

Mission of Ghana/Sierra Leone

Dear brethren,

My name is Charli Yana and I have been a member of the church of Christ since 1986. About three decades ago I was first introduced to the mission work in Ghana by a brother from the Camp Hill (PA) congregation, Bob Williams, who visited the Carlisle church of Christ to detail his work in digging wells and supplying fertilized eggs for raising chickens in Kumasi, Ghana. Along with his wife Beth who was a nurse, they helped to establish a public health clinic and maternity ward on the Ghana Bible College campus where the Bomso church meets. The elders of the church oversee the work of the college, the clinic and other missions. Even then I had in mind to go because of how interesting Bob's presentation was. They have both since passed.

On another occasion while with the Carlisle congregation, Dr. Samuel Obeng, then president of the Ghana Bible College, visited us to promote the work of the GBC. A student funding scholarship, the Dr. Samuel Obeng Memorial Scholarship Fund, has been named in his honor since his passing in August of 2018.

As a member of the Camp Hill congregation a few years ago I was introduced to Emmanuel Antwi, the current president of the GBC, by brother Don Pownell who is deacon over missions. The idea of going to Ghana was finally to become a reality and the following year, along with Don and sister Arbie White Davis, who has established a fund to support the widows in Ghana, I was able to make the trip. Don and Arbie had been there before so I relied on them to explain the differing customs and practices and how I needed to attend a 'travel clinic' for necessary immunizations and have my passport updated.

Then, after two consecutive years of visiting Ghana, I was approached by brother Francis Amara of the Camp Hill congregation who was originally from Sierra Leone. He was interested in getting a brother from there into formal studies at the Ghana Bible College.

Francis came to the states to leave a civil war that had erupted in Sierra Leone in 1991 but had ended in 2002. Here he met the then preacher at Camp Hill, Doug Hamilton, and was converted to true New Testament Christianity. When he returned home for a visit he sought out a church of Christ and found Anthony Joseph Yillia, who preached at the congregation at Koidu, Sierra Leone, which is located on the northeast end near the borders of Liberia and Guinea.

Joseph had no formal training but was preaching the Gospel "in spirit and in truth" (*John 4:24*) nonetheless. And neither did the other local preachers in that area. His problem obtaining a formal preaching education had mostly to do with financing, being from an impoverished background.

When Francis approached Joseph about the Ghana Bible College and that he knew someone who might be able to procure financing for him to go, Joseph was encouraged yet skeptical, as were his family and congregation. When Francis returned to the states he approached me on the subject and I responded that we needed to get Joseph connected with Emmanuel Antwi to make sure there was a way for this to happen.

Not only was there the need to finance room and board, schooling and a laptop for Joseph, there was also a need to meet the costs of traveling and other expenses. But since it would be so expensive for Joseph to return home and then back to the GBC for the necessary three year course this became another hurdle that needed to be ironed out. And beside all of this is the fact that Joseph would have to be away from his wife and two sons for the duration of the program.

Once the necessary particulars were worked out between Joseph and Emmanuel the work at getting the funding began. I am not a 'politician' who seems to make it look easy to ask for support so it was a bit uncomfortable for me to solicit funding for this endeavor. But in this case it wasn't something that I would benefit from personally so it was a little easier to beseech the brethren on behalf of Joseph and his then future plans for his fellow preachers once he returned home after his schooling at the GBC was complete.

The Camp Hill brethren usually take up a special collection to pay for our expenses once we arrive in Kumasi since anyone wishing to go must provide for their own travel fare. It was the funds supplied from the Lighthouse Church of Christ in Milton Delaware (*which I got to know through Jim and Bev Kline who retired there from Carlisle*) by which we were able to procure about half of what was needed for one year at Ghana Bible College. After speaking with Emmanuel about the possibility of Joseph starting on what was raised and pay the rest as he went, it was agreed and a financial statement was produced in order to know all expenses that would arise.

When the thought of Joseph only being able to attend for two semesters came to Emmanuel's attention he had to figure out a way in which Joseph could get all his credits within a shorter period. The answer was for him to attend lectures in other towns during break. But that also came with some cost.

We once received a letter from Joseph about his being robbed while on his way to one such lecture. He explained that all the occupants of the lorry he was travelling in were requested to exit the vehicle while the robbers looted it. They took everything, including Joseph's laptop. At this point all his notes, software materials, downloads and documents were lost. His response was "This is what happened by the will of God Almighty for reasons He approved best. To Him be the glory." Even though we had not yet fully funded his expenses, we needed to get Joseph another laptop in order for him to complete his studies at the GBC. And God's people in Camp Hill came through.

To think how often we in America feel that going without coffee or some other 'necessity' is such a burden, how many of us would understand life without indoor plumbing, hot

water from a spigot, dependable electricity (*or none at all*) or even a regular mail system? And yet there are brethren in third-world countries who have none of these. For Joseph to have a laptop was more than just necessary, it was the lifeblood of his future mission. And I don't apologize for America's wealth either since it is through the generosity of Christians living here that the Great Commission is supported through missions such as these "into all the world".

Two sisters from Camp Hill in particular (*Jane and Faynelle*) have come to Joseph's rescue in not only this situation but one (*Jane*) even aided in paying off his final expenses to complete his training and travel fare to return home while the other (*Faynelle*) helped in getting Joseph a portable generator. To them I am eternally grateful.

It was decided that Arbie and I would return to Ghana in March of 2019 (*my third trip*). Don had other plans to go later. Ghana is located right above the equator so it is not only hot but very humid and March is right before their rainy season which really wreaks havoc on the infrastructure there. Planning for Ghana is a year-long endeavor since my contribution is to present a three day seminar to the Ghana Bible College students and alumni along with teaching a Bible class at one of the congregations on the Sunday while we are there. Since Don usually did the Sunday morning preaching, without him I had the task of preparing for both this time.

We arrived during their Independence celebrations. Our gracious host (*with his wife Affia*), an elder of the Bomso church, Gabriel Opong met us at the airport and drove us to our lodgings which are part of the compound he owns. Part of my luggage included the new laptop that I was to present to Joseph; this would be the first time I had met him in person. I can't describe how grateful he was to receive it. He is such a good hearted, spiritual young man, as are most all the brethren I've met from that region. I haven't met a student yet from the GBC that wasn't hungry for the word of truth, and Joseph was no exception.

With Joseph being away from his family and congregation from August of 2018 until December of 2019, one can only imagine his feelings and what his homecoming was like. Even though having a faith that can move mountains, they were pleasantly surprised that the brotherhood would come to his aid in supporting his education in Ghana and all that would ensue from the wealth of knowledge and training he had received while away. His desire to initiate a preacher training school that would be open to the public, but mostly benefit other preachers who are in the same predicament Joseph was in, has become a reality by the grace of God. The school, by God's grace, will coordinate with the Ghana Bible College and benefit from the Biblical knowledge it affords.

Because Joseph is from a third-world country, his income to feed and take care of his family without having to take on secular work became another expense that needed to be addressed. His focus needs to be on establishing and running a preacher training school so a gracious brother (*Terry*) from the Lighthouse Church of Christ in Milton, Delaware made the plea to his brethren to help Joseph with a monthly contribution that

is above and separate from their weekly giving. That expense was resolved by the aid of this gracious congregation.

After his arrival in Freetown, Joseph still had another day of travel to get home since their highway system is rough at best. And he has no vehicle of his own. We were able to supply Joseph with a much needed PowerPoint projector but a portable generator was needed so he can take it places that have no power (*or any other evangelistic tool that requires electricity such as a printer which he has yet to procure*). A sister (*Faynelle*) asked to donate \$500 to either Ghana Bible College or Joseph and that I would have the choice. I asked Joseph, without his knowing of the \$500, what a generator would cost him and he said \$500. How can anyone not believe in God's providential power to move mountains?

I have authored and illustrated three children's Bible based story books (*The Patience of Job, Noah and Jonah*) and one coloring book (*Noah*) along with my latest publication "Unlocking the Revelation" which can be purchased in either paperback or hard cover form. Ordering information and direct links to Amazon and Xulon Press can be found on the homepage of my web site: www.truthdiscovered.net. All profit generated from the sale of these books goes to the work in either Sierra Leone or Ghana.

If your congregation is interested in funding Joseph's mission, checks can be made out to: "*Camp Hill Church of Christ*"; memo line "*for Joseph Yillia/Sierra Leone*". For record keeping please send all checks to the following address: *Charles Yana II; 169 East South Street, Carlisle, PA 17013, (717-386-1028)*. *If you know of anyone who would like to donate a vehicle for Joseph's mobility (preferably an SUV) that is in fair condition, please inform us so we can raise the necessary funding to ship it to him.* Funding for the Ghana Bible College can be made out to: "*Greenbank Church of Christ*"; memo line "*for Ghana Bible College*"; address: "*511 Greenbank Road, Wilmington, DE 19808*". Rick Murkowski is the contact there (*302-994-3800*).

Sierra Leone's religion is predominately Muslim. According to Joseph they are "peaceful" and can be converted if only they have the Gospel preached to them. This is a prime opportunity to get involved on the ground floor of what could be, by the grace of God, another great institution in the brotherhood to train the next generation of preachers in a country where Christianity is on the increase. Photos of Joseph's schooling, graduation, family and work can be viewed on my web site under 'Photo Galleries'.

If possible and you would like for me to visit your congregation to give a PowerPoint presentation on the work in Ghana and Sierra Leone I would be happy to oblige. Please call me at the above number.

Thank you in advance for any financial support you give to these missions. And may the grace of our God through Jesus Christ be with you.

In Him,
Charli Yana

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