

## **AECM REPORT ON LIBERIA, WEST AFRICA**

February 23 - March 07, 2000

1. Liberia is a nation that just recently emerged from a long period of civil war. Although the war left much of the infrastructure in ruins and the nation without electricity and adequate communication systems, there is much evidence that God is raising up and unifying spiritual leaders for a time such as this. Many believers fled to neighboring nations such as Ghana during the war. They told me of the difficulties and dangers they faced during exile, but also how they went preaching the gospel everywhere (Acts 8:4). One leader testified that churches were planted into Muslim communities as a result of the believers being scattered abroad. Indeed, what Satan meant for destruction, God worked for good.

2. I arrived at Robert's International Airport on Friday, February 25, after a forced overnight in Abidjan. The tropical heat of Liberia quickly became a daily foe. I drank a case of water in about two days. There was no electricity and most eat only once a day. I soon observed that this is a nation whose leaders say they need and seek God, but in reality most seek money. No price is settled. I call it the "land of bribes". Even so, this is where God had sent me and I gave thanks for my house of provision with the Peters family and all that was set before me. They truly cared for me as the servant of God. This is also where young Bishop Alexander Collins of Latter Rain Harvest Evangelistic World Outreach Ministry, Inc. lives. I tested this leader to see if he was truly raised up by God and found him trustworthy in all things. He is hoping and planning to come to the Annual Assembly in June.

3. The Latter Rain Harvest Evangelistic World Outreach Ministry is a young and growing network of churches and ministers. The network of now more than 35 churches was birthed from a vision God gave Alexander Collins less than a year ago. Although Brother Collins is quite young, 26 years of age, God has given him favor with government officials and church leaders in the region. I met at least four officials including the Minister of Justice and the Speaker of the House. The latter declared, "Without God we cannot survive!" This was impressive at first, but I wondered if he spoke more as a politician than a sincere believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. Brother Collins knew them all and they seemed supportive of the growing network of churches and ministers. The goal is for the network to span all 13 counties of the nation.

4. The daily schedule challenged me to trust God for the strength to finish the mission. I preached 15 times in ten days at churches, revival meetings, and crusades. I also conducted four days of Leadership Training. There were 278 salvations with around 40% of these involving backsliders returning to the Lord. I witnessed at least 16 deliverances and many healings. I was able to plant 26,000 LD (\$650) into Latter Rain Harvest, 16,000 LD (\$400) into Bethesda Camp of Child Evangelism Fellowship, and seed offerings into the churches I visited. I also received a word for Liberia, which I proclaimed to church leaders and government officials alike. On February 26, God gave me Isaiah 43:17 for Liberia. It was God who stopped the war and it was God who would not allow it to rise again. They were not to remember former things (43:18) because God was doing a new thing (43:19). There would be a new outpouring upon the nation (43:19-21) and a new song (42:10-12). This time God was going to march across the land and prevail through His church (42:13). God anointed me to proclaim that He has a plan for Liberia. I believe Liberia is one of the key gateway nations in God's plan for the end time harvest. Both the timing of my visit and the AECM partnership were confirmed daily in all our hearts.

5. The Leadership Empowerment Seminars were very effective as avenues to help local leaders to break with older crusade and revival formats. The meetings in Buchanan were a great learning experience for the young network. The leaders and host church they had sought to work through did not have their hearts into the work. In fact they did not notify the network that another seminar was going on at the same time until the day of the seminar. It was reported that most leaders were attending that seminar because they offered free Bibles and certificates. Nevertheless, 25-30 attended our seminar with about 15 of these being from the Buchanan region. The host church also had some religious strongholds that made things even more difficult. Brother Collins quickly mobilized the network intercessors to begin strong warfare praying. Although this led to a breakthrough during the final crusade meeting, it was a defensive posture when they needed to be engaged months earlier. The network will be much wiser next time. The seminars in Monrovia were attended by at least 48 church leaders. It was a very anointed time together. Each seminar ended with the laying on of hands and anointing with oil asking for an increase of empowerment upon each leader.

6. Three revival services and six nights of crusades were conducted during my time in Liberia. I sensed there was something wrong with the pattern of these events by the time we reached Buchanan. I had asked Brother Collins to preach one of the crusades there and his assistant was scheduled to preach the first crusade upon our return to Monrovia. This gave me an opportunity to observe them ministering and the effect of the crusade format. The order of service at the crusades (prolonged praise sessions, offerings, church announcements, etc.) clearly supported the blessing of believers more than the reaching of the lost. Brother Collins was very receptive to my input and began to make some changes. These changes were in place when I preached the crusade in Monrovia on Friday, March 3, and led to the greatest impact at any of the crusades with 45 salvations and a strong move of God. In fact, an additional 51 came forward for deliverance and healing. God had captured the attention of the network leaders because they could see that the changes resulted in a much stronger penetration to unbelievers.

7. I was able to meet with Bishop Isaac Winker who leads another network of around 12 churches. The Isaac Winker Global Ministries, Inc., is based in Monrovia. He also is pastor of Dominion Christian Fellowship Center. I was excited to hear his vision because it was identical to the harvest vision of the AECM. He received an AECM packet and wants to fill out an application. Pastor Winker also is president of the Full Gospel Minister's Association. Although I was unable after several attempts to personally meet with Bishop Yarkpa of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Africa in Buchanan, an AECM packet was delivered to him.

8. The networks and leaders I observed showed some signs of excellent unity. I observed some things, however, that need to be broken for the new to come. Brother Collins and the network demonstrated they are open to change and even made some significant adjustments during my stay. Church leaders in Liberia have borrowed many patterns from Nigerian leaders. Not all are good or even necessary. I encouraged them to seek God for direction and not to violate biblical principles. I strongly exhorted them to break from the old *survival vision* and to acquire God's perspective of things. They were very receptive of the following guidelines:

- Must locate & work through the key leaders in a city or region to be most effective
- Choose very carefully the location to host seminars, revival meetings, crusades (avoid legalistic Pentecostal Holiness churches as host church)
- More orderliness and punctuality in planning & carrying out events will increase the impact and bring more glory to God
- Crusades are not designed to bless believers or repeat another Pentecostal/Charismatic worship service, but to reach the lost. (offerings, prolonged praise sessions, church announcements, etc. are inappropriate in this setting and only serve to delay the word of God. God's focus is saving the lost! Every aspect of the service must reflect God's focus.)
- For network members to charge the network for use of instruments and facilities weakens real unity and the network (This practice brought some strife into the network in Buchanan)
- Do not make financial provision the driving force of the vision and do not bill international teams for their ministry to you (I Tim. 3:3; 6:10; Matt. 6:19-24)
- The host network is responsible under God for the safety/lives of international teams (Use extreme caution regarding unsafe taxi drivers and vehicles, but trust God for official vehicle, etc. Keep in mind a day of rest for team members)
- Most international teams will need to stay in hotels due to heat, etc. (Do not be offended at this when it costs you nothing!)

9. The AECM has a strong future and role to fulfill in the nation of Liberia. This trip was in the perfect timing of the Lord. They greatly appreciated God sending someone who would speak truth to them in love. They desire a real partnership with the AECM. All of West Africa will be impacted if we proceed with sincerity and wisdom.

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