

18th March 2025

Dear Friends,

Greetings in the name of the Saviour. I was so thankful for all of your messages of encouragement and support throughout my time in Africa. As with last year, I travelled on behalf of Evangelical Press Missionary Trust to support and encourage the ongoing work of Europresse (the French publishing and ministry arm of EPMT) in Africa. This included time in Togo and also in Benin for the Grace Conference West Africa organised by Europresse Afrique. It was a joy and privilege to serve alongside the team whilst I was there - Jean-Claude Souillot (France), Paul N'Goran (Ivory Coast), Vincent Dua (Ivory Coast), and Julien Naka (Benin).

It is hard to convey in a letter like this the full extent and joy of what the Lord is doing. We can absolutely say that He has done great things for us whereof we are glad! It is staggering to see the impact of the Gospel in the most unlikely places and that the Word is not bound.



Europresse Afrique -
Paul N'Goran (Ivory Coast),
Vincent Dua (Ivory Coast),
Jean-Claude Souillot (France),
Julien Naka (Benin)

Togo - Growing Opportunities

I joined the rest of the brethren who were already in Lome, Togo. I was very relieved to arrive after my flights had been cancelled by one airline the day before I was due to leave! Thankfully other arrangements were quickly put in place and I was soon stepping out into the 38 degree heat. My Visa was linked to the cancelled flights which could have been a problem at immigration, but the Lord overruled, and after some tense exchanges I was allowed through.

The time in Togo saw opportunities for ministry in a number of different churches which have a growing interest in the message of sovereign grace. The ongoing influence of the Europresse books and other resources is very encouraging and being used of the Lord to bring people to a deeper understanding of the truth. On the Saturday, Jean-Claude and Paul preached two messages to a gathering in the 'Eglise Baptiste Biblique' in Djidjole which is a suburb of Lome. This was

followed by a Q&A session where some had very searching questions over biblical truths such as sovereignty, election, and the outworking of those things. On the Sunday, each one of us had been invited to preach in various churches, and I had the blessing of preaching in Djidjole via translation. As I was sat quietly just before the service began, the noise of howling, screaming, and shrieking could be heard from another meeting across the street. There was a 'prophetic deliverance and exorcism event' in process and it struck me that in such close proximity you had false teaching on one side of the street and then the truth of Christ on the other. As one old preacher stated - *'when God builds His church and does wonderful things in the lives of sinners - Satan is never very far away, often building his own chapel next door!'* As we came back together from the various places it was clear that the Lord had been pleased to grant His help and there was a good hearing in each of the churches with a great hunger for the faithfully preached Word.



'Eglise Baptiste Biblique'
Djidjole, Lome



Paul N'Goran preaching at the
Saturday meetings in Djidjole.

On that Sunday afternoon we were invited to a gathering on the other side of the city that meets in the home of a man called Florent. Vincent preached from Ephesians and the blessing continued with the sharing of a meal together. For many years, Florent was in a Christ-less 'church' and it became increasingly difficult for him to go because he is also blind. Yet, in the Lord's providence, Florent was listening to our radio programmes called 'Les Echos de la Verite' (The Echoes of the Truth). Through these messages, the Lord wonderfully worked in Florent's heart and by grace he was brought to saving faith in Christ. Contact was made with Jean-Claude and Julien establishing a precious relationship. Florent has such a deep love for the Saviour and longs for others to come to know Him. To this end, he has a meeting every Sunday in his home where the Word is heard either through faithful preachers or listening to our radio programmes. It was very moving to have that time of fellowship with Florent and his family and a further testimony to the wonders of grace.



Florent at the meeting in his home.

On Monday we travelled over the border to Benin, but on the way we stopped at Radio La Grace on the outskirts of Lome. Arrangements had been made to record another message for broadcast. The recording studio was in one of the sprawling suburbs of the city and not the easiest to find! Yet, we arrived just in time and Jean-Claude was able to preach the Gospel of grace with great clarity. The rest of us were very quiet whilst sat alongside him in the studio! It was particularly poignant for me to see this after hearing the story of Florent the day before. We cast our bread on the waters and the outcome is in the Lord's hand and for His glory.



Jean-Claude recording a message at Radio La Grace.

Europresse Afrique Planning

The Conference was being held in Grand Popo, Benin and an early arrival gave us a day together before it was due to start. This was an invaluable opportunity to be together and talk over the work. This included looking at the many encouragements, current challenges, and plans for the future. They are dear brothers and the fellowship with them was very sweet. They love the Lord, His Word, His cause, and desire the glory of God. It is a wonderful outworking of sovereign grace to have a unity in Christ which transcends all natural boundaries such as a culture and language.



Discussions about the work of Europresse.

There are many encouragements and the appetite for the books remains strong. Julien and Vincent alongside their roles as pastors in Benin and Ivory Coast, are our operatives on the ground. They promote the message of sovereign grace through their ministry and the sales of the books. Under the pastoral care and ongoing encouragement from Jean-Claude, they have been used of the Lord to point many to the great truths of the Scriptures and strengthen the Grace churches. Quality titles continue to be produced through the labours of Jean-Claude for sale throughout the French-speaking world. These resources are also shipped and sold in French-speaking

Africa. The books are able to go where we cannot and it is so encouraging to see the message reaching the unlikely places.

We are incredibly blessed at the moment with such faithful servants of the Lord in this work. However, one of the great challenges on the horizon is succession and a new generation of men with the heart for the message and right vision to follow in the work.

Grace Conference West Africa - Grand Popo, Benin

The Grace Conference had previously been designed for men on the Europresse preaching course. However, over the years as the appetite for biblical teaching grew, the Conference was opened to a wider audience from amongst the Grace Churches and also to contacts in other countries. Big numbers would be easy to gather, but the Conference is for those serious about the Word and so it is by invite via the church pastors.



The costs are entirely covered through the work in Africa and gifts from the churches and individuals. The Conference also gives the opportunity for a book stall with many of the Europresse titles available.

Many of the churches involved in the Conference are pastored by men who have previously come through the preachers course run by Europresse/EPMT and who have been helped by the resources produced. Jean-Claude has been

greatly used of the Lord to encourage the churches in the Word and commitment to the true Gospel when there is so much 'dead religion' around. Discernment and clarity about the Gospel are vital and especially in this setting when there is so much confusion about what true Christianity and conversion is.

Around 100 people gathered for four days of ministry from Benin, Togo, and Ivory Coast. Many others will listen to the messages which were recorded at a later stage. The days were full with preaching meetings, prayer times, as well as Bible Study and Q&A sessions. Messages were given by Jean-Claude, Paul, Julien, Vincent, myself, and a number of local men from the Benin Grace Churches. Amongst the many blessings, the time of Bible Study was particularly rich and saw very fruitful discussions. There was a real willingness to look for answers in the Scriptures and to submit to the Word, not just personal opinions. Throughout the Conference, there was a sense of the Lord dealing with us and many were deeply impacted by the preaching of the Word.



Julien Naka preaching the opening message at the Conference followed by a picture of some of the delegates.

Grace Church, Zogbo, Cotonou

On the Sunday following the Conference, Jean-Claude and I were with the fellowship in Zogbo where he preached in the morning service to a full building. This was then followed by a Men's meeting which was due to be for around forty-five minutes. After a short exposition from Daniel, discussion was opened up on the lessons from the passage. Time flew by and those discussions were still happening over two hours later. One of the overriding concerns was how the church should seek to maintain its zeal and seek the Lord. There was a concern that spiritual temperature was beginning to drop amongst them! It was very humbling to me that they should have this concern considering how it was still burning hot in comparison to much of what we know here in the UK.



A blessed time with some of the men from the Zogbo church.

Over the time spent amongst the Lord's people here, I could not help but be blessed by the enthusiasm for the Word, the evident love for the Lord, and the warmth of the fellowship. There are many challenges for the people but as they kept telling me they trust in a great God who is in control.

Prayer Points

- Give thanks for the ongoing ministries of Europresse and Jean-Claude's faithful ministry in French-speaking Africa. Pray that as we look to the future, the Lord would provide for those who can follow on in the work for the future.
- Give thanks for Julien Naka (Bohicon, Benin) and Vincent Dua (Gagnoa, Ivory Coast) as they continue to promote the literature and resources of Europresse in West Africa. Pray that they would be strengthened as they serve in their local churches as well as in their wider ministry and that the Lord would provide others to come alongside them in the work.
- Give thanks for the growing opportunities in Togo and deepening interest in the truth of sovereign grace. Pray that the churches with which we have contact would come to a greater understanding of the Scriptures and be faithful in their proclamation of the Gospel in a sea of error and opposition.
- Please pray for the Grace Churches throughout Benin as they maintain a Gospel witness. Pray that the leaders would be encouraged in their work and that the churches would be kept from those who would seek to do the churches harm.

Thank you so much for your ongoing interest and prayerful support. There is so much more that could be said. If you or your church would like to know more about this visit, or about the wider work of EPMT, please do let me know. We are currently working on EPMT's online presence as well, but there is a place to sign up for planned updates on the cover page of the website found at www.evangelicalpressmissionarytrust.com

Yours warmly in Christ,

Jonathan Stobbs

