

# Newsletter

July 2010

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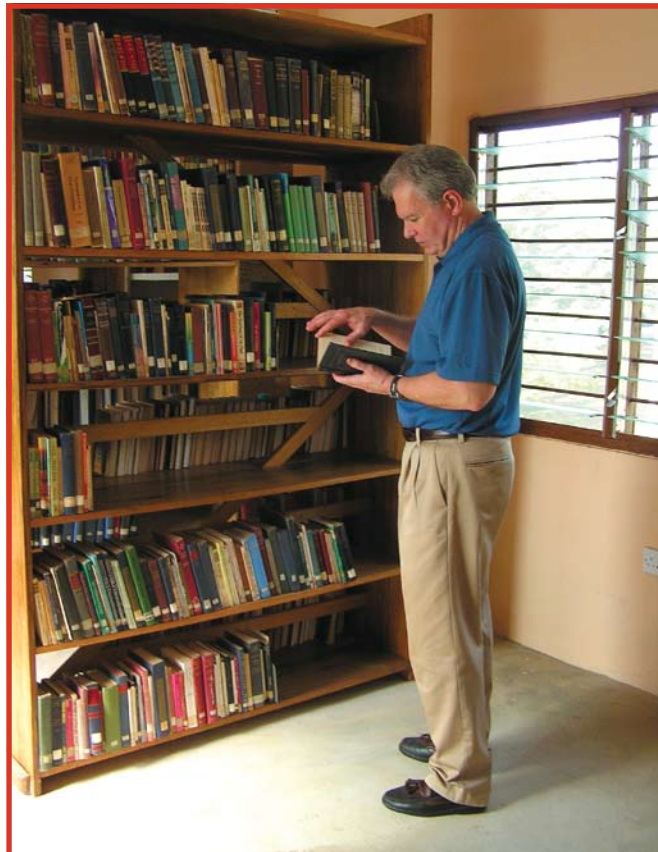
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## Is that school really there?!

"Have you been there?" asked a skeptical business person. It's an important question. How many have fallen for some internet scam? Yeah, me too. So, the question, "Have you been there?" is critical to answer. This issue will be a report from one team of short term missionaries who went there, experienced the campus and ministered to the churches and pastors who have been involved with the school. Through their report we can validate this ministry to our own hearts and others we may meet. Who knows, maybe you too will become motivated to see for yourself!



Books stacks in the new temporary library attracted Dr. Rich Schoenert, pastor of Calvary Baptist Church, Roseville, MN. The library contains over 25,000 books, one of the largest collections in Ghana.

## Ghana Leadership Initiative - 2010

Report on short-term mission to AIC pastors in Ghana

### LEADERS

- **David Anderson**, President of Crossing Bridges, Inc., a ministry focusing of disability awareness and ministry training
- **Rev. Morris Anderson**
- **Sandra Anderson**
- **Dr. Rich Schoenert**, Senior Pastor, Calvary Church, Roseville, Minnesota

The seminars were designed to support the work of the school as well as enhance people's appreciation for the school's ministry.

## Ghana Leadership Initiative - 2010

### Ministry Focus

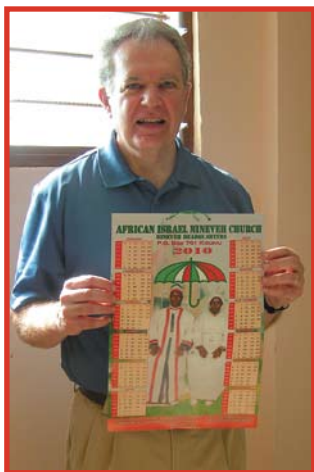
Speaking at several Pastors' Leadership Conferences in several locations. Topics: *The Church's Responsibility to Persons with Disability: A Ministry Challenge – or an Opportunity?* (David); *Characteristics of a Healthy Church* (Rich); and *Biblical Principles of Leadership* (Morris). Sandra spoke to women's groups on the *Book of Esther*.

### Ministry Summary

The Pastors' Leadership Conferences were held in Kumasi, Accra, Agate, Kormantse, and Cape Coast. We also had opportunity to tour Good News Theological College and Seminary, to interact informally with the students, and worship with the GNTCS faculty and students. During the second week, we met with the executive committee of the GNTCS Board.

On Sunday, February 28, we each shared from God's Word at churches in the Accra area: Rich at Calvary Baptist (Adabraka), Morris at Christ Holy Church (Awoshie), and David at New Generation Gospel Church (Accra). Rich also spoke at Life Way Community Church on March 3, and to give a live interview on a Christian radio station in Accra ("Sunny FM").

In addition to the Pastors' Leadership Conferences, David spoke on aspects of disability awareness and ministry at Ghana Christian University, Trinity Theological Seminary, and Valley View University. The challenge was well received.



### Report from Rich Schoenert

#### *Worshipping with the staff and students of Good News*

While the service of communion included some hymns, they sang "their own songs" with drums, dancing, clapping and much passion. This drew my attention to the fact that the West not only brought the gospel to Africa, but our culture, as well. I learned that missionaries consistently

taught Africans that their music—including clapping, dancing and the use of drums—was either inferior or sinful and that Africans needed to dress like Europeans in order to



attend church. One wonders how much we hurt the cause of Christ by not letting Africans communicate biblical values through their own culture.

#### *Meeting with the executive committee of the board of directors of Good News*

All six of the board members I met care deeply about the seminary. One of the greatest needs the school has is for greater financial support. Since it targets poor AIC churches, most congregations are unable to provide any financial assistance, and most of the pastors are unable to pay for an education. Thomas stated, "I have



*never met an AIC pastor who receives a salary.”* The poverty of the churches has infected the school.

Yet, the seminary is meeting a great need. One story illustrates this point. A graduate of the school, Jonathan, was asked why he decided to attend Good News. He told of a time that, as a pastor of an AIC church, he was asked by someone to find a particular verse in the Bible. He tried, but could not locate the verse. This experience motivated him to apply to Good News. Jonathan is now a trained pastor.



### ***Meeting church leaders at the various conferences***

At our first conference in Kumasi, pastors and bishops wore different colored robes to all meetings. The colors reflected their rank and title.

We arrived an hour late for our conference in Agate. Yet 200 people had traveled from significant distances and were sitting in a partially completed building for two hours waiting for our arrival and teaching.

At the conference in Accra, I ended up teaching without notes or electricity. Yet we continued in a good spirit without lights, fans or sound.

The conference at the village of Kormantse introduced me to the poorest believers I have ever met. About 40 attended our meeting in a building with a dirt floor. Chickens and goats wandered around while we sought to teach. But, in spite of the poverty, one sensed a deep love for Christ and His word.

The Cape Coast conference was the smallest but the most responsive, perhaps due to the size of the group (12) and the fact that many had a college education. We met at the Evangelical Methodist Church of Christ. The district superintendent, Millicent, has been accepted for studies at Luther Seminary. She plans on starting this fall.

### ***Preaching at Calvary Baptist, Accra***

This multi-site church averages 7,000 in attendance at its main campus and nine satellite locations. The Senior Pastor, Fred Deegbe, received his education at

Southwestern Seminary and Asbury Seminary. He has attended our church. Ebow Paitoo, a member of and ordained by our church, oversees all nine satellite pastors. The church is built on the same five purposes we have: It was a delight to see the passion of these believers in worship and their hunger for teaching.

### ***Preaching at Life Way Community Baptist Church***

This church plant, located in a suburb of Accra, is about one year old. The part time pastor, Edward Osei-Bonsu, is also a full time director of Christian Education and Church Development for the Ghana Baptist Association. Before I came to Calvary, I was Edward's pastor for 2 years while he attended Gordon-Conwell Seminary. It was a joy to see Edward again and see this new church of about 80 people, mostly young couples.

### ***Visiting Mephibosheth Training Center***

Through Dave Anderson's previous ministry in Ghana, we were able to visit this school for children with disabilities. There were 32 students. We observed them in worship and rehearsing for Ghana's Independence Day parade.

David adds, "I am pleased to observe the growth of the ministry, both in terms of facilities and the number of children who are served through this residential program. Andrea Jehu-Appiah is a trained physical therapist from New Jersey who married Joseph Jehu-Appiah, a Ghanaian. He serves as pastor and teacher as well as co-director with Andrea."

### ***Personal Impressions***

I was struck by the poverty I witnessed. We drove by hundreds of small villages. These people are valuable to God and the AIC churches are ministering to them in the name of Jesus Christ. David adds that it reinforces the need for assistance through teaching, preaching, prayer, and other means to bring light and hope to the people.



*Rita Oduro and a neighborhood child.*

I was touched by the kindness and hospitality of the people. Ghanaians are a very humble, gracious people who openly serve others. Their kindness is illustrated by one of their customs: when you enter a home, they assume you are weary and thirsty from your journey. Therefore, before asking you the

purpose of your visit, you are offered a seat and a drink of cold water.

I was impressed by the extent to which at least nominal Christianity impacts the culture. As an example, there are stores all over with Christian names: Calvary Furniture Works, Apostle Tours, Love of God Frig Repairs, El-Shaddai Motors, Seek Ye First Trucking, Blessed Driving School, etc. Yet the Christianity these people are exposed to is often mixed with ancient tribal customs or the health/wealth gospel, which is everywhere.

I was deeply stirred by my visit to Cape Coast Castle, where thousands of human beings were branded as slaves and sent away. We saw the dungeons where they were confined and the “*door of no return*” through which they passed before entering the ships that would take them away from their homes and families and transport them to distant places. Yet above these dungeons there was a church where white people gathered! What an ugly contrast!

**Finally, I return with a strong impression concerning the importance of our continuing partnership with Good News Theological College and Seminary. Without the support of a few US churches like ours, it is doubtful that GNTCS would be able to survive.**

***As a result of this trip, God has enlarged my heart for ministry in Ghana.***

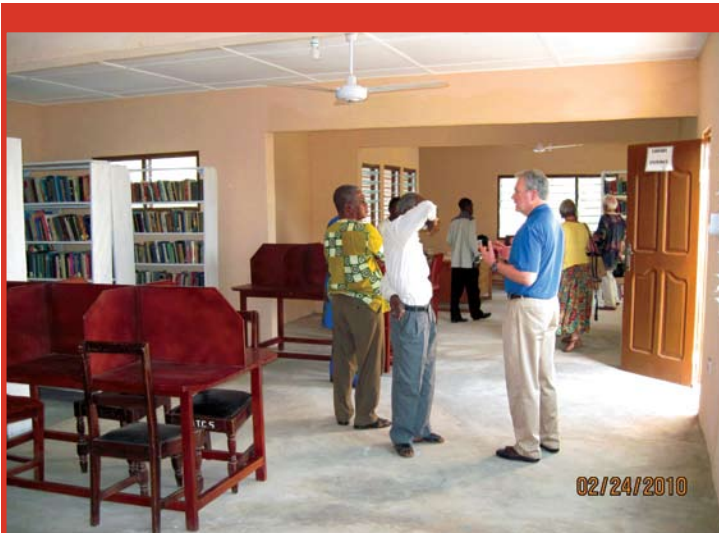




## Thoughts from David Anderson

I was impressed with the quality of the students at GNTCS. The campus of GNTCS was attractively maintained and new construction continues.

What was most pleasing to me was to see the new library facilities, now on the floor above the male hostel. It is much cleaner (and more easily kept clean) than the cramped quarters used when I was there in 2002-2003. It is well lit, with more spacious shelving for the huge number of volumes they possess, and good room for students to study and work.



The team inspects the new library facilities, enjoying the increased room for the collection and study than the previous space had.



David Anderson speaking about disability ministry at a Pastor's Leadership Conference.



I was pleased with the response of those who attended the Pastors' Leadership Conferences to what I shared about disability ministry, especially those who attended the conference in Kumasi. There was a good time of Q&A during and immediately following my presentation. The same is true from Trinity Seminary, where I was give about four hours to lecture on disability issues and the church. Trinity serves people from the mainline denominations and has about 150 students. The President of the Seminary, Dr. Cyril Fayose, attended the session, after which he issued an invitation for me to come back for a 2-3 week period and teach a full course on disability ministry (Theology of Suffering, Disability, and the Church). Several students met with me during breaks between sessions to discuss their interest in disability ministry.

And while in Kumasi, Thomas took Rich and I to meet Professor Frempong, Principal of Christian Service University College. Dr Frempong also extended an invitation to me to come and teach something related to disability at the school. (Also, Trinity Seminary invited David to return and teach an intensive course on disability ministry.)

**We praise God for watching over us as the team traveled to and within Ghana to minister. It is our prayer that the thoughts shared during our ministry in Ghana will "percolate" in the minds and hearts of those at the various conferences and schools – that God will water the seeds planted and bring forth fruit, leading to church growth and ministry to and with persons who are dealing with disability issues.**

## Sandra Anderson's Ministry with Esther Tawiah, Lecturer at GNTCS

On a late Sunday afternoon **Esther Tawiah, lecturer at Good News Theological College and Seminary**, arrived back on campus driving her car over the dusty, other colored road that wound around the small campus to her duplex. Jemima Oduro and I had walked outside the home she shares with her husband Thomas, principal of "Good News." Seeing Esther, Jemima waved and beckoned for her to come and say hello. Esther was



dressed traditionally today in a long, fitted, two piece blue print African dress and a white, modest head covering still used by many women of the African Indigenous Churches to whom she ministers. Esther's day had been filled with worshipping, ministering, teaching, visiting, and shopping.

Though the direct distance between towns and villages may not be great, curves, potholes, the manner in which a road has been constructed, and more often, traffic congestion, can really create long, bumpy drives. And

it had been another day of blistering heat, unusual and uncomfortable even for Ghanians.

On another afternoon Esther drove me to her favorite outdoor market place so I could experience and



discover the Dodowa farmer's market held by ladies on Mondays and Thursdays. The government constructed permanent cement stalls for vendors, but the ladies prefer their long, thatch covered corridors that are in the open and more visible. Large and small smoked and salted fish, eggs, fruits, vegetables, grains, fabrics, herbal medicines – to mention just a few of the many items offered – were attractively displayed and made the market very inviting.

And then we were on our way for the really important reason we were in the Dodowa area on what was quickly becoming another late afternoon! Esther's heart has been burdened with desire and love to teach and share the Good News of Jesus from the Bible with the largely illiterate women of the villages around the Dodowa area not too far from the campus of Good News Theological College and Seminary. Some of the women are also sellers at the Dodowa market we had just come from. Previous contacts had not worked out.

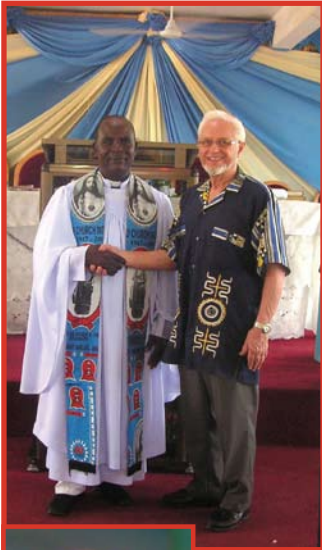
As the darkness quickened, we arrived at the designated meeting place where women were arriving by foot. Over sixty women of diverse ages gathered and sat eagerly and attentively on backless benches for over an hour to listen as I taught in English from the Old Testament book of Esther. The lesson was then translated into both the Twi and Ewe languages. As the study came to a close, over 75% of the women raised their hands to let Esther know they did not own a Bible, but desired to learn more! The door had been opened for Esther to return and teach! "This is one of the best days of my life!" Esther exclaimed. "I know these people because I come from their villages. In God's strength I am prepared to do whatever work is necessary to teach these ladies so they can read the Bible and learn how to follow Jesus. I will return."

**I know Esther's determination and resolve. I heard the love and longing in her voice to make Christ known and lived by these ladies. I'm confident she will – in God's strength and power.**



## Sunday in Accra with the Anderson's at Christ Holy Church, Nation Builders

by Rev. Morris Anderson



Some time after the roosters crowed we began our first Sunday in Ghana. Dave, Rich, Sandra, and I sat closely in Thomas' car for the long, sweltering ride through heavy traffic into the capital city of Accra. We each had separate assignments for preaching in Accra. Sandra and I would spend the morning with Christ Holy Church.

Worshippers had already gathered in the worship center on the first floor when we arrived. In front of the room blue and yellow fabric drapes hung from the ceiling and wall to focus attention and frame the raised platform. Ceiling fans helped to move the warm, humid air from the open doors and open, louvered windows. Here adults were engaged in a Sunday school class taught by a young woman wearing a lamé, turban styled head covering. Just outside of the building chickens meandered freely among children sitting on benches waiting for their teacher to arrive.



As the service began I was asked to sit on the platform behind the glass-encased pulpit from which I preached, and a white-draped table. Sandra was directed to a seat by herself on the side of the platform. Singing was spirited. The band accompanied the choir and congregation as everyone joined in hearty handclapping. Quietly the assistant pastor's wife wearing a high, stylish, red straw hat came to the outside door adjacent to where Sandra was sitting, without a head covering, and handed her a scarf. Sandra understood, and artfully sculpted the scarf around her head, now modestly dressed for worship.



Halfway through the three-hour service we witnessed a memorable child dedication. As the ceremony began, the family and their close friends left the building as everyone else continued singing. They returned in a processional down the center aisle led by a goat. Someone else carried a live chicken. Others brought money. These were "thank offerings" in gratitude for the birth of the child. People simply gave what they had. The animals would be sold and the proceeds given to the church.



The baby girl was dressed in a gold gown and a big, elaborate headdress similar to her mother's. Both parents gave testimony of God's blessing them with this child. Others in the congregation shared their words of joy at her birth. While the couple knelt on the red-carpeted floor together with family and friends, prayers of thanksgiving and blessing were offered. The pastor concluded the ceremony by holding the baby in his arms, praying for her and the family. Finally, another offering was called for to give towards the support of the child "all the way to her entrance into the University", as the pastor put it. Love and generosity surrounded this family.

Christ Holy Church has two additional buildings under construction. One, an administrative building, and the other a maternity clinic where pregnant women will receive medical care and can give birth to their babies. Adjacent to their present building they have land on which to build a new worship center to expand their ministry.



Classrooms, administrative offices and apartments occupy the upper floors. Before leaving the church the pastor brought us to his private apartment on the third floor of the church building and provided a Ghanaian dinner for just the two of us. We would meet him and the assistant pastor again at the leadership seminars sponsored by Good News the following week in Accra. There, together with church leaders from many AIC churches, our team would help fulfill two of the objectives of our mission – equipping pastors and strengthening churches.

*You might have to get used to love.*



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*Much of the team's ministry with GNTCS involved representing the seminary at Pastor's Conferences. Here at Kormantse, Rev. Morris Anderson teaches the "Principles of Leadership."*