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GEMS

GLOBAL EVANGELISM MINISTRY SERVICES

COVID-19 and the Great Commission



Michael Williams Family



Working His Works: Having His Vision for 2020

By Michael Williams,
Director of GEMS

John 5:19: *“Then answered Jesus and said unto them, **Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise.**”* (Emphasis mine)

Covid-19 and other events that have coincided with it have literally rocked our world! It has taken the norm from us to the point we don't know what normal is. It seems so many facets of life have changed and we wonder if things will ever be the same again. The good that has come out of this is that for many of us Christians, we

have had a sometimes-false concept about what church, missions, evangelistic outreach, etc., is. Hopefully, now that God has shaken everything up a bit, we are more open to follow Christ in His works. You see, we can easily put God in a box and try to get everything we think, say, and do concerning the aforementioned areas to fit inside our box. It is as though we are praying for our will to be done in Heaven rather than His will to be done on earth because, rather than asking God to show us how to get involved in His works, we set up our idea of how to work for Him and then expect Him to get involved in our work. Many Christians and churches have become bewildered wondering how we can serve Him in pandemic conditions because what we thought were the only ways to serve Him were basically shut down. Hopefully, now our eyes can be opened to be like our dear Saviour Who, of course, is the perfect example we have of what it means to serve the Father. Jesus told us that He would look to see what works the Father was doing and then He would do those works.

This one verse of Scripture and the principle taught in it (and there are many more that line up with it in principle), if understood and utilized, would revolutionize our lifeless, stoic churches into thriving assemblies of people passionate about working with Jesus. Here is what we should do in our personal evangelism, church outreach, in missions, as a Christian:

1. Watch to see where and how God is working.
2. Get involved with His works.

It may not be orthodox. It may not be anything like what you have done before. It may not make sense (and probably will not). It may require a change in philosophy. It may consternate the “Pharisees and Sadducees.” It may require self-sacrifice (and likely will). However, here are a few of the benefits:

1. When you work His works, the yoke is easy and the burden is light. (Matthew 11:30)
2. When you work His works, all that's needed will be provided. (John 14:14)
3. When you work His works, they will abide as gold, silver, and precious stone instead of wood, hay, or stubble (your own works). In other words, you will bear fruit. (John 15)



Let us learn from these times! Let us forget about how God is supposed to work and what that is supposed to look like; let us, rather, look for His works and get involved in whatever it is.

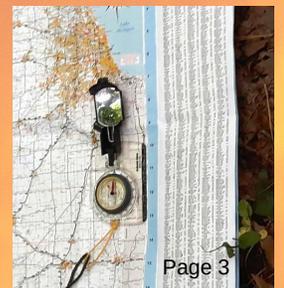
During the early part of the pandemic God allowed my family and me to get involved with what God is doing in our church for Missions. We put together a several-week virtual Ignite Youth Missions Conference, hearing from and talking to many missionaries and ended with a two-day missions training time with missionary Jason Dover.

GEMS (Global Evangelism Ministry Services) is a ministry out of Calvary Baptist Church, 3812 Kirby Parkway, Memphis, TN 38115-5288. These ministry updates are published at least four times a year and may be requested at no cost by mailing to the above address or by going to our website at <http://www.gems4christ.com>

Ignite Youth Missions Conference



During the two-day missions training time, missionary Jason Dover taught the Ignite youth group survival skills based on his years of experience as a missionary leading expeditions to the remote jungles of South America.





Since our last update we have seen many changes in our world. If we are not careful, we could be moved by the environment we find ourselves in. If we are going to be steadfast and unmovable it will not be upon the sand of this world. We must be firmly planted on the Rock. "Thanks be to God" that in these uncertain times we can be certain of victory. May we abound in the work of the Lord because our labour is not in vain.

"But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." I Corinthians 15:57-58



Coronavirus in Ghana

"Though I walk in the midst of trouble, thou wilt revive me: thou shalt stretch forth thine hand against the wrath of mine enemies, and thy right hand shall save me." Psalms 138:7

The Coronavirus has had a far-reaching impact in Ghana as it has had in the rest of the world. Almost every aspect of life here has been impacted in one form or another and churches have been no exception. Large portions of the population were under a complete lockdown from March 30 – April 20, and all church services were suspended March 16 – June 7. Though we were unable to hold services, we were able to hold eight Bible studies each week in the villages and in our residence. We missed our regular services but God used the Bible studies as a wonderful time of discipleship and fellowship. On Sunday, June 7, we rejoiced to come together and hold regular services again. There are some "guidelines" we are following: each person must wear a face mask, hands must be washed before entering buildings, offering plates cannot be passed, we must have no public singing, congregations cannot exceed 100 people, and there must be a social distance of 6 feet between people. These guidelines are enforced, and some pastors have already been arrested for violating them. Some of the buildings we have been meeting in will not accommodate the congregation while social distancing, so we have chosen to meet outdoors.

As of June 29, Ghana has recorded 17,351 total cases. There are 4,245 active cases, and there have been 112 deaths.

Sorrow upon Sorrow

On June 15th and 16th, we had sorrow upon sorrow with the passing of two members of our church family:

John Walter Kwakye (74)

Hosea Firimpong "Atta" (19)

Though this is a time of sadness, we are reminded that we have a wonderful hope and that we will see them again.



"Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also. John 14:19

God, in His tender mercies, scheduled a meeting between these two men on October 19, 2018, in which John had the opportunity to share the Gospel with Atta. On that day, Atta professed faith in Christ! God is so wonderful to allow John to lead Atta to Christ. It is a comfort to us that John introduced Atta to Christ on earth and was there when Atta met Christ in Heaven. Atta's friend, Steven, visited church on June 14th (Atta's last Sunday). The following Friday I was able to share the Gospel with Steven, and he also professed faith in Christ.



Praises:

For five weeks in March and April, we were without running water due to an issue with the public water service. Once the lockdown was lifted, we were blessed to have a well drilled. Now we have a constant supply of CLEAN water!

Our oldest child, Autumn, just completed her senior year of high school. She will begin taking online courses this fall.

Prayer Requests:

Atta's funeral service was held on July 2nd and John's was held on August 1st. Please pray that through the testimony of these two men many more will come to Christ.

Please continue to pray for the building project in Apewu. The project was delayed due to the lockdown, and now we are currently in the rainy season.

Please continue to pray for our family and the churches at the lakeside as we seek to spread the Gospel.





Patrick & Christelle Ndjaboue



"For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth... so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please..." (Isaiah 55)

In these times of social distancing, God has laid in our hearts to engage in parking lot Gospel sowing. We have enjoyed placing Gospel tracts on car handles. We always have had massive "crowds," and the cars have been really "nice" to us! It was fun to step back and watch the drivers returning to their cars. They would notice the tract on the driver's door, briefly examine its content, and then take it with them into the car. What happened next, we cannot tell; but this thing we know: the Word of the Lord shall not return void; but it shall accomplish that which He pleases.

While engaging in such a sowing effort, we met a Navajo young woman named Celeste. Though we were just intending to place the tract on her car's door, she insisted on talking with us. She inquired about the content of the tract, and we shared with her the hope in Christ. She told us that she had lately often thought about death and was wondering what would happen to her soul if she perished during the pandemic. By the Lord's grace, Celeste called on the name of Lord Jesus, right there on an Arizona parking lot. Praise the Lord!

We also give thanks to the Lord for Hunter's salvation. We met this young man during a door-to-door visitation in our neighborhood. Hunter lives in another town and was waiting on a friend's driveway when God allowed our paths to cross. Please pray for his growth in the Lord!

As we prepare to leave for Germany, we have mainly been visiting churches near our home in Georgia. Last Sunday afternoon, we had scheduled to drop in at a certain church, but, due to an interruption outside of our control, we could no longer be on time for the 5:00 PM service. My mind was therefore directed to another church, which held a 6:00 PM service. We arrived there, unexpected by men, but apparently scheduled by the Lord. To our surprise and delight, the church took us on for support on the spot. Praise the Lord for divine interruptions! *"I will guide thee with mine eye."*

As we wait on the Lord's timing to move to Frankfurt, where schools are already opening, and churches now hold in-person services. It appears, based on the current discussion among the European leaders, that international travel restrictions may now extend into the month of July. We are therefore accepting meetings, assuredly gathering that the Lord is extending our deputation time. Our next meetings will take place in South Carolina and Tennessee.

Dear pastors and friends, we want you to know, that we thank the Lord always for your fellowship in the Gospel. Please pray that the Lord will (1) give us wisdom in dealing with the logistics of our move, (2) open doors of utterance, and (3) prepare the way before us. *"Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen."* (Ephesians 3:20-21)

Almost two years ago, the Spirit of God began to open to me the great need of putting Bibles in the hands of Germans. From that initial flicker, a great flame has started in my heart to systematically distribute the Scriptures among the German people. Because most Germans are Bible-illiterate, they must have in their hands the Word of God that liveth and abideth forever. I knew it needed to be done, but now I know that it is God's time. I will share in our next update how the Lord has been unfolding this matter before us, and the efforts we are taking to bring this to pass.



Roy and Lois Thompson



Summary, 2nd Quarter, 2020 (June, 2020)



The virus pandemic kept us in and around our home from early March until Sunday, June 7th, when we re-opened the church for services. Previously, we were prevented from traveling except for emergencies or deemed essential services which did not include religious gatherings. During that time, we communicated with church members only via telephone. I was stopped twice by police to produce a government form required to travel from home. Apart from travel restrictions, we experienced no shortages, as food, transportation, fuel, and other services continued to function normally. Care for Lois' father continues to be a daily task although

less time-consuming as his needs have been less demanding over the past 6 months. While he requires no specialized medical care, we continue to be the only close relatives who want him to live with family as opposed to a nursing home. Still, this adversity has taught us many things about serving the elderly suffering from dementia, and we believe that God is using these experiences to bless us in ways we do not see.

Thanksgiving:

1. Previously serving as missionaries to Zambia, Charles (American) and Maria (Romanian) Rouch plan now to serve in Romania. Maria is translating some Bible study materials to use here. Pray for wisdom for them as they make this transition.
2. Continued thanksgiving for God's mercy and grace for our health, strength, and safety.
3. We had been praying for the Lord to send someone to serve in full-time pastoral care and leadership for the Ploiesti church. Bro. Aaron Hiltibidal, presently serving in Cluj, has visited our church twice now this year and is considering that very possibility.

Prayer needs:

1. Continuing wisdom with our most important ministry, the training of our children.
2. Wisdom as we make every effort to work with Lois's family in partnership caring for Lois's father.
3. Vision for how God would use us here beyond the interim pastoral ministry position in Ploiesti.

Update: Please pray for the Thompson family. Lois's father passed away on August 6, 2020.





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Proclaimer Audio Bibles

"So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." Romans 10: 17

When we began working in remote villages, we learned very quickly that a hard copy of the Word of God was nearly non-existent; and even if one were to be found, an individual who could read it, and read it well, was just as hard, or harder, to be found. Understanding how vital Scripture was to the spiritual growth of these precious people, we began searching for ways to get it to them regularly. We spent hours each week verbally going over and over passages to help them memorize. We used pictures, flannelgraph, songs, games -- anything we could think of to help them. Imagine our excitement when we learned of Faith Comes By Hearing, an organization that makes available audio Bibles in many different languages! We purchased some and watched the people began to grow rapidly as they listened daily to Scripture. Whole villages sat and listened in the evenings; farmers played Scripture as they worked in their fields; women listened to Scripture as they sat and cooked together. For several years now GEMS has handed out these audio Bibles (called Proclaimers) to as many individuals and families as we could, and we have watched the mighty power of God's Word change lives, homes, and regions for the glory of God! Our Mission started an outreach ministry called Operation Proclamation for the express purpose of getting the Bible into the hands and hearts of the poor and unlearned. Please pray with us over this important ministry and consider partnering with us to get audio Bibles into villages. Can a more precious gift than that of the Bible be given to one who has never had it?



How to support the Proclaimer ministry:

Send checks to GEMS with "Operation Proclamation" in the memo or donate online via our website: <http://gems4christ.com>