

Gowins' Ghana Updates

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Pearls of Great Price

*"Jesus said, 'Again the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls, who on finding one **pearl** of great value, went and sold all that he had and bought it.'" Matthew 13:45, 46*

*"And the twelve gates were twelve pearls, each of the **gates** made of a **single pearl**, and the street was pure gold..." Revelation 21:21*

*Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life and that they may enter the city by the **gates**."*
Revelation 22:14



Despite the fact that Ruthie and I lived on a beautiful little island in the Caribbean for two years, we NEVER saw a pearl. Nope, not one, though we saw many awesome sea creatures and the extreme beauty of God's handiwork.

Pearls are found in oysters. A bit of sand finds its way on to the soft body of the marine animal, and the oyster secretes a substance to coat the sand and lessen the pain. Over time that substance repeatedly secreted from the body of the animal becomes a pearl. This product then, becomes a rare but valuable commodity to man in our economy of standards. Did you note from our text above that a single pearl is a gate in the city of God? A single 1,400 mile high pearl will be quite a spectacle, don't you agree? Especially when you consider that earthly pearls are formed as a result of the wounding of an oyster's flesh. These spectacular pearls will be a reminder to each who passes them of the magnitude of Christ's sufferings and their eternal benefit for an eternity. WOW and double WOW!

Five men gathered in prayer here in Q last week. I'm certain they appeared a rather odd group to those who passed by. First of all, there was a white man among them, bowing his head and holding hands with the others standing in the circle. The second man was older, like the white man, and terribly skinny. He, Isaka, had a lucrative gold mining job but left the job in the south to heed his call to seek a commodity of infinite more value than gold -- souls. In addition, there was a nearly blind man (Richard) whose handicap hinders him in various ways yet seems in no way to diminish the gifts of communication that God placed upon him for the Gospel's sake. Certainly out of place with these older men was George, who, though a recent graduate with an accounting degree, demonstrates purity in his life so seldom seen in this culture, and he preaches Christ quite effectively.

The last of the quintet was Pastor Sammy. His tribal markings distinguished him from the other Africans bowed in prayer. He is from the south. The Fante' are respected even here in the dry northland. He speaks four languages fluently and is learning a fifth. His wife, Grace, and two children are the newest members of our team. What a gift from God he is to our ministry here.

Sammy grew up in Accra, the capital and largest city in Ghana. As a youth he ran with the wrong crowd. Alcohol, tobacco, and a licentious lifestyle were the norm. One day a white lady told his friend about Jesus, and the friend in turn told Sammy. The result was a new servant of Christ and eventually a call upon his young life to communicate Jesus wherever he goes. He is a dynamic witness and a gifted leader. He is respected by all who know him. Although I met Brother Sammy way back in 2006, he has continued to impress me with his wisdom and leadership gifts.



Many Ghanaians still need to respond to the good news. Pray for Jere, Ruth Ann, Pastor Sammy, and the other workers who are teaching the Truth in villages.

Some weeks ago a strong partner in ministry from the US asked me if I believed the ministry would fold when I left since another missionary will not come to fill my shoes. My reply to you in the USA is, "There will be NO leadership vacuum when I leave because of Sammy." He is just a man who has flaws like the rest of us, but he is definitely a gift from God to this ministry. Sammy has all the tools necessary to continue and grow the work here.

The subject of the five men in prayer, simply put, was "gates." We approached the throne of God through the gate of prayer, and we sought the grace of God for the ministry here to continue. You see, the men all know that when I leave the funds may dry up. Only God opening the gates of Heaven and pouring the funds out upon the people here will allow the work to go on. The open gate from the US may close quite suddenly or gradually, especially since the economic situation in the US is so dire. Only God can move hearts and provide the means for the Gospel to proceed here. Now, not only can God open the gates of Heaven to pour out that which is necessary --- the gate itself an excellent example of the fullness of God's provision and grace. What a splendid symbol He uses.

Praise God, William Hatcher, a fellow from a church in Mississippi, is faithfully working on ideas of small business ventures for our pastors and/or church folk to support the work. Ideas such as bee-keeping, a grinding mill, cheap ovens to bake bread, and solar light bulbs are among the possibilities. We had also considered the purchase of a tractor to initiate a business. Presently we do NOT have the answer to these dilemmas, but God does! He will open the gates so that the Gospel here may continue to reach souls so valuable to Jesus that a pearl is used to remind us of the cost of our redemption and the richness of His grace.

By His grace and for His glory,

Jere and Ruth Ann