA

✘ A new dormitory which will house about 36 students is now under construction at our Teacher Training school, Otun, West Nigeria. Our present over-crowded sleeping quarters will make this new building very much appreciated.

### NORTH NIGERIA

✘ Pastor Welch recently paid his first visit to the North Nigerian Mission. In the few days he was there he visited Jos, Jengre and Kano.

✘ Evangelistic efforts have just begun in Kano and Kaduna. The effort in Jos is nearing its close. Ten or eleven persons have signed the covenant promising to obey all the commandments of God.

✘ The two most successful Ibo colporteurs are working in Kano. Others in Zaria, Kaduna and Jos are doing well also.