

14 September 2015

Dear Brethren,

Our trip to Ghana is now history. The trip we had all long awaited is accomplished, and it was much more successful than we had imagined. The Ghanaian brethren fully accepted the simple gospel and the work of the church as evangelism, edification, and limited benevolence. They have completely rejected the concept of human institutions doing the work the church is tasked with doing. They clearly see the error of collections of churches to do anything.

Our plan from the beginning was to build a good base of authority in the word of God and the work of the church while teaching against institutionalism. All five of us worked as one in this teaching which the Ghanaian brethren absorbed like a thirsty sponge. We really had no opposition to the errors they were involved in because they accepted the teaching just as the Thessalonian brethren did 2000 years ago. 1 Thess. 2:13 “For this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you accepted *it* not *as* the word of men, but *for* what it really is, the word of God, which also performs its work in you who believe.”

Before this effort there had not been a conservative effort that we know of in the nation. Now there exists two strong sound churches where there was only churches steeped in the institutional error.

We did not know what to expect or the magnitude of the problems that existed until we were actually in Africa. Liberal brethren have been very active in Ghana. Churches there are involved in all kinds of things that are not the work of the church. Many of the churches have choirs, they support human institutions, they have healthcare professionals giving presentations in the assembly, they pay for funerals directly, and some operate businesses with the church being the front. There was a sign on the church van of one of the churches we worked with that had “For Hire” as a taxi.

Liberal brethren have been teaching that if you want to establish a congregation in an area, the church needs to establish a secular school. The churches in Ghana are heavily invested in the education business. It is not that the brethren have studied these issues for themselves and are doing these things because they have determined to do it. They have just never been shown from the scriptures how to have a respect for God’s word, or how to establish authority for their practices.

The Asoufua church where we went to preach had already learned before we came that it was not the work of the church to operate a school. The brethren there separated the school finances from the church treasury as soon as they learned it was not the church’s work. However the school still remains on church property which they know has to be completely separate the church. The church is in the process of making a detailed report showing all expenses needed to completely separate the school from the church. According to national law, they are not even allowed to remove the church name from the school until the school is no longer on church property. The state names the school which is always associated with where the one or entity that owns the property, in this case the Asoufua church of Christ.

We have been in communication with Buddy Pane, President of Florida College, who is committed to making the school financially strong through personal donations from individual investors. Some have

come up with an idea of involving the students of the college in fund raising efforts for the school. The fear is if the school fails after being removed from the church, the brethren will be tempted to be drawn back into institutionalism to save the school. We must work to keep that from happening.

12-13 August 2015 – My trip began that Wednesday. I drove the two hours to Wilmington, NC and worshipped with the Winter Park church where two other members of our party, John Cripps and Ed Lewis, worship. We worshipped together that evening and spend part of the night loading study materials on the USB drives we took with us for the African brethren. As we got better acquainted after services, we discovered that Ed Lewis was my baseball coach at Florida College. We had not seen each other in almost 40 years, and before this trip John Cripps and I never met. I stayed with Ed Lewis and his wife, Pat, that evening who drove the three of us to the Wilmington airport for our departing flight on the following Thursday morning. We flew from Wilmington to Atlanta where we had a layover, then from Atlanta to Amsterdam, Netherlands where we had another layover, and finally from Amsterdam to Accra, Ghana. The flight with layovers took about thirty hours. We arrived Friday night and spent the night at the Hotel in Accra. Sunday Ayandare met us at the hotel from Nigeria to be a part of the team.

14 August 2015 – Saturday morning four brethren from the Asuofua church met us at the hotel. They loaded our things in the van and began the five hour trip to Kumasi arriving about 4:00 that afternoon. We did not get much chance to rest. Before going to the hotel in Kumasi we attended a funeral for one of the members on our way to the Asuofua church building to discuss the work that was to begin in the morning. There would be two Evangelism teams, one team would preach at Asuofua church and the other team would preach at Tarkwa Maakro in the evening services.

We discussed what our teaching plan with the Asoufua church. We were not there to take over their work, but were there to help teach the way of the Lord more perfectly. Our design was not to make a dependent church of the Asuofua church, but to recognize the autonomy, independence and equality of every local church. By laying the foundation of Authority found in God's word, the organization of the local church, and the work of the local church, we sought to lay a good foundation upon which to build. Intermingled with the lessons, we also taught against the Institutional error and the mindset that local churches could pool their resources together in some Brotherhood Project for the Lord.

They asked us if the church could provide food for the preachers who came from long distances for the Preacher Training Sessions. We said the church is authorized to only provide for needy saints. John Cripps, Ed Lewis and I agreed to provide the money from our own resources to provide food for the preaching brethren coming long distances. The food was to be purchased and some of the women would work during that week to provide food after the Preacher Training Sessions. The brethren then drove us to the Okubi Hotel where we stayed during our time there.

15 August 2015 – Sunday morning Richard Donkor picked us up at the hotel after breakfast and we drove 15 minutes to the Tarkwa Macckro church. Richard Donkon introduced us all to the church where we were to do some work during the two weeks there. We then traveled to the Asuofua church building to begin the work. Services were to start at 9:00 AM but due to power outages we had to start at 9:30. Ghana has a rotating schedule, which is not published, to provide power twelve hours during each twenty four hour day. The electricity went out and the church had to start up the generator so we could have power. I preached the Bible Class period on the Work of the Evangelist using 2 Tim. 4 as the text. The lesson focused on the scriptural work God gave the evangelist and the denominational concept many have

about his work. The lesson period was delivered by John Cripps who preached on the New Testament Church. After services, the Ghanaian brethren welcomed us officially and we made our introductions to the brethren. Total attendance was 338.

The preacher for the Tarkwa Maakro church invited us to his house for a short introductory visit. We also visited in the homes of some members of the Asuofua church before going to the Hotel at 3:00 PM. We needed to prepare for the night's lessons planned from 7:00 – 9:00 and to eat dinner. John Cripps taught on the Work of the New Testament Church at the 7:00 hour. I preached the 8:00 hour on the Need for Authority using Mt. 21:21-27 as the text. Following all the lessons we had a question and answer period as time allowed. Evening attendance was 190. Brother Ed Lewis and Sunday Ayandare preached at Tarkwa Maakro at the 7:00 – 9:00 hours on the New Testament Church and Authority for the evening lessons. Attendance at Maakro was about 280.

We arrived back at the hotel about 11:00 to talk about the work and the next day. I went back to my room and tried to write a daily report of the activities. However I was sometimes too tired to write the report and had to make up for it the next evening. We got to sleep about 1:00 or 2:00 that morning.

17 August 2015 – Monday morning Richard picked us up after breakfast and we arrived at the Asoufua church building to begin the morning Preacher Training Sessions. We taught from 9:00 – 12:00 on Preacher Training, How To Study the Bible, and Basic Bible Doctrines. Ed Lewis taught the 9:00 hour, John Cripps taught the 10:00 hour and Sunday Ayandare taught the 11:00 hour. Lunch was provided for those attending the morning sessions by individuals and the ladies cooked and served them.

Manny Ebong was engaged in a gospel meeting and could not join the group until that afternoon. We met him at the airport in Kumasi and brought him back to the Okubi Hotel where we stayed.

Richard Donkor met us at the hotel for the 7:00 – 9:00 preaching sessions. I taught How Authority is Transmitted to us at the 7:00 hour. John Cripps preached on the Church and Institutionalism for the 8:00 hour.

Sunday Ayandare and Manny Ebong preached at Tarkwa Macckro church on Authority and Institutionalism. We tried to present the same basic materials at both churches.

18 August 2015 – Tuesday morning after breakfast Richard took us to the Asuofua building for the 9:00 – 12:00 teaching sessions, where we taught on Preacher Training, How to Study the Bible, Basic Bible Doctrines. I taught the 9:00 hour, Joh Cripps taught the 10:00 hour and Manny Ebong taught the 11:00 hour. Lunch was provided for those attending the morning sessions by individuals.

We visited with some brethren in their homes during the day and went back to the hotel about 3:00 to eat dinner and prepare for the evening preaching.

Richard brought us to the Asuofua building and took the other team to the Tarkwa Macckro building. John Cripps preached the 7:00 hour on the Work of the Church and Institutionalism. I preached the 9:00 hour on Improper Standards of Authority Often Used.

Ed Lewis, Manny Ebong and Sunday Ayandare went to Tarkwa Maakro where they taught on the New Testament Church and Institutionalism and Authortiy from 7:00 – 9:00 PM.

Each night there was a question and answer period as time allowed. We went back to the hotel about 11:00 where we talked about the day and planned the next day's work. I went back to my room and wrote a report of the day's activities and we went to bed sometime after midnight.

19 August 2015 – Wednesday morning Richard picked us up from the hotel and brought us to the Asuofua church building for the 9:00 – 12:00 teaching sessions on Preacher Training, How To Study the Bible, and Three Steps Toward Denominationalism. Lunch was provided for the preachers attending the training sessions.

We visited with some of the brethren in their homes. Richard took us back to the hotel at 3:00 to eat dinner and prepare for the evening preaching.

Richard picked us up at 6:00 and we went in the two teams for Asuofua and Tarkro Maakro. I preached to 7:00 hour on How To Establish Authority. John Cripps preached the 8:00 hour on Understanding Authority at Asoufua.

Ed Lewis, Manny Ebong, and Sunday Ayandare went to Tarkwa Maakro and preached on different aspects of Authority and The New Testament Church and Institutionalism.

We were taken back to the hotel room about 11:00 where we visited and talked about the successes of the day and the plans for tomorrow. I went back and wrote the events of the day and went to bed sometime after 1:00. This ended the evening preaching at both Asuofua and Tarkwa Maakro for the week.

20 August 2015 – Thursday morning after breakfast Richard brought us to the Asoufua church building for the 9:00 – 12:00 teaching on Preacher Training, How To Study, and Basic Bible Doctrines. The men ate the food prepared by the ladies and provided by the individuals. We visited brethren in their homes until we were brought back to the hotel at 3:00 to eat supper and prepare for Public Preaching.

Public Preaching was at Asamang to prepare the village for the establishment of a new local work there on Sunday. I focused my lesson on sin and closed the lesson with the cure. We preached in the streets of Asamang beginning at 7:00 PM and left an hour for questions from the community. If there were no questions, we used the time to preach a little longer and offer an invitation. There was a fire because a small diameter electrical cord was used from the generator to the equipment. The community Public Address system was used and the lessons went out over the local radio station as well as the village's bull horn system that blared out the message to the whole town.

21 August 2015 – Friday morning after breakfast Richard took us to the Asoufua church building for the final session of the morning training sessions on Preacher Training, How To Study the Bible, and Basic Bible Doctrines. Leather study bibles were presented to those preachers who didn't have a study bible. The West Fayetteville church provided 25 leather study bibles, all of which were given out. There were also 75 paperback pew bibles that were handed out to all who needed one. All 100 bibles were given out. We also gave out other study materials including 100 USB drives loaded with more than 5 GB worth of study materials, CD's with study materials provided by Jim McDonald as well as many reference books for the church library.

The second night of Public Preacher was conducted by Ed Lewis and Manny Ebong. They mentioned the problem of sin but focused on the cure found in the Gospel. One soul responded to the gospel call and

she was baptized in the hotel swimming pool in the same hour of the night. There were hundreds of people in the street to hear the gospel in the Public Preaching. This night was a rainy night, but the people still came. Though the crowd was less, there were still hundreds of people listening to the gospel messages.

22 August 2015 – Saturday morning after breakfast Richard took us to the building for a 3 hour question and answer period on any Bible questions. The five of us were seated on the stage at a table and written questions were submitted. We received many more questions than we could answer, but we used the three hours and answered all we had time to address. Time for taking class pictures was provided and the students could take individual pictures with anyone they chose. The men ate the meals cooked by the ladies and provided by individuals. The average attendance for the Preacher Training sessions was 95 from 17 different congregations though out the Ashanti region.

23 August 2015 – Sunday morning after breakfast Richard took us to the Soccer Field of a school in Asamang for the 9:00 service to begin the new local work. Others from local churches showed up to encourage the Asamang brethren in the new work. I preached the class period on The Church of Christ or Denominationalism and 13 came forward to be baptized into Christ. We took them to another church building to baptize them while Ed Lewis preached during the regular sermon time. We came back and all took the Lord's Supper together. Total attendance for that first service was 737. Two additional young people wanted to study with us after which they were baptized into Christ. That day there were 15 souls added to the Lord's church, and one from the Friday night Public Preaching for a total of 16. The brethren that formed the Asamang church (75) were called to the center of the field, then all joined them for a prayer. It was an emotional service. We went back to the hotel to eat, rest and prepare for the evening preaching.

I preached during the evening service for my final preaching at Asoufua. There was no electricity and no generator so we just studied in the dark with nothing but a cell phone for light. After a period of question and answer the service was dismissed and we waited to be picked up.

Ed Lewis, John Cripps, Sunday Ayandare and Manny Ebong went to Tarkwa Maakro and preached for the 7:00 – 9:00 hours.

24 August – Monday morning after breakfast Richard took us to other smaller churches in the countryside to exhort and encourage them to greater faithfulness. Two persons spoke at each church with short lessons designed to encourage and strengthen them. We went back to the hotel about 3:00 to eat dinner and prepare for the night preaching.

Ed Lewis, Manny Ebong and Sunday Ayandare preached on the family at Asoufua at the 7:00 – 9:00 hours.

John Cripps and I went to Tarkwa Maakro to preach on the family. I preached in the 7:00 hour with questions following the lesson. My lesson was on Strong Loving Male Leadership in the Home. John had the night off.

25 August – Tuesday morning after breakfast Richard took to visited more remote country churches. Again two people spoke, at each local church, words of encouragement and perseverance in the work of

the church. We were taken back to the hotel about 3:00 to eat dinner and prepare for the evening preaching.

Ed Lewis, Manny Ebong and Sunday Ayandare preached at the Asoufua church from 7:00 – 9:00 . The lessons were geared toward the family.

John Cripps and I went to Tarkwa Maakro for the 7:00 – 9:00 preaching. I had the night off and John preached on the Woman's Role in the Home. After John's lesson, the church choir was called forward to sing a special hymn and what appeared to be designed to show off the talent of the singers. During the question and answer session that followed both John and I were given opportunities to answer questions. We took that time to ask where there was authority for a choir in the Lord's church. Also calls for the church to get out of the taxi business. The church van had a sign saying the van was for rent. The church was operating a business using the church van as a taxi service. The church told us they had many things to think they needed to study and rethink some things.

26 August – Wednesday morning after breakfast Richard again took us to other country churches for words of exhortation and perseverance in the work of the Lord. Again two people spoke words of encouragement designed to motivate them to continue the work of the Lord in difficult settings. We also visited the homes of members to encourage them. We went back to the hotel about 3:00 to eat dinner and prepare for the final night of teaching.

The evening session was a three hour question and answer session by all five of us who had spoken there throughout the two weeks. Questions were asked about the choir and we gave them answers from the bible. We asked them to show authority from God's word for the choir. They appealed to Rev. 14:3 for that authority. It was pointed out that what John saw in vision form did not constitute authority for the church to do anything. Plus it was pointed out that in Vs. 2 they were using harps. If Verse 3 authorized choirs, then verse 2 authorized instrumental music which they would not accept.

Each of the five of us gave our parting messages and our thanks for the opportunity to preach the gospel there. Even though some of the things we said were hard for them to hear, they heard the messages and were made to think about what authority they had for doing some of the things they were doing.

27 August – Thursday morning after breakfast Richard took us on a couple of excursions for a day of relaxation. It was pointed out to us that the ladies did not receive anything for their efforts and they were inadvertently overlooked. We used the excursion time to find bibles in the native Twy language for the ladies. We purchased the bibles from the Kumasi market place. We then went to the Manhyia Palace Museum. The Museum was the first Ashanti king's home that was turned into a museum. We then went to the zoo to see African wildlife. Then to another monument that was the Ghananian version of the sword in the Stone. A sword was magically put in a stone and if it was ever pulled out it would bring the collapse of the Ashanti kingdom. Then we went back to the hotel.

That evening Richard picked us up after dinner to meet with the Asuofua church to say our farewells. Joseph Owusu Ansah delivered a report of the work done in the meeting. The brethren gave us gifts to take home to our wives and gifts of appreciation for our efforts. We had pictures taken with the brethren and said our final goodbyes.

28 August – Friday morning after breakfast Richard picked us up for the five hour journey back to the Accra Airport. Sunday Ayandare and Manny Ebong had an early flight while ours was about 11:00 that evening. The brethren couldn't make two trips so we just left and sat at the airport waiting for our flight. It took 44 hours from the time we left the hotel to the time we set foot in Wilmington, NC. My wife met me at the airport and we stayed that Saturday night in Wilmington. We arrived there about 11:30 PM so it was too long a drive to make that night back to Fayetteville. We worshipped with the Winter Park church where John Cripps and Ed Lewis work. We ate together and then headed back to Fayetteville in time for the evening worship with the West Fayetteville church. It was a happy reunion and all were glad to see us and hear about the success of the trip.

This report has been lengthy, but much there was a lot of work done on this trip. It is a great encouragement to me and the church here to see the successful preaching of the gospel of Christ. We keep in constant contact with the brethren there in Ghana through facebook. May God continue to add to the growth of the two faithful churches in Kumasi, Asoufua and Asamang, and may the word of the Lord sound forth from there throughout all Ghana.

One of the most impressive statements we read was the future plan of the Asamang and Asoufua churches given in the words of a Ghanaian brother named Joseph Owusu Ansah.

FUTURE PLANS OF THE CHURCHES

Asoufua church of Christ has plan to build a new church building to be able to accommodate the increasing number of saints in the church.

- Asoufua church has in plan to buy vehicle and machines for rural evangelism work.
- Asoufua church as plans to separate the existing school to be managed and financed by different entity. (In other words, separate from the Lord's church).
- Asoufua church has plans to establish churches after the establishment of Asamang church in areas such as Amoaman, Fufuo, Abria, etc...
- Asoufua church has plans to train and equip more men to become preachers and elders to serve our Lord. (What is most impressive about this statement is the fact that in Ghana one cannot serve as a preacher in a Church of Christ without a preacher's certificate from a Church of Christ school operated by liberal brethren. Institutional brethren have taught Ghanain churches that if you want to build up a local church the church has to build and operate a school. Here is a clear recognition that the local church is God's training facility for future preachers and elders, not a church owned and operated preacher training school. They plan on printing out a completion certificate that should serve as certification that will be recognized by the churches in Ghana.)
- Asamang church which has been established by our Lord will need a church building, Evangelism equipment, vehicle, preacher to equip the saints with the word of truth.
- Asoufua and Asamang churches of Christ have in plan to organize such programs every year to edify brethren in Ashanti Region.
- Asoufua church has in plan to provide cloth to needy saints in Asoufua church and beyond.

And here are the words of the preacher of the Asoufua church, Richard Donkor on the Achievements and the Recommendations.

ACHIVEMENTS

1. God was with us and in control throughout the program.
2. The brethren from afar arrived safely.
3. The attendance to the program was good.
4. There have been a great change in the life of the local members at Asoufua
5. Asamang church of Christ was established.
6. A visitation to nearby churches was done to strengthen them.
7. The men were equipped with knowledge and materials for them to carry the good news to all men.
8. We were able to treat all the lessons planned.
9. There was good relations between us.
10. The message were able to reach as many as possible churches in Ashanti region such as, Asoufua church of Christ, Tarkwa Maakro church of Christ, Ohwim church of Christ, Abrepo church of Christ, Bohyen church of Christ, Bantama church of Christ, Adum church of Christ, Afrancho church of Christ, Barekese church of Christ, Barekuma church of Chris, Kumi church of Christ, Esaso church of Christ, Nkwantakesse church of Christ, Kona church of Christ, Ashiase church of Christ, Atonso church of Christ, Mampong central church of Christ, Asuboa church of Christ, KNUST church of Christ, Maakro Junction church of Christ.

RECOMMENTATIONS FROM THE PREACHER

1. We hope that such program will be organized to educate the churches in Ghana on issues that are leading us to apostasy.
2. The period for this program must be three weeks so that they can go to different places.
3. The speakers must have their lessons on hardcopies for the members because most of them are computer illiterate.
4. If the program is going to be yearly then there will be the need to have a car where will be used for their errands because rented cares cost much.
5. The Asoufua church of Christ needs your assistance to relocate the school from the church premises in to fully do the work of the New Testament church.

We were encouraged when this report was read in the presence of all at the conclusion of the preaching trip. This has the possibility of transforming the churches all over Ghana. Preachers and people wanting to be preachers were trained from 17 different churches in the area. One of the brethren that went through the training program preaches on the radio to the northern reaches of Ghana. He said he is going to take what he has learned from the program and preach and teach it on the radio. Other preachers going to preacher training facilities in other areas said the same thing. The impact of this effort can be transformative to the nation who has never had simple Christianity without human institutions doing the work the church is supposed to do.

We have already made plans to have Richard Donkor, the preacher for the Asoufua church, to come to the U.S. and preach for the churches in this area that supported the work in Africa. We through it was be a fitting cap to the trip to provide churches that supported the work in this area the opportunity to ask Richard about the work and hear him preach. We thought it would be an encouragement to all involved.

Without the support of faithful brethren and faithful churches this trip would not have been possible.
Thank you all for your fellowship in the gospel.

Yours in Christ

Wayne Seaton