

News Update – May 2011



Dear friends,

Successful charities have a clear vision, strong personal relationships and a sound organisational structure. Grace & Light was founded on the vision of the Gospel, openness and love. The Gospel of grace and forgiveness remains at the heart of what we do, and our HIV-positive members would testify to the difference their hope in Christ makes. The concept of taking HIV testing to where people are, pioneered by Grace & Light, is now widely practiced in Nigeria. Encouraging those tested to be open about their status is not really understood, even amongst Christian HIV/Aids organisations.

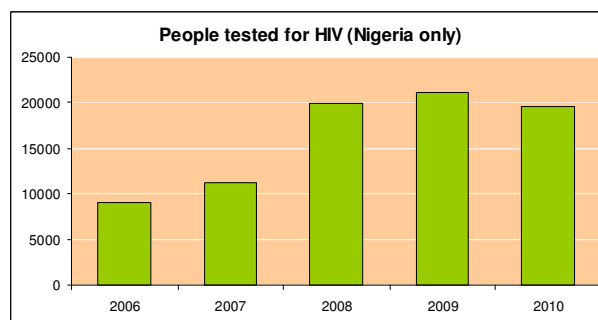
The biggest challenge for Grace & Light remains that of love, our third principle. Openness is of little use if the Christian community is not willing to support those living with HIV, or to hold one another to account in life-sharing groups. Our International Coordinator, Tassie Ghata, put it like this: "Life sharing isn't a strange extra thing that Grace & Light is trying to add on to the basics of Christianity; it is something essential that the church badly needs – not cosmetic surgery but a life-saving blood transfusion."

It is tremendously encouraging to see the vision of Grace & Light spreading to other countries. New volunteers have been trained in Sierra Leone, Liberia and Zambia, accounting for nearly half of the total for 2010. Whilst this stretches us in terms of finances and human resources, we rejoice in God's provision thus far.

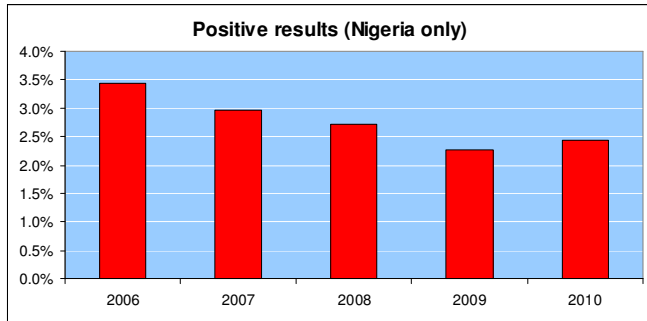
In the charity sector HIV/Aids is seen as a 'hard sell', people prefer to give their money to other causes. But we know that the prayers and faithful giving of our supporters do make a difference. People are coming to Christ, transformed and churches preach the whole gospel. Grace brings grace and light.

Review of activities

Achievements during 2010



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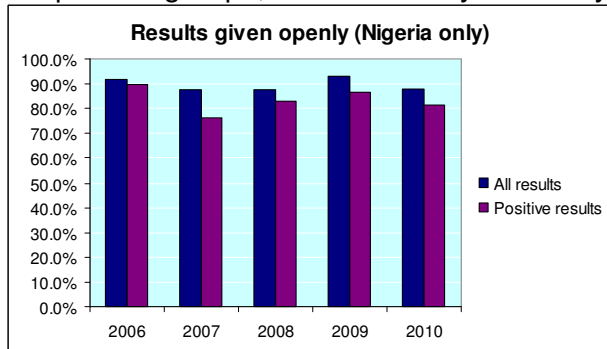


Looking back at 2010 the greatest encouragement has been to see Grace & Light reassert itself outside Nigeria. Starts had been made in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Chad previously but with limited success. With our International Coordinator, Tassie, only able to visit about once a year, it is vital to have proactive boards and volunteers. This has not always been the case. Tassie was glad to be able to return to the first two

countries in 2010 train volunteers and appoint new boards. In Zambia, a totally new country for Grace & Light, Idah Kayeka was appointed to be the first Programme Officer and 25 volunteers trained. When the Zambian team started ministry, we were struck by the much higher incidence of HIV in Zambia compared to W. Africa, over 10% as compared with 2.4% in Nigeria.

The ministry in Nigeria suffered for a lack of resources, in terms of finances and manpower. Most volunteers stay with us for about two years and thus the need to constantly train new volunteers is great. In 2010 lack of money meant we were not able to run many training programmes, impacting the number of churches visited and resulting in missing our target of testing 25,000 people. It is nevertheless encouraging that the message of openness is still well-received in churches, despite the widespread opinion that only those with something to hide will take an HIV test.

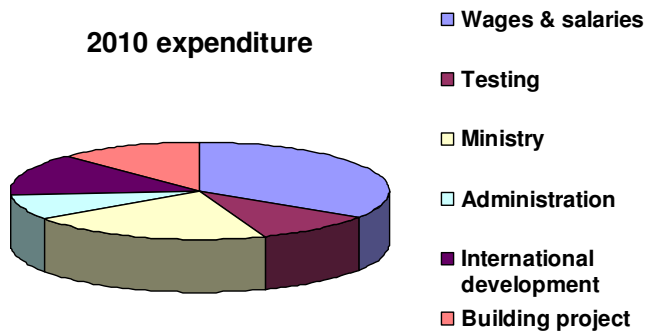
The real measure of Grace & Light's achievements will always be the effectiveness of life-sharing groups. After every new church is visited new members (those who have tested openly) are put into groups, coordinated by the newly-formed church action committee. It is very hard to



share the intimate details of one's personal life with fellow believers to help prevent the spread of HIV. These are matters that many of us find hard to talk about even with our closest Christian friends. Life-sharing remains a challenging goal, but one worth pursuing.

Another major development in 2010 was the start of building on the site of Grace & Light's Jos headquarters. A fence has been built on the two sides without a road boundary. In the African context having your own headquarters

adds greatly to an organisation's credibility. Whilst ministry is our priority, we are conscious of the need to make progress on construction.



Total Income 2010

15,282,674 Naira

Total Expenditure

16,042,565

Naira

Plans for 2011 and beyond

Our benchmark this year is to touch the lives of 30,000 people through our gospel messages, HIV counselling and testing and Care and Support (life sharing) for both HIV negatives and positives.

We intend to see God bringing attitudinal change, commitment in serving Him and close connection to shared life in Christ for all our members.

Please join us in praying that we will achieve this target in His strength; pray also for God's provision of necessary human and material resources.

Prayer points

- Pray for the impact of life-sharing groups in churches.
- Pray that we may find the right balance between quality and quantity of volunteers.
- Pray for all positive members, that they will lead holy lives, and for those who are negative to care for them and remain negative.
- Pray that our churches will be the home of love and righteousness instead of worldliness, segregation and denominationalism.
- Pray for the new teams in Sierra Leone, Liberia and Zambia that they may not lose their zeal.
- Pray that God will raise up more donors, so that the work might expand.
- Pray for renewed strength and vision for our International Coordinator, Tassie, and International Chairman, Mark Hopkins.