

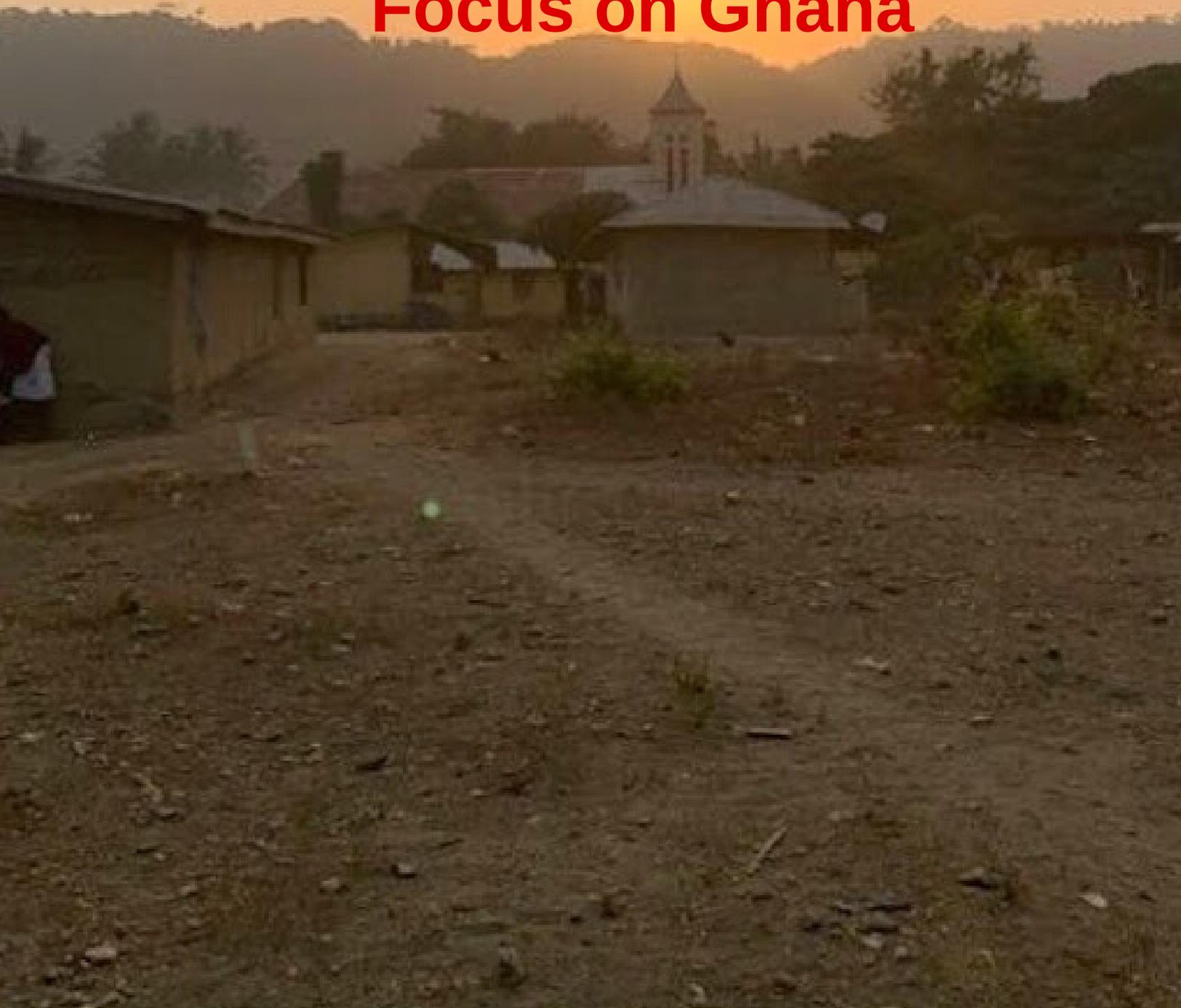


GEMS

GLOBAL EVANGELISM MINISTRY SERVICES

Issue #4
April 2020

Focus on Ghana



Michael Williams Family



All Things Work Together for Good

By Michael Williams,
Director of GEMS



As I continue down the Path of God's Divine Providence, Protection, and Provision, I am reminded more and more often of the depth of Romans 8:28. He truly works all things together for good! That good is all-inclusive: His good, our good, the good of others, good for His plan for the redemption of man, and we could go on.

trip to Ghana for young people who would attend the IGNITE Youth Missions Conference in Fort Dodge, Iowa. While we were there, we were given a booklet about reaching the "least of these" per Matthew 25:40. I took that booklet back to Calvary Baptist Church of Memphis, and we started "IGNITE Outreach." Anyone from ages 13-40 was invited to gather together



and pray about how God would have us reach the least of these. One of the groups prayed and decided to raise money via a bake sale to send to Ghana, West Africa, to help feed the poor there. As they planned and prepared, each step was bathed in prayer. As the time approached for the sale, we left one step unprayed about: Where to hold the sale! We (I admit that my leadership was at fault here) began to seek a location logically: Where was



the place we could make the most money? A place was chosen, and we tried for weeks to get permission but with no results. With two days left and nowhere to go, I sent two young men to a grocery store right down from the church...still nothing. Then Pastor Hooker suggested a grocery store right across the road from that one. Immediate results! When the day of the sale arrived, we were amazed. We received more money in donations than we did in sales! We found the manager to be a believer who invited us to come again in the future, and our youth passed out nearly five hundred tracts during the sale. Since we had a trip already planned for Ghana, I believed it would be good to take the money with us and feed the poor with some of the ones who had prayed and worked to make this happen.



On the other side of the world and at the same time, Missionary Josh Brown was praying at a location and felt impressed to see if our Mission could rent the facilities in the future. This put him in contact with a Muslim man who worked for the government. When we asked about feeding orphans in Ghana, Josh went to this man to see if he could direct us. He did, and what happened was truly amazing! Our group of 23 Americans met with 90 orphans plus accompanying adults and several government officials on a Saturday morning. We were able to share the love of Christ with them not only by giving them food items to take home, but also by God granting the opportunity for Pastor Hooker to tell everyone about the Greatest Gift ever given. Many received Christ as their Saviour and the Spirit of God moved so strongly that the officiating Muslim man publicly announced that he would come to church in the future!!! Also, many more doors of opportunity were opened on that day. **ALL THINGS WORK TOGETHER FOR GOOD!**

I will not take the time, nor the space, to tell you all the things that God did during our time in Ghana, but you will see from the photos and testimonies in this update, that God did great and mighty things which we had not anticipated!

FOCUS ON

GHANA

The country of Ghana is located on the west coast of Africa and is a land of lowland hills. The name Ghana stands for "Warrior King" in the Soninke language. Formerly known as the Gold Coast for its abundance of gold which was traded by British merchants, Ghana was the first African country to gain its independence in 1957.

Ghana shares borders with the Ivory Coast to the west, Burkina Faso to the north, and Togo to the east. To the south are the Gulf of Guinea and the Atlantic Ocean. Lake Volta is the largest artificial lake in the world. It extends for over 320 miles and can be seen from space. The capital city of Ghana is Accra which has a population of 4.1 million.

Ghana has a tropical climate because it is close to the equator. Its seasons include a dry season (November to March) that coincides with a "subseason" of Harmattan (December to February) which is when tradewinds carry dust from storms in the Sahara down to the coast. The days are foggy due to heavy dust in the air, temperatures are high, and the weather is very dry. The rainy season occurs from April to November with the heaviest rains occurring from July to September. The temperature remains fairly constant throughout the year and ranges from a low of 73° F to a high of 90° F; however, the hotter months occur during our winter and the colder months are during our summer. The hours of sunlight also remain constant throughout the year due to being closer to the equator. Daytime is generally 6 AM to 6 PM with a variation of only 15 minutes in either direction.

Above: Mrs. Hooker holds "Baby Brooke," the daughter of Rhoda, a Ghanaian who was the head cook for this year's Prayer Camp.

Below: Mrs. Hooker, assisted by her friend Coco the monkey, taught Children's Church in the village of Apewu.



Fun Facts

Experience of a Lifetime!

By Mrs. Jo Beth Hooker
Pastor's Wife at Calvary Baptist
Church, Memphis, TN

We just returned yesterday evening from a 10-day missions trip to Ghana, West Africa. We had a wonderful time! Ten young people and adults along with the four young people who live there, plus eight additional adults, participated in hands-on learning experiences such as: pounding fu-fu, hauling water, building a fire and cooking on a coal pot, hiking through the jungle and up a mountain, helping to host 180 Ghanaians at prayer camp, visiting an orphanage, meeting a village chief and helping to conduct a night time crusade in his village, touring a historic slave trade castle located at the infamous gold coast, and swimming in the ocean. For all, it was the experience of a lifetime. Eyes were opened, not only to human suffering like never before but also to the incredible joy that comes from knowing and sharing Christ. I think we all came home more appreciative of what we have in America and with a greater desire to make a difference in the lives of all in whatever time we have left. God is answering prayers in Ghana and changes are happening. What an opportunity we have to truly make a difference in our lifetime and for eternity!



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>



2020 Ghana



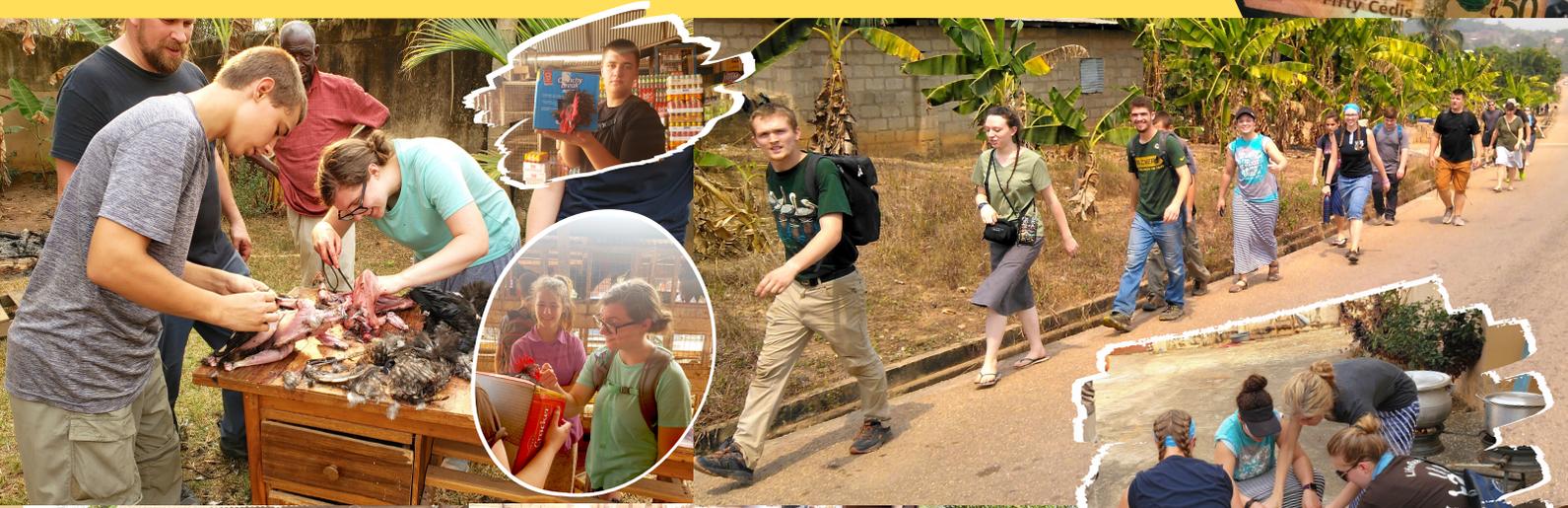
Prayer
Camp



Feeding the Orphans



Missions Trip



Survival Training

To view more photos and a special video of this trip, visit our website.



Recipes from Ghana

Polo



There are two types of coconuts sold in Ghana, depending on the fruit's maturity. To the left is an immature, soft coconut which has sweet milk that is drunk from the coconut before eating the soft meat. Hard coconut, like those sold in American grocery stores, is a mature coconut that is used in processing coconut oil or making polo.

Ingredients:

- 1 cup flour
- ¼ cup sugar
- ½ tsp nutmeg, ground
- ¼ tsp salt
- ½ cup coconut, shredded
- 2-½ Tbsp water
- 1 Tbsp milk
- vegetable oil, for frying

Preparation:

- Combine flour, sugar, nutmeg, salt, and coconut. Slowly blend in water and milk.
- Form into a ball and roll out on a floured surface until ¼-inch thick.
- Cut into two-inch bars.

Fried Polo:

Place pastries on a greased baking pan and bake at 350° F for 5 minutes. Heat a little bit of oil in a frying pan and fry for 2 minutes, flipping to get both sides golden brown. Cool in strainer.

Baked Polo:

Place pastries on a greased baking pan and bake at 350° F for 10 minutes or until lightly browned. Remove and cool on rack. Serve alone or with coffee, tea, or bissap. Bissap is a drink made from hibiscus flowers. It is called Bissap in the coastal areas and Sobolo in the Ashanti area.

Groundnut Soup

Ingredients:

- 3-4 pounds beef, poultry, or fish
- 1 tsp salt (not needed if using salt beef cubes)
- 1-¼ cups natural peanut butter
- ¼ cup tomato paste
- 6 tomatoes
- 3 tsp cayenne pepper, ground
- (or 2-3 red peppers)
- 8 cups water
- curry powder
- 1 tsp ginger, ground
- nutmeg
- 1-½ chicken or shrimp stock cubes
- ¼ cup onion, chopped
- 2 tsp salt



In Ghana, peanuts are called "groundnuts" since they grow underground. They are traditionally roasted in a large iron skillet over an open fire and mixed with sand in order to better distribute the heat evenly throughout the nuts to prevent burning.

Preparation:

- Combine the meat or fish with 1 tsp salt in a large pot with enough water to cover and steam until fully cooked.
- Mix peanut butter and tomato paste with cayenne pepper in a pot, and slowly blend in 2 cups of water. Cook on medium heat, cover, and stir occasionally for 20 minutes.
- Add the remaining 6 cups of water, stirring in slowly. Reduce heat to medium-low.
- Cook the onion and tomatoes together and blend until smooth. Add it to the soup along with the meat or fish, ginger and stock cubes. Add spices to taste. Boil for 30-40 minutes, stirring occasionally.
- Serve alone, with fufu or omo tuo (Ghanaian rice balls).

Optional: Add green beans, eggplant, carrots, okra, and/or cauliflower to the broth.

Ghanaian ladies are trained from toddlerhood to carry loads on their heads. Their neck muscles are incredibly strong. They frequently carry with them a cloth called ntoma that is called kitenge when it is used for specific purposes such as carrying babies.



Fu-fu

Climbing My Mountain

By Rachel Rodgers



I was recently given the privilege of visiting the beautiful country of Ghana. I took this trip with the GEMS missions group and my pastor and his wife. I have never experienced anything like it, and it was amazing to experience a culture so vastly different than mine and meet some incredible people. We worked from sunup to sundown, and after the sun went down, we worked a little more. From the Prayer Camp, to the Crusade, to the orphanage, we all were constantly on the move. It was truly amazing to see the things that God had done through the Williams first and is doing through the Browns now.

After six days of going nonstop, however, I was physically, mentally, and emotionally drained. We had planned to take a hike that was meant to be five miles long with a hill at the end. Now I am not a very athletic person and was not excited about any kind of real hiking. On the day before the hike my feet had swollen to twice their size and I was in quite a bit of pain anytime I walked or stood; but Pastor Mike encouraged me to walk just one mile to the next village so that I could get the experience of the hike. I agreed to that because I didn't want to miss out on anything I could be a part of, but I was so tired that I didn't know if I would be able to make it. The morning of the hike I woke up elated that I was going to be able to help with the children's church and get to see what Sundays were like for the Browns; I wasn't even thinking of the hike beyond a passing thought. I was enlivened and full of joy at seeing God's work in the villages.

After church we lined up to get ready to go, and God just struck my heart and said I should go the full five miles. I thought to myself that I would never be able to make it all the way, but God put a little song in my heart that I had not sung since I was in middle school. I began to sing to myself, "The joy of the Lord is my strength." As I walked along, I grew more and more weary. My heart was pounding, and I began to feel even more anxious about the hill at the end of our journey. It seemed as though each rough patch tore me down inside a little more. When we finally reached the hill, I gritted my teeth and started to walk up it one step at a time. It was steep, but it didn't seem too high from where I was standing. When I was up to the first switchback, I looked at the young lady walking with me and asked if we were almost there. She looked at me and said, "You're about 20% of the way." Every ounce of strength I had seemed to drain away. It was taking every-



thing inside me to put one more foot in front of the other. I prayed silent complaints to God about how tired I was, and how I had put everything I had physically into this hike only to be defeated in the end. "The joy of the Lord is my strength." My heart grew a little lighter but still my feet hurt so bad that each step still seemed agony. "The joy of the Lord is my strength." He reminded me of all the joys He had allowed me to experience while on the trip thus far and it made it a little easier for a time, but each time I would come to a switchback and not be able to see the bus, I was instantly deflated again. I finally stopped and stood looking at the next hill. Weary and discouraged, I had gone as far as I could go. Then the Ghanaian man walking with us said, "Just two more hills and you will see the bus." I thought that he ought to know, but I didn't know if I could climb two more hills. I told God "I have nothing left, Lord. I need You to get me to the top of this mountain." I began to hum aloud, "The joy of the Lord is my strength" over and over. I begged God for the strength to put one foot in front of the other. But when I finally crested the last hill and saw the bus, I was overwhelmed with joy. I had done something that I never imagined I would do, and I began to think, "God could do so much more through me if I used His strength instead of mine." What a glory to know that His strength is made perfect in my weakness! What a joy that while my strength will run dry, His strength is boundless! If we all could allow God to use His strength in us, what mighty things may be accomplished for God's kingdom!



Josh and Emily Brown

Faith Baptist Church of Apewu

Psalm 122:1: *"I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord."*



Lake Bosomtwe is the only natural lake in Ghana. It is located about thirty kilometers southeast of Kumasi, Ghana's second largest city. The name Bosomtwe literally means "antelope god" and was given based on a tale of a hunter who found the lake while hunting for antelope. The lake is considered sacred in Ashanti culture and is a stronghold of idolatry involving the sacrifice of animals. There are many shrines dedicated to this belief located around the perimeter of the lake.

It was to the village of Apewu, located beside one of the most prominent of these shrines, that God led Missionary Michael Williams and his wife Brooke to start a church. Much time was spent teaching and expounding on the Gospel. In this region, steeped in idolatry and churches that teach works salvation, it took much time explaining the doctrine of salvation by grace through faith alone. As time passed the light of the Gospel began to shine through, and the people began turning from their belief in



Pastor Nicholas Amoah and Josh Brown

idols and works to belief in Christ. During the next three years, the church began to grow, not only in numbers, but also in grace and the knowledge of our Lord. The Lord began such a wonderful work that, 2 years later, the church in Apewu helped with the founding of a second church in the nearby village of Dompaa. In 2019, Ghanaian national Nicholas Amoah was ordained to pastor the church in Apewu. Pastor Nicholas was one of the very first attendees to the church in Apewu; he became a believer and witness for Christ. Through faithfulness and searching the Scriptures he grew mightily in the Lord, and God used him to help lead the church whenever Brother Williams had to be away. Today there is a Bible-believing church pastored by a local man running 50 in attendance in a village of only 300 residents. To God be the glory!

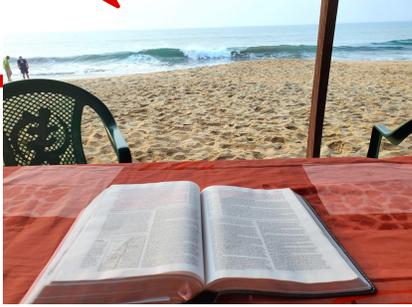
The people of the church have prayed, saved, and waited patiently for six years for God to provide land on which to build a building. They are still meeting in the same classroom they started meeting in six years ago. I'm sure you can imagine how excited they were when God not only provided the land to build, but also provided the extra funds needed to begin building! God laid the need of a building on the heart of a man who donated enough funds to begin building la church for these precious, faithful people.



We thank the Lord for His provision and what He is doing for His church! Please pray with us as we continue to seek His will and begin this building project!



What "path" in life are we unwilling to walk for cause of Christ? "For I the LORD thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not; I will help thee." - Isaiah 41:13



The road ahead is narrow,
The way is rough and long,
I do not know what lies ahead
But still I follow on;
For One has gone before me,
He knows the path I tread,
And at each highpoint I can see,
How faithf'ly I was lead.
And so I need not worry,
I need not anxious be,
The Shepherd Who doth guide along-
He loves and cares for me.

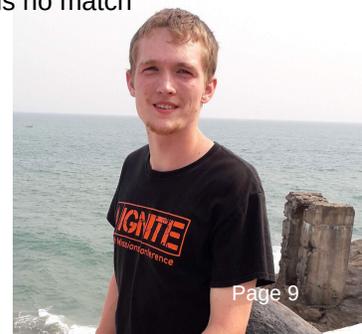
By Brooke Williams



Noah Bake is serving as a GEMS intern to our Ghana Missionary Josh Brown. GEMS has added him by faith and Noah has stayed in Ghana by faith. Please pray for him.

Aside from the amazing work God has done in my own life, I have stood in awe as I have watched God. As Prayer Camp began to unfold, troublesome things began to happen. The devil tried to throw a lot of small things at us to get us off track, but he could not succeed against the mighty power of God. God did something truly amazing at Prayer Camp this year: the Spirit of God moved through people as Pastor Hooker and Bro. Mike brought exhortation and a challenge from the Word of God. It also stirred my heart to see so many people, Ghanaian and American alike, step up and serve. It is truly awesome when you see people caring about the Lord's work.

From Prayer Camp to the Crusade to feeding the Orphans, I saw that the devil is no match for the power of God. Though there were problems, the Gospel still got out and God's power was not hindered, for nothing can compare to the power of God.





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?

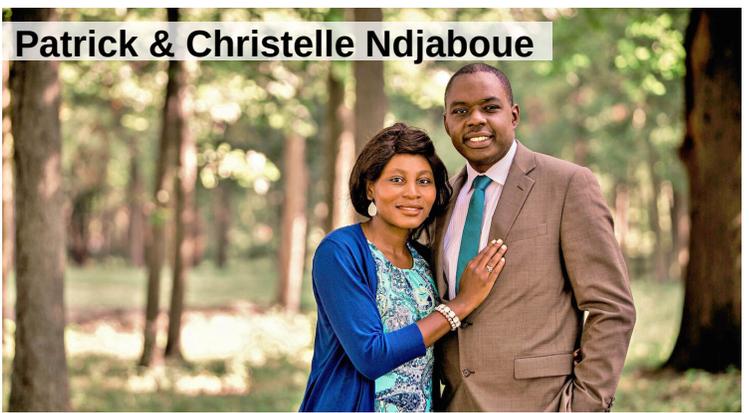


How to support the Proclaimer ministry:

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



Pictured to the left is a 100-year-old blind man who was led to Christ by Josh Brown a few months ago. He had listened to the Proclaimer regularly when his son played it for him. He told Josh that something just burned within him when he would listen to it! We praise God for this technology that is provided by love from those who help to provide them from the States.



What a Friend We Have in Jesus

He has continued to open doors for meetings, and has wonderfully supplied for our needs. We know that the Lord has used your faithful financial support and prayers on our behalf. Since our last update, the Lord has led us to meetings in Georgia, Tennessee, Texas, Arkansas, Oklahoma, New Mexico, and Ohio.

Support - In the last quarter, 14 churches have partnered with us to evangelize the people of Germany. We are thankful for the part the Lord has called to do in this work and for the privilege to labor for the salvations of souls.

Tears - Last July, we attended a special service in Canada. It was the first time I preached in French in the presence of my parents. Little did I know, that it would be the last time I met with my dad this side of Heaven. My dad recently preached on Sunday morning at his home church in Africa and unexpectedly passed in the afternoon. He was a wonderful example, a faithful servant of Christ, and solely lived for others. We sorrow, and we greatly miss him; yet we sorrow not like the world; it comforts us that, because of Christ's sacrifice for us, we will see him again in Heaven.

What a friend we have in Jesus / All our sins and griefs to bear / What a privilege to carry / Everything to God in prayer.

Travel - On December 3rd, Christelle and I flew to Africa for my dad's funeral. Later in the following night, we landed in the economic capital of Cameroon. The next day, in a two-car-convoy, we began our trip to the small town where the family lives. I was riding in the rear vehicle. Two hours later, the car began unexplainably to lose traction; a few minutes later, black smoke emerged out the exhaust pipe; then white vapor came into our view from the car hood, and then the car just stopped. We were in front of a gas station. We informed the front vehicle about our predicament. It drove back and parked beside us. We got a mechanic to come on site who diagnosed a damaged heater. Realizing that the repair would considerably delay our travel, we decided to all jump into the "good" vehicle and proceed with our trip while the driver of the "bad" vehicle would deal with the mechanic. There was just a problem: the "good" vehicle would not start. "Electrical Issue!" says the mechanic and, "We don't know how long the repair will take." So here we are with both cars broken down.

We prayed and asked the Lord to help. But still no idea what the root cause was. Since we had Gospel tracts with us, we decided to use the down time and pass them out. There were seven or eight people sitting there and about ten more across the street. We passed out tracts to everyone. In the meantime, an itinerant seller of cosmetics walked by; she hoped to sell some products to my brother-in-law. The conversation turned to the condition of her soul. I explained to her the Gospel, and she decided to trust Christ. Standing there at the gas station, Diane bowed her head and called on the Lord to save her soul. "My thoughts," the Lord said, "are higher than your thoughts."

"Do you have any questions for me?" I asked after the prayer. "I have a big problem," she said. "I was wondering if you could help me. I don't have a Bible. I need a Bible." Alleluia! Who would not want to meet that need? So I rushed to the car, got the only New Testament that I was carrying, ripped the first page which had my name written on it, and gave it to Diane. She stood speechless, but happy. Then two voices shouted from behind her, "Can we have a Bible also?" I had no other Bible with me, and, by this time, the "good" vehicle was up and running. O to what length the Savior would go to save a soul!

Upcoming - Untold multitudes in the kingdom of darkness are asking, "Can we have the Gospel also?" We are going to those in Germany. Would you pray for us as we ready to move to Germany. Thank you for your faithful financial and prayer support.

Due to the worldwide pandemic and ensuing restrictions, the Ndjaboues' departure date has been postponed. Please pray for this to be resolved in the Lord's timing.



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In December, we engaged in street evangelism with our two older children, passing out tracts in Bucharest and Sibiu. In Bucharest, we met near Piața Romană, and partnered in this effort with Brother Adam Zander from Brasov. Christmas is a great time to engage as one can wish passers-by a Crăciun Fericit (Merry Christmas). Chick Tracts has an ideal, Christmas-themed tract, which I ordered in quantity. Man has many devices (Prov. 19.21) and interest in the Gospel is not what it was 30 years ago after the revolution. But usually I get a smile and a thank you when offered to the barber, grocery clerk, car wash attendant, delivery driver, etc.

Thanksgiving

1. A wonderful November Missions Conference fellowship, feeling very much loved and appreciated as we lodged in the newly-established missions house in Memphis.
2. Mrs. Helmic's Christmas package which arrived for the new year and was a BIG blessing. Her faith and friendship is very encouraging for Lois.
3. Freedom to homeschool with dad's mornings now dedicated to administration, education, and training activities with the children. I look forward to it daily!
4. Continued thanksgiving for God's mercy and grace for our health, strength, and safety.

Prayer needs

- Continuing wisdom with our most important ministry, the training of our children.
- Wisdom as we work with Lois' family in caring for Lois' father.
- Wisdom for ministry as we still await a sign language translator to support a deaf ministry and divine opportunities to proclaim our faith.
- Our neighbors, Dănuț and Dana, Viorel and Aspazia, Ionuț and Mihaela.



Roy and Lois Thompson